

# RED WEEKLY

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# WITH THE MINERS

# against the Social Contract



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



**THE MINERS must not stand alone. There are a thousand and one reasons why their claim for earlier retirement on full pay should have the backing of the entire workers movement.**

On simple humanitarian grounds there can be no argument about the right of those who spend two-thirds of their lives in darkness adding just a couple more years to living as the rest of us do.

cuts which will accelerate the destruction of the welfare state and increase unemployment.

According to newspaper reports, the next stage of incomes policy will limit wage rises to three per cent — or one seventh of the likely inflation rate.

By demanding earlier retirement, by challenging the Social Contract, the miners have the potential to challenge all of this.

There can be no dispute that the working conditions the miners endure produce illness and death. There can be no argument that the retirement age of miners in this country compares unfavourably to that of the vast majority of their colleagues in the capitalist world — even miners in Spain retire at 50.

Each of these arguments justifies the miners' claim, and together they make an unanswerable case. But over and above all this, there is another reason to mobilise all possible support for the miners.

They can say to Callaghan, Healey, and the witch-hunter Foot: the miners have suffered enough, they will not suffer longer. They can say to the Social Contract architects, Murray, Jones and Scanlon: the working people of this country have suffered enough, they will not suffer more.

They can say to the Labour and trade union leadership: your attacks on the working people are opening the door to a Tory election victory, and we will not stand idly by.

As in 1974, the miners are not just fighting for themselves; they are fighting for all working people, for they are fighting the Social Contract policies of this Government.

The wholesale price index rose last month by one and three-quarter per cent, an annual inflation rate of over 20 per cent. The Labour Government is to introduce yet more

Let all militants start to explain the necessity to back the miners, to explain why the strike that is necessary to gain the miners' full demands will be a strike for all our interests.

## FIGHT LABOUR BANS

**LIKE A KNIGHT** in shining armour, Sir Harold Wilson has joined battle with Foot, Callaghan, the Daily Express and the Daily Mail against 'Trotskyist infiltrators' in the Labour Party.

His witch-hunting tirade over the weekend against so-called 'political asset-strippers' was made in support of right-wing MPs such as Sandelson, Prentice and Tomney, all of whom face the chop at the next General Election.

What a coincidence that these three were all selected by representative general management committees only to be removed by small unrepresentative GMC's consisting of 'hate men', 'red Trotskyist infiltrators', and 'take-over bidders'.

Wilson has drawn up a set of proposals designed to deal with what he calls the 'predatory-minded'.

His three-pronged attack on party democracy would limit the powers of GMCs during re-selection, strengthen the hand of the Government and its supporters in the Parliamentary Labour Party, and take local proceedings out of democratic discussions in meetings into the arena of secret ballots influenced by witch-hunting hysteria in the press and on TV.

The proposals are combined with a suggestion that Labour should act on the notorious Underhill Report (put on one side by the NEC last year) which argues that it is 'infiltrators' who constitute the



greatest danger facing Labour. But Labour MP Martin Falgout commented last Sunday that the witch-hunting speeches 'are attempting to divert the movement away from the poli-

tical reality that the IMF is dictating what the Labour Government should do'.

Eric Heffer and Joan Lester have tabled a resolution for the next NEC meeting deploring 'unsubstantiated and hysterical allegations'. Resolutions from trade unions and Constituency Labour Parties should flood the NEC meeting supporting this motion.

The NEC should be called on to state clearly that the real danger is the right-wing policies of the Government (for which the present hysteria is simply camouflage), to vote against the Underhill Report, and to take the wind out of the right wing's sails by demanding an end to bans and proscriptions altogether.

# PROBLEMS OF HOSPITAL WORK-IN

'The EGA — I've never really taken it seriously. I thought it was just an issue for cranks and lesbians.'

These were the words of David Ennals, Social Services Secretary, when approached last week by a delegation of women MPs opposed to his department's decision to close the largest women's hospital in the country. Ennals' bigoted and casual attitude towards the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital is hardly surprising. As the person directly responsible for the Government's savage attacks on the health service, which could involve the closure of up to 120 hospitals in London alone (out of a total number of 150), he can hardly be expected to be either interested or informed about individual cases.

He remains in ignorance at his own risk, however. For the EGA struggle, involving the first ever work-in at a British hospital (now in its fourth week), stands at the forefront of a growing national movement amongst health workers determined to resist Ennals' plans for dismantling the NHS.

The EGA workers have been fighting to save their hospital since last January, when Barbara Castle announced that it was to close on its present site. The authorities have now made it clear that they want all the patients out by the beginning of next year. They can then proceed to demolish the hospital and auction its valuable site to the highest bidder.

## STRIKE ACTION

The fight to save the hospital has attracted widespread support from the London workers movement, especially inside the health service. In July over 1,000 workers in local hospitals took strike action to show their solidarity, and on 17 November many joined the 3,000-strong march from the EGA to the beginning of the huge demonstration against the cuts.

Even the London organisations of the unions involved at the hospital — NUPE, ASTMS, COHSE and NALGO — have been forced to voice their support for the campaign; NUPE have even gone so far as to back it nationally. Unfortunately this has meant very little in practice.

Even on a London level the official bodies of the unions have made no attempt to build solidarity with the EGA. Organising protest marches through London to assist in the gentle art of persuasion is one thing, backing up workers who are taking industrial action to resist the cuts is quite another, and certainly not within the spirit of the Social Contract.

Yet a London-wide and national response from the industrial unions, from the public sector generally and especially from within the health service is absolutely essential if the EGA and the hundreds of other hospitals facing closure or rundown are to be saved. Exemplary struggles are taking place in many hospitals up and down the country.

## LOCAL SUPPORT

At Lansdowne in South Wales, a concerted campaign to save a geriatric hospital has attracted widespread local support including that of the South Wales miners; in London, at St. Monica's hospital in Willesden, ambulance drivers are refusing to move patients out, thereby blocking another attempted closure. But if each individual struggle remains isolated, the Area Health Authorities under the direction of the Department of Health and Social Services can pick them off one by one, presenting each separate closure as a 'special case'.

Unfortunately the 'special case' argument is not restricted to those wanting to close the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital. It is also used by many people who want to keep the EGA open. In consequence not enough effort has been put into sending representatives to union meetings, stewards meetings, and trades councils to build support amongst the labour movement for the struggle.

But the stewards in the hospital are beginning to tackle this problem. On 11 December they have called a conference for delegates and representatives throughout the London workers movement to discuss support for the EGA. This provides an excellent opportunity to begin the co-ordination of resistance to the health cuts, not only at the EGA but throughout London.

The EGA work-in faces other problems. The consultants at the hospital are not particularly concerned about its closure. Their statement that, work-in or no, they will treat any patient who attends the EGA reflects only their dissatisfaction with the terms of the transfer as it affects their own individual position (they want at least 74 beds at the alternative site at the Whittington). Whilst their support is obviously desirable, it can in no way be relied upon.

Unfortunately this problem is not fully understood by those leading the work-in. Too much attention has been paid to keeping the consultants in line and not nearly enough to ensuring that the mass of workers in



Contingent in support of the EGA work-in on the mammoth 17 November demonstration

the hospital are actively and democratically involved in the struggle. Even the date of the beginning of the work-in was kept secret by the stewards committee until the day it actually started.

## DAY-TO-DAY

Mass involvement of the EGA workers in the work-in is not just a 'good thing' — it is essential if the tactic is to be used successfully. This means that decisions concerning referral of patients, delivery of supplies, maintenance of the hospital, payment of wages, and all the day-to-day problems involved in running a hospital must be made by all those involved in the struggle. This in turn is only possible if the broadest forces are encouraged to take part.

As yet at the EGA this has not occurred. By and large the management has been allowed to maintain its

authority inside the work-in.

These shortcomings of the EGA struggle, its lack of mass involvement and its failure to break the authority of management are serious weaknesses. Because it represents the first ever attempt to institute general workers control inside a hospital, all those who are fighting to stop the massive cuts in the NHS and the other social services should be concerned that these problems are overcome.

The difficulties faced now by those involved in the EGA struggle are the same problems which many other health workers will have to tackle as the fight against the health cuts gathers strength. It is therefore vital that the EGA work-in is given the widest possible support by all sections of the labour movement.

Resolutions of support, donations and offers of help should be sent to: EGA Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Euston Road, London NW1.



## MPs in the hot seat

The following MPs, whose names top the Private Member's Bill list, are those who will probably be approached by SPUC to sponsor a restrictive abortion Bill:

- JOHN PAGE (Conservative, Harrow West)
- JULIAN RIDSDALE (Conservative, Harwich)
- DAVID HUNT (Conservative, Ravensbourne)
- STEPHEN ROSS (Liberal, Isle of

- Wight)
- WILLIAM BENYON (Conservative, Buckingham)
- GERAINT HOWELL (Liberal, Cardigan)
- DUDLEY SMITH (Conservative, Warwick & Leamington)

NOTE: Labour MPs whose names were drawn appear further down the list, and will therefore have no opportunity of having their bill debated.

LAST WEEK the names of MPs chosen to put forward Private Members' Bills in this parliamentary session were announced. The anti-abortionists heaved a sigh of relief at the list. Of the first seven names that were announced, five are likely candidates to sponsor the restrictive abortion Bill which the Catholic weekly, *The Universe* has been heralding for some time.

With the time-consuming devolution debate already scheduled, it is doubtful whether all of these seven MPs will have an opportunity to have a Bill of their choice debated. Nevertheless, we can be assured that the anti-abortionists will be making a bee-line for them, urging them to join in the ever-growing attacks on women's rights.

It is just two years since Labour MP James White attached his name to a restrictive abortion Bill. Since then his name has become a symbol of the betrayals of the Labour leaders, supposedly

committed to extending women's rights.

It is this kind of career that awaits the MPs whose names were chosen last week. Are they prepared to 'make their

# Threat of new anti-abortion Bill

name' on an issue which has deeply polarised society in many capitalist countries in recent years?

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child thinks that at least two of them are. In fact William Benyon, a Tory MP who is fifth in line for a Private Members' Bill, could very likely jump at the chance. In the recent regional rallies organised by SPUC this MP appeared on several platforms.

However, the exact nature of such a restrictive Bill appears to be a point of debate amongst the anti-abortionists. A recent letter to *The Universe* indicated that despite the fundamental agreement of all these reactionaries to restrict women's rights, there appears to be a debate about the best tactics to achieve this.

Some of this camp, possibly linked with Life — the anti-abortion group more closely associated with the Catholic Church — think it better just to go for a Bill based on the piece-meal attacks drawn up by the Select Committee. Others, who appear to be linked with SPUC — a group claiming to be non-denominational — think that the climate is ripe for an all-out attack to change the entire basis of the 1967 Abortion Act.

It has been the 'social' clause of this Act which has been the target of their attack. If this clause, which gives women the right to abortion on social grounds, were repealed, it has been estimated that 80,000 women would be driven to backstreet abortion each year.

proposed Bill be restrictive, but that it will also be more subtle than the blundering efforts made by James White.

The Select Committee set up to debate the White Bill is due to make its final report as we go to press. If this Report goes even further along the road in wiping out the limited rights won by the 1967 Abortion Act, it may well be that the more extreme wing of the anti-abortion camp will be persuaded to base their Bill on the Report.

The outcome of the efforts of the anti-abortionists to persuade these MPs to sponsor a Bill will be known on 22 December. The names of the Private Member's Bills will then be released and submitted for their first reading in Parliament.

## TRIBUNAL

However, regardless of the success or failure of these forces in getting a Bill this particular session, it is clear that their campaign will continue. In this situation, the Abortion Tribunal scheduled for 29 January at Central Hall, Westminster, is extremely timely. It will provide an opportunity for all supporters of women's abortion rights to discuss the next steps in the fight on the basis of local campaigning activity.

As the time draws nearer to the Tribunal, *Red Weekly* will be talking to the organisers of each of the major events scheduled for the day. Next week Rose Knight, a well known activist in the women's movement and a long-standing campaigner for abortion rights, has agreed to discuss the plans for the event on 'The

# COPS LAY INTO HOTEL WORKERS

OFFICIAL strike action in Oxford's hotel industry spread last week, and with it came a stepping up of police violence against the strikers.

For two weeks workers at the Linton Lodge Hotel have been on strike over victimisation and union recognition. Last week they were joined by staff at Oxford's Randolph Hotel. As with the Linton dispute, the one at the Randolph arose after management had sacked union members in an attempt to smash the efforts of the staff to improve their miserable pay

drafted in from outside Oxford, responded to a 200 strong picket outside the Linton by picking on individual pickets, punching them, pushing them to the ground and kicking them. Then they arrested four for 'obstruction'.

But the police violence is a testimony to the successes the strikers are having. Most deliveries at being stopped at both the Randolph and

## BLINDERING

# IN FOCUS

## THE DEVOLUTION BILL:

# What it means for socialists

AS THE DEVOLUTION LEGISLATION winds its way through the corridors of Westminster, a much more important debate will be taking place elsewhere. All over Scotland, in factories, homes and trade union branches, working people will be arguing the provisions of the Bill. It is the importance of this debate, not the niceties of the United Kingdom's constitution, which demands a clear answer from socialists to the Government's proposed legislation.

The most dramatic and far-reaching aspect of the Bill is the proposal for an elected Assembly, the first for 260 years. It was the success of industrialisation at home and bloody imperialism overseas which cemented together the two nations of England and Scotland, despite the diversity of their education, legal system, and national churches. Today, when military plunder in the colonies is only a distant memory, and Britain spins nearer an economic holocaust, the United Kingdom is disintegrating.

The spectacular growth of the SNP, the noisy pressure extended by the trade unions on an initially anti-devolution Labour Party, and even the public split in the Tory Party demonstrate all too clearly the depth of support for an Assembly in Scotland.

Democracy is at the root of this demand, whatever its confused and contradictory expression. Faced with a choice between that demand for democracy on one side, and the 'inalienable rights' of Westminster on the other, we have to give total support to the setting up of an elected Assembly. That means support, no matter how critical, for the Devolution Bill.

### INADEQUACIES

Despite all its gross bureaucratic inadequacies, it is a crucial first step towards the essential point — the right of the Scottish and Welsh people to express in elections what type and form of government they want.

But democracy does not stop with the printing of the ballot papers for the first Assembly election. The two-party system of 'first past the post' should be scrapped and proportional representation introduced. The opportunity should be taken to lower the voting age to the real age of maturity, which is 16.

The clause in the Bill for a fixed four year term for the Assembly should be thrown out as well, and a provision introduced for an immediate election if demanded by 10 per cent of the population. These could mark a start at least in making the Assembly accountable to the people who elected it.

The Government, of course, is vehemently opposed to any such accountability. Built into the Government's Bill are clear veto powers vested in the safe hands of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which can be relied upon to look after the broader interests of the British ruling class.

### POWERS

tatives to the Assembly on the basis of their policies, are the only forces capable of making that decision.

The first meeting of an elected Assembly in Bilbao or in Barcelona would be in itself a massive gain for democratic rights against the Spanish ruling class, as the culmination of general strikes, a generation of political prisoners and a systematic struggle reaching back through a civil war. On the contrary, Scotland has not seen any examples, in even the most limited form, of such mass self-organisation and social conflict around the national question.

### OIL

Both the Scottish National Party and the most intelligent representatives of the British ruling class are anxious to avoid any such conflict arising in the future.

The potential blow-up over respective shares in the oil revenue has also been thought out with Professor Simpson, a nationalist economist, producing a scheme for a joint 'oil-pound' account to be held with the Bank of England. This solution to a potentially dangerous issue now has the endorsement of *The Times*, often in the front line in shrewd bourgeois thinking.

For these reasons no blank cheque can be given to this new Assembly. It may well be 'democratic' for the Assembly to continue (or even extend) the anti-homosexual laws in Scotland, or to maintain the cancer of separate religious schools, both of which are distinct features of Scottish political life, but such legislation would still have to be fought tooth and nail on both sides of the border.

With an SNP Executive in Edinburgh and a Labour Government

nationally, socialists would be weaving their own noose if they automatically supported the Assembly in every conflict with Westminster. The real possibility that the Assembly could actually bolster up some of the most reactionary and parochial aspects of Scottish social and political life should warn socialists against any impressionist notions of some 'revolutionary dynamic' being unleashed from Edinburgh.

### VISION

But among the mass of the Scottish working people it is precisely this vision of radical change, no matter how confused or reformist its expression, which motivates the clam-

## THE BILL

**REVENUE:** The Assemblies are being given no powers to raise their own taxes. All revenue will come from block grants, the amount of which will be decided annually by Westminster. Initially the Scottish Assembly will receive a grant of £2,000m and the Welsh Assembly a grant of £800m.

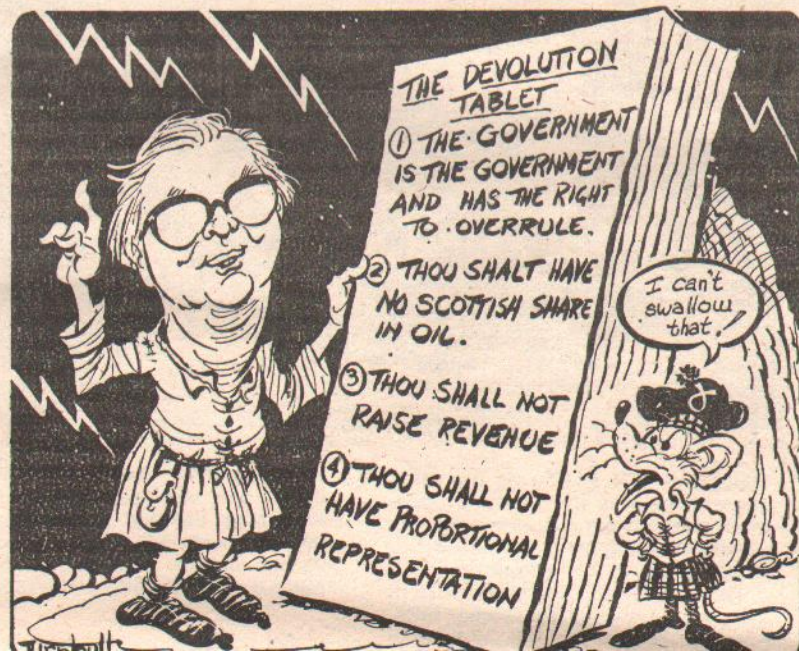
**PAY POLICY:** The two administrations will have to abide by UK pay policies. Reserve powers will be retained by Westminster to determine pay and conditions of those in public employment.

**ELECTIONS:** First elections will take place in 1978. They will be held under the standard 'first past the post' system.

**CONTROL:** The Assemblies will have general control over education (other than universities), health, social work and local government. They will also control land use, housing provision and rents. There will be limited powers over agriculture, fisheries and harbours. On industry, the Scottish Development Agency and Welsh Development Agency will have investment functions, and control over factory building.

**LAW:** The Scottish Assembly will control Scottish law, including courts, general criminal and private law, and prisons.

**VETO:** Westminster will have powers to scrap a Scottish Assembly Bill and will be able to revoke a law passed by either Assembly if it is judged to have 'unacceptable' effects. Westminster will also be able to 'lay down guidelines' on the investment policies of the development agencies.



It is not just the left which is thrown into confusion by the devolution proposals. The Sun cartoonist chooses to play on the threat which devolution might pose to the integrity of the 'United Kingdom'.



our for an elected Assembly. Although the SNP has gained support from important sections of the merchant banks in Scotland, it is absurd to see the growth in their support as some capitalist conspiracy.

To turn your back on this mood for change, whatever its petty bourgeois manifestations, would be stupid. The Assembly is here to stay, and as long as working people look to it for some solution, socialists have to point out what these solutions actually are.

### PROGRAMME

The parasitic overseas investment which characterises Scottish banking, the get-rich-quick plunder of the multinationals, the barrier of total secrecy which envelops the oil industry, where even the Government is systematically conned by big business, the human misery of Glasgow as the worst slum in Europe — the problems are obvious enough, and only the boldest and most audacious shift in wealth and power towards working people can even begin to tackle them.

The cornerstone of such an approach would be punitive taxation and nationalisation, yet these measures are specifically ruled out by the Government's Bill, with the Assembly denied any power to raise revenue. This clause has to be flung out.

But working class representatives would be foolish to wait for Westminster's permission to launch such a socialist programme. Instead they must fight for the Assembly to assume the powers necessary to tackle the legacy of 150 years of capitalist anarchy.

The key to any such programme would be for the workers parties to form the executive of the Assembly. Given the flirtation of Sillars, the SLP leader, with the SNP it becomes doubly important to reject any coalition or deal with the Nationalists in the Assembly.

Does this mean that socialists should be in favour of independence? First we should be clear that the phrase of 'separatism' is one invented by the Labour bureaucrats against the SNP, whose real position is for self-government inside loyalty to

constitutional arrangement between Scotland and the United Kingdom.

For socialists 'unity' is not about structures of parliamentary rule, but about the unity of the organisations of the working class. A fight for independence can only be a fight to break up that unity. To divide the trade union movement, for instance, along national lines, to break up the Engineering or Transport Workers unions into Scottish and English unions would only weaken workers on both sides of the border.

Any analogy with Ireland's break from Britain, or argument that some specific form of English oppression is responsible for Scotland's problems, is to tail-end the reactionary mythology of the middle class SNP, who seek some way out of the crisis by appealing to the 'Common Interests' of the Scottish nation.

Some sections of the socialist movement have argued that the whole issue is a diversion, cunningly invented by the Labour Government to distract attention from its scandalous record on unemployment or the cuts. Nothing should surprise us about the cynicism of the Labour Cabinet, but more important issues are at stake.

### FIGHT

The fight for socialism does not merely take place within the four walls of the factory. The capitalist class exercise their rule by a multitude of social, cultural and ideological means. To refuse to confront capital on every single terrain of daily life is to give up half the battle before it is fought. For better or for worse, the national question is one of these terrains.

British imperialism is now in its worst crisis since the days of George III. Its panicky and clumsy attempt to 'solve' the national question in Scotland is only an indication of its weakness, not its strength. By initiating a fight now in the homes, work-places and union branches of the Scottish working people for the Assembly to assume the powers necessary to confront the power of capital, this weakness of the Westminster Government can be turned to the positive advantage of the working class.

A new era is opening up in British



# Storms ahead at NUS conference

**THE NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS conference this weekend will be a stormy affair. The collapse of three NUS service companies has destroyed the strategy of the present Executive for maintaining the union's unity against disaffiliation from the right. The Blackpool conference marks a watershed for the student movement.**

The decisions in past years to expand services at the expense of uniting the membership to support the political campaigns of the union have led to the present crisis situation.

The Federation of Conservative Students, who two years ago had only 13 conference delegates, will arrive at Blackpool assured of the support of nearly 200. If they hold their fire against the present Broad Left leadership of the union, it will only be because the Executive majority has made concessions to them.

The solution that the Broad Left leadership will seek to the current precarious financial position of the union will be unity at any price. In terms of the Tories' demand, it will be acceptance of the basic premise that the cohesion of the union will be built by a downgrading of the resources put into campaigning and a greater emphasis on those services still remaining.

But such 'agreements', as embodied in the joint statement made between the Broad Left, the Tories and other student organisations after the announcement of the services crash, lead students up a dangerous blind alley. The Broad Left seem to refuse to realise that a union which does not devote the bulk of its resources to campaigning in defence of students' interests will necessarily be a divided one.

## ALLIANCES

The Broad Left leaders' failure to change course does not arise from a worship of services as such, but from their overall understanding of what alliances students must form to defend themselves.

During the campaign for an increase in the student grant, the strategy of the Executive was to ally with the Vice-Chancellors and college principals and to win over 'public' (press) opinion. This uneasy alliance came apart when students took direct action in the colleges in support of their claim and against increased hall fees and cuts.

Since the election of the Labour Government, the emphasis has changed. The objective is a campaign to pressure changes in government policy. This is meant to be pursued through alliances with left MPs and the trade union bureaucracy.

But these tactics run straight into the support which ex-lefts like Jones and Scanlon have given to the whole government policy of the Social Contract. Scanlon, in particular, demands more cuts in public expenditure which somehow will reflect themselves in increased industrial investment.

So student action organised by the Executive has been devoted to building support for the lefts and their policies — policies, incidentally, which have been rejected by NUS Conferences in the past, such as import controls, the strengthening of the National Enterprise Board, and so on.

## DOLE

All of these policies try to pretend that there is some common interest between workers and big business wrapped in the

The role of the NUS leaders during last summer's occupations of teacher training colleges against unemployment and education cuts bore all the hallmarks of this strategy. The number of occupations was unprecedented in the history of the student movement. Yet the NUS refused to place any demands on the leadership of the National Union of Teachers to support the struggle by implementing NUT policy of a fight through classroom action for class sizes of 30 or less in order to employ jobless teachers and meet educational need.

The NUS Executive refused on the basis that it would 'harm' relations between the NUS and the NUT. But what 'harm' would have been done by a policy which could have given a perspective for the 20,000 teachers now on the dole?

Now the Broad Left's system of alliances has reached out to include the Tory students, who have fed massively off the demoralisation that the Executive's failure to give a lead independent of the likes of Jones and Scanlon has produced.

## UNITY

In order to fight the right wing inside the NUS it is necessary to win students from the policies of the Broad Left. Inevitably this will bring accusations from the Communist Party that the far left are endangering the unity of the NUS. But this demagoguery should not blind students to the fact that it is the far left in the union who have fought consistently against the threat of the right wing.

It is not the far left who have signed joint statements with the Tories; it is not the far left who have put forward the disastrous policy of relying on the benefits of services to ensure the unity of the union.

At the same time, for any groups or individuals to put themselves forward as

the alternative to the Broad Left in the manner of the National Organisation of IS Societies seriously ignores the number of independent militants who can be won to such an alternative at the present time in the colleges.

Differences in overall programmes can be resolved through struggle. But an opportunity exists now to unite all those prepared to fight on the basis of a rejection of the Broad Left's past policies and alliances with the Tories, and the necessity of a union based on political campaigns that fights for unity in action with the working class and the trade unions.

**PAUL BROOKE (IMG Student Organizer)**



THE BROAD LEFT'S compromise with the Tories will aid developments towards a right-wing take over of the NUS, and even start to threaten the existence of a unified student movement.

The challenge to this bloc from the left of the union, including the base of the Broad Left, must be that political campaigns can unite the student movement. The ownership of private service companies, subject to the massive pressures of the economic crisis, serves to endanger the viability of such a union.

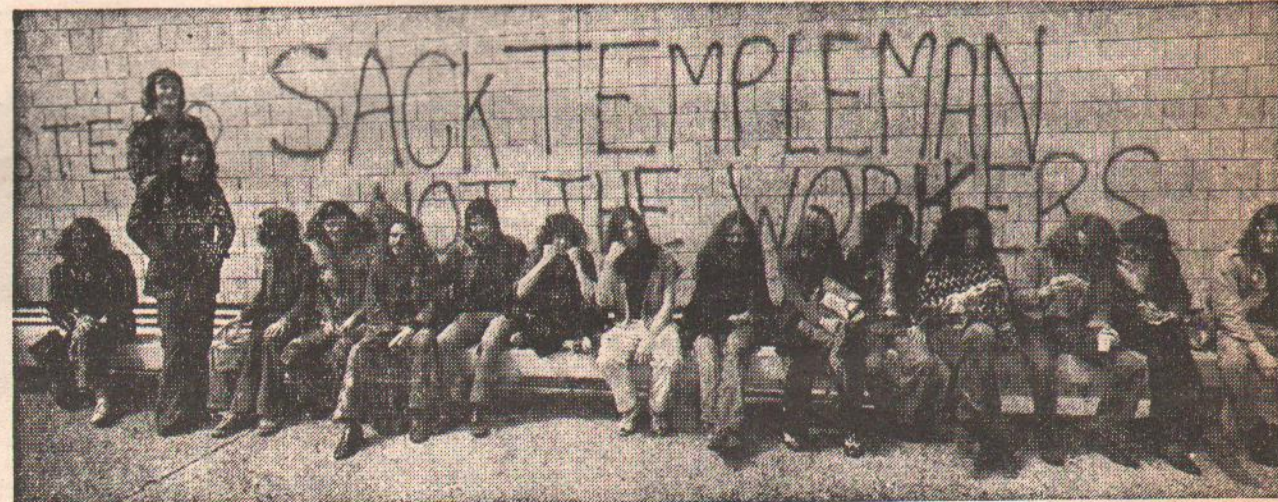
The left has to be able to present a programme of action to meet that threat including:

★ The fight for unity of the NUS on the basis of a fighting campaign against the Labour Government's attacks on students, in alliance with all those workers fighting those policies.

★ For an immediate cash injection by the Labour Government to re-employ all the sacked workers and restore services on the basis of state finance.

# KENT OCCUPATION GIVES FIGHTING LEAD

On 30 November over 350 students at the University of Kent voted to occupy in protest at the lack of accommodation on the campus. At the same annual general meeting the students also passed a vote of no confidence in the right-wing dominated union executive.



Kent students have a history of struggle—in 1972 they fought a plan to sack campus workers

alternative to it. Following the votes one college was immediately occupied, and the next day an emergency general meeting of over 500 students voted to extend the occupation.

The accommodation issue at Kent has been brewing for some time. Original plans for the university stipulated that there would be six

# Manchester bid for left unity

WHILE the growth of the right wing in the student movement has attracted a great deal of attention, the fragmentation of the left has not. One step to overcome that disunity could have been taken last weekend at a conference of student activists called by Manchester Polytechnic students and the left minority of the NUS Executive, Andy Durgan and Graham Threlfall.

The conference, called to discuss the services crash crisis of the NUS, was supported by the National Organisation of IS Societies, the IMG Student Commission, a large number of independents, and members of a new grouping — the Radical Alliance. The Radical Alliance consists of a number of Broad Left members, largely based in the Welsh colleges, who have characterised the Broad Left as a bureaucratic election machine and recognise the need for a fighting union based on an alliance in action with the working class.

## AGREED

Dave Aaronovitch, member of the NUS Executive responsible for services, was also there and attempted to defend the positions taken by the Broad Left, saying that it was the far left who would find themselves in alliance with the Tories at NUS Conference, not the Broad Left. His remarks received a sharp rebuttal when an angry member of the Broad Left and Communist Party from Swansea took the microphone to dissociate herself from the 'dishonesty' of Aaronovitch.

The conference agreed that the Broad Left leadership of the union had played into the arms of the right by its strategy of basing the continuing unity of the NUS on services rather than on the development of mass support for political campaigns. The need to fight for jobs and services to be guaranteed through state financing was also overwhelmingly agreed.

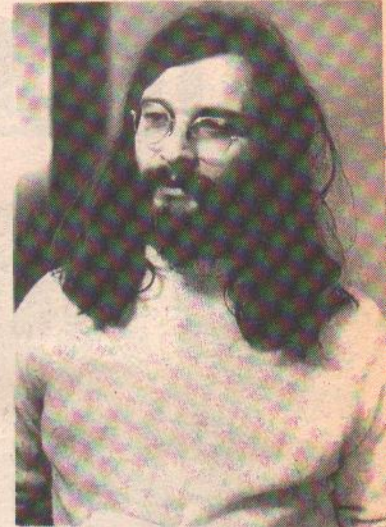
However, in spite of this correct analysis, the conference voted by 55 to 47 against a proposal to form a united electoral slate which could have been the basis for a new

★ The support of the labour movement must be won to such a project through a plan for the reorganisation of the travel services, drawn up in conjunction with the rail unions and the unions concerned with all other areas of travel, including the airlines and road services.

Given the precarious state of charter airline firms, a campaign for the nationalisation of all such companies must be at the centre of such a plan. At the same time the expertise of the sacked staff must be used to draw up the outline of such a plan.

★ The full facts of the closures must be made available to the conference. All information must be available to a commission elected directly from the floor of the conference.

★ The NUS should fight for the nationalisation of the other remaining companies by the Labour Government.



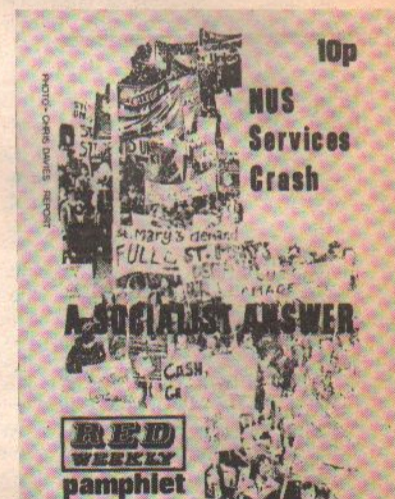
Graham Threlfall, one of the two NUS Executive members who convened the conference

leadership for the NUS. Instead the meeting accepted a NOISS motion to call for the resignation of the four members of the services board — a stand which clearly implies that mismanagement was at the root of the services crash rather than the political strategy of the Broad Left to put services above campaigns for the building of student movement unity.

## POSTURING

Although the great majority of independent delegates at the Manchester conference were won over to the position of unity of the left as the key to a strong fighting NUS, this was rejected by NOISS supporters with the implication that they are the only left alternative.

This posturing must be countered by a stronger fight at NUS Conference to unite the left on an understanding of the failure of the Broad Left strategy. Confusion about the responsibility for the present crisis in the NUS must be cleared away in the fight for a censure on all the Executive members and their Tory allies who support that strategy.



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## MOTION

ence against these deteriorating conditions, and now the students at Kent have decided to take matters into their own hands, with those involved in the occupation having taken over leadership of the union.

campaign on accommodation linked to grant levels. There will also be a call to open up the campaign to forces other than students — such as those in the general labour movement.

The fact that the students at Kent have managed by their actions to show what a campaigning union can do is just one good reason why

# POWER FOR WOMEN

THE RECENT NUS Women's Conference demanded that women students should have the basic democratic right to self-organisation in the colleges. The conference went on to demand that the NUS Women's Conference should be policy making — at the moment all women students can do is to 'advise' the Executive.

And so year in and year out women militants have been 'advising' the Broad Left dominated executive with policies designed to seriously challenge women's traditional role in society and to initiate a militant fight against the discrimination women face. But these policies must be based on women students' right to close their meetings in order to develop their self-organisation and self-identity, a position which the Broad Left have consistently opposed.

## CLASSIC

The supposed NUS Women's Campaign [or more precisely the lack of this campaign] is a classic example of the way the Broad Left have sacrificed building a strong political campaigning union on the altar of NUS Travel. Political and material resources that could have been well spent on developing the fight for women's rights and integrating it into the central campaigns of the union — such as that against the social expenditure cuts, which particularly affect women — went instead on this commercial disaster.

The tradition of opposition within the NUS Women's Campaign has recently gelled into the Women's Left Caucus. This aims to act as a focus for socialist women to discuss their perspectives for the Women's Campaign and in so doing to challenge the Broad Left's 'protest' conception of it.

The WLC also aims to take the fight against women's oppression into the centre of NUS activity, instead of having it hived off into the so-called Women's Campaign as being simply a women's issue. A motion has been drawn up around which it is hoped all student unions will campaign in preparation for the Easter Conference.

## RIGHT

Given the present crisis in NUS, it is particularly crucial that the fight for a politically active Women's Campaign, based on the recognition of women's right to self-organise, should be seen as an integral part of the struggle for an alternative socialist leadership for the NUS.

Such a leadership, in alliance with all those sections of the working class fighting the Labour Government's Social Contract strategy on cuts and wage restraint, must certainly take up questions of women's oppression in all its campaigns.

Not to do so is to dig not only your own grave but that of the whole of the student movement as well — with Tory undertakers! That is just what the Broad Left have done.

For more information about the WLC, or for copies of the motion, please contact: Sheila Kelly or Sarah Roelofs at North London Polytechnic Students Union, Prince of Wales Road, London NW5.



'Peace People' leaders Mrs Ewart-Biggs and Betty Williams

# IRELAND: No to Broad Left support for Peace People

THE LAST TIME that the issue of oppression in the North of Ireland made it to the floor of NUS Conference was two years ago. A campaign in Britain on the issue of Irish freedom was promised, but was scandalously ignored by the Broad Left-dominated Executive.

Harassment of the Northern minority has increased ever since then. So has the number of deaths. Now the Broad Left has finally decided to organise a campaign on Ireland.

## SLOGAN

But it is not a campaign against the policies of the British Government in Ireland. It is a joint campaign with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) around the slogan 'Students for Peace and Progress in Northern Ireland'.

This campaign makes no distinction about the responsibility of students to wage a campaign in Britain against the oppression of

another country — Ireland. Instead, like the British Government, the Executive treats the North of Ireland as just another part of Britain.

This campaign has never been discussed or decided on by any conference of the NUS. Previously, on issues like the Stalinist-backed repression in India, the Executive have avoided taking a position under the cover of having 'no mandate'. Now, with 'no mandate', they plan to prepare a joint campaign with the British Government-backed religious bigots of the 'Peace People'.

A month ago, students at Kent University organised a conference 'to build a campaign against British repression in Ireland'. The NUS Executive did not even bother to send a speaker to report back from the NUS fact-finding delegation that visited Ireland last summer.

## HARASSED

The delegation had plenty to report back. Delegates themselves were physically harassed by the 'security forces'. In addition the democratic organisation of the delegation could have laid the basis for a genuine mass based campaign of action against the Government's role.

But all events since show that the Executive only saw the delegation as a preliminary step toward building the 'peace and progress'

campaign.

The Better Life for All campaign, which is the basis for the NUS campaign, has the support of the Tory spokesman on Ireland — Airey Neave. However, far from this being a lesson for the Broad Left, they now propose to take their collaboration further by associating with the like of Mrs Ewart Biggs, wife of the assassinated British ambassador to Ireland.

Thus it is left to rank and file students to launch a campaign against Britain's presence in Ireland. The Coordinating Committee set up by the Kent Conference, with its policy of Britain out of Ireland, self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, and troops out now, provides the best forum to do that.

They have huge tasks. They should be supported by every socialist student.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMG?

If so, write to the IMG Student Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

Name.....

Address.....

College.....

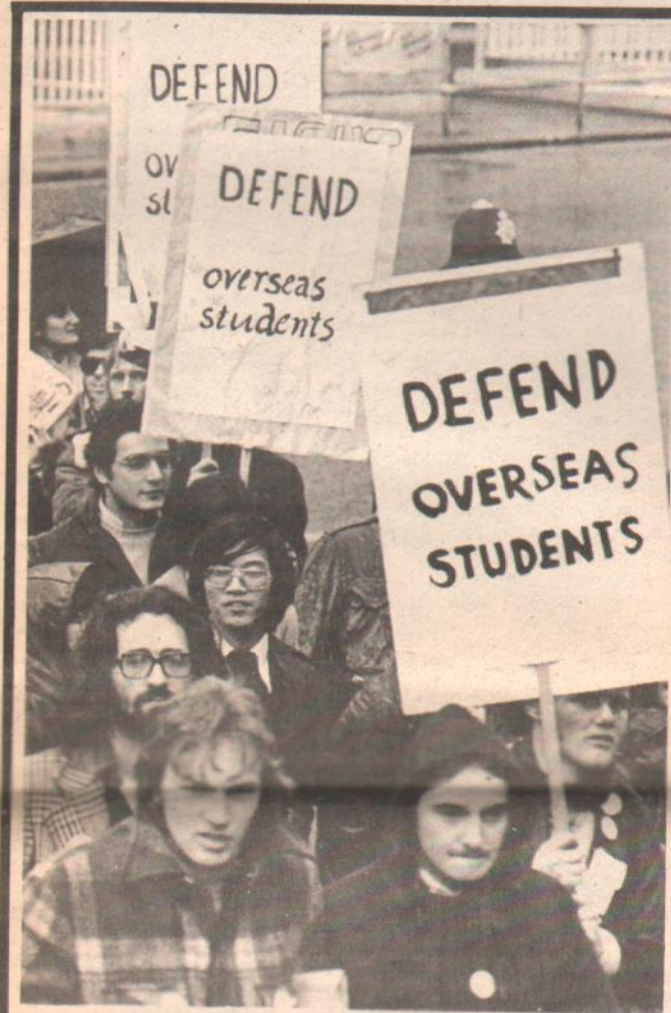


Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Overseas students at Middlesex and Teesside polytechnics have been to the forefront in fighting the attacks of the Labour Government. Their active stand against the discriminatory fees, quota systems and racist laws is in sharp contrast to the NUS Executive's inactivity. The latter have warned of the dangers of direct action, failing to see that it is through building national mass support for the actions of the overseas students themselves that their interests can best be defended.

# What stand internationally?

THE ATTITUDE NUS should take to student unions in other countries is one of the major questions raised by the present crisis in the student movement. The latest issue which has brought this to the attention of the student movement was the action taken by the NUS following the wave of occupations and strikes in virtually every college in France last spring. Executive member Al Stewart was sent to discuss with UNEF [National Union of French Students] and then invite a UNEF delegation to Britain. All very laudable on the surface — or was it?

Two questions have to be asked. First, what is UNEF; and second, what attitude did UNEF take over the student strikes?

UNEF emerged after the collapse of the French Student Union in the 1960s, when the Government withdrew all financial backing because of the union's opposition to French imperialism in Algeria. UNEF, according to *Le Monde* (9 November 1976), has 49,000 members out of a total student population of 800,000. Its principal political supporter is the French Communist Party.

Other national student organisations exist, for example UNEF (action syndicale), supported by the OCI (International Communist Organisation), or the MAS (Movement for Socialist Self-Management), which is supported by sections of the CFDT (one of the two major French trade unions), the United Socialist Party (PSU), and the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. What is very clear is that there is no equivalent of the NUS in France — that is, a single student organisation which incorporates all students and all political groups.

Secondly, the position adopted during the strike by the UNEF reflected its political mentors.

The French student movement through May 1968 and the struggles of the 1970s has a fine

al co-ordination' with the right to call national actions. The same procedure was adopted this year.

At a national co-ordination on 27/28 April at Censier in Paris, the UNEF proposed that the strike should end. The position for the continuation of the strike won 225 votes, while UNEF received only 42 votes for their position. This indicates their real strength in the movement. But it also reveals the betrayal of the CP.

The central problem of the strike was the failure to win strike action in solidarity from university and teaching staff. In their union SNES-UP, dominated at the leadership level by the CP and Socialist Party, a proposal for joint strike action was rejected. The CP and the SP tried to call off the strikes and not extend them because of their fear of losing middle class votes in the 1978 elections. It is clear that UNEF subordinated their proposals for the student strike to these considerations.

## MINORITY

Why then does the NUS exclusively support UNEF when it only represents a minority of the French student movement? Why did the NUS only consult with UNEF during the strike, when



NUS backed those who tried to call of French students' action

strike? The answer lies in the same politics put forward by the Broad Left executive of the NUS and the CP-dominated UNEF.

For example, both share the conception that the international tasks of the student movement are to campaign for international peace and security, which mirrors the attitude of the Soviet Communist Party. Their approach stems basically from a division and debate within the workers movement over internationalism.

For the CPs throughout the world the basic principle is to defend the states of Eastern Europe, and hence the privileged position of the bureaucracy within those countries. To talk of security and peace means maintaining the status quo of an international

behind bureaucratically controlled East European student unions — for example, the support NUS has given to the CSV, the puppet student union set up in the wake of the Czech invasion in 1968.

What attitude would revolutionary Marxists take over the international links for NUS? In the concrete case of the French students, we would have built links with the whole student movement via the strike committees and the national coordinations, not just with one section of the movement.

In general we would be for an international movement but one based on firm opposition not only to capitalism and imperialism, but also to all forms of bureaucratic manipulation, as in the case of



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# BLACK IN BRITAIN

TO BE BLACK in Britain today means to suffer constant humiliation, harassment and degradation. There are the social and economic conditions in which black people live — heavy unemployment, slum housing and the rest. On top of this many black people are subject to incessant attacks, both verbal and physical. The stories we print below are examples of these attacks, and they are examples only. They are taken from a bulging file of case histories compiled by the Asian Socialist Forum.

The experiences outlined in these case histories are a shocking testimony to the tide of racism in this country. They also have a political lesson, because they speak both of the racism of the National Front supporters and the racism of the police. When those such as Lord 'Uncle Tom' Pitt tell black youth to join the police force, it is like Ian Smith recruiting blacks to the Rhodesian Army. These histories show that the police offer no protection; and the only conclusion possible is that blacks have no alternative but to defend themselves.

**Ms D.C. of West Drayton:**

'Ever since we moved into this house, which was sometime around April/May 1973, we have been harassed by gangs of white youths living in and around the estate. On this estate there are only four coloured families and all of them suffer from the same kind of treatment.

'For about two and a half years we have had gangs of white boys throwing stones at our windows. The kitchen is still boarded up as the glass was broken a few months ago. The director of housing refuses to do anything about it (it's a council house).

'The front bedroom downstairs has a cracked window and is still boarded up. This is my daughter's room and she suffers from asthma. The downstairs front door has also got a crack in it, and the windows in the drawing room have also been broken. All the windows have been broken.

'On 12 October more stones were thrown and windows were broken again. We looked out and saw three white boys passing. We asked them where they were going and where they had come from. They said that they were coming from the club. What can you do when they are always lying?

'Whenever something happens we report it to the police, but they do nothing. The council have a very bad attitude towards us and are not helpful at all. There is dampness in the rooms and the wallpaper doesn't stay on.

'There are cracks in most of the walls and the wind comes through them. The roof tiles have come off because the white boys throw all sorts of rubbish on the roof. The council doesn't even repair our windows. We pay £8 a week rent.

'On 16 November a boy whom we knew came to the front gate. That was about midnight. He was with another white boy and I went out and asked him what he was doing. He started getting very angry and called me a "black bastard".

'A few months ago A.P., who lives in the house behind my back garden, threw a stone at the back top bedroom window and broke it. These white youths never leave us alone. They have also thrown a burning tyre in our garden and burned the hedge. They have written "Black Bastards Get Out" in large letters.

'We have made complaints to the police but they don't care. My sons and daughters come home beaten up. I'm fed up and want to leave this country. Why do people treat us like this? I don't trust anybody — the council, the police, no-one.'

## Radio picketed against airtime for fascists

A picket of Pennine Radio in Bradford was held last Saturday when local trade unionists, students and anti-fascist groups met to protest against fascists being given airtime on community radio.

We reported how last month local National Front leader Jim Merrick was prevented from broadcasting by an occupation of the radio station. This picket was a follow-up to the occupation, and was called by Bradford Trades Council [who have a 'no platform' policy].

The demonstrators were not allowed to leaflet the premises, as the manager was afraid of another occupation, but a member of the National Union of Journalists said that he would raise the question in the Pennine NUJ chapel. The picket was a step forward for the forces involved in

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**A.Y. of West Drayton:**

'We moved into our house in March this year. After two or three days my mother hung clothes on the washing line. In the evening when she went out to collect the clothes she found some were torn and some were rolled in the dirt.

'We also found a letter demanding we pay £5 a week if we had any intention of staying in the house. All this was reported to the police in West Drayton. One police officer came round, registered our complaint and went away.

'Ten days later gangs of white youths broke six window panes in the top bedroom. We called the police, another policeman came and registered our complaint, but no action was taken. We had our windows broken again two days consecutively after the policeman came.

'Two weeks later another incident occurred. My mother and sister were sitting outside when a gang of white youths appeared and threw a bottle. Luckily it missed my mother and sister.

'We complained to the police but they said they could take no action, because although my mother recognised the faces she did not know their names. Sometime later we managed to find out some of the names and gave this information to the police. The police recorded this but have taken no action.

'In early July all the family were out. When my two brothers returned to the house about 4.30pm they found smoke coming out of the top bedroom. They ran upstairs and found the whole room on fire. They managed to put the fire out, but most of the things like mattress, lino and clothes were burned.

'The fire brigade and the police were called, the room smelled of paraffin. One policeman later said that we were responsible for causing the fire, saying things like "you should have switched your heater off". But there is no socket in that room, so we don't know what he was talking about.

'Abuses such as "fuck off black bastards" and "why do you come to this country wog" are very common to our ears. I also found "go away black bastards" inscribed on our front pavement. So I went to the police. I waited one hour, but no-one attended me, so I got fed-up and left.'

Ms O. Harlington:



Mass action and the building of black self-defence is the way to counter racist attacks

received quarterly bills of about £25. After the reading in July 1976 the company wrote to say that they had underestimated by £112.32 and that amount was now due.

Ms O. went to the Hounslow gas showroom in July to say that she could not pay all at once. She entered into an agreement to pay in instalments. She paid £30 immediately, leaving her a bill of £82.32.

On 14 September she received a visit from a debt collector, Mr Pellister, who said she must pay the full amount immediately or else have her gas cut off.

On 16 September she went to the gas showroom and paid the bill by cheque. On 17 September Mr Pellister re-appeared, asking for permission to read the meter. While she was in the kitchen, Pellister used the opportunity to find out how the gas pipe ran into the house and gave instructions to three workmen to begin drilling in front of the houses to disconnect the pipe.

Ms O. was horrified to see this and showed the workmen the receipted bill.

They then stopped drilling and remonstrated with the debt collector, saying that they would not disconnect the gas since the bill had been paid. Mr Pellister then said the bill should have been paid in cash, not by cheque, so she still owed the £82.32 plus £22 for disconnection and connection (work which was not even carried out).

Whilst Ms O. was telephoning the Uxbridge gas showroom, Mr Pellister called the police. The police arrived very quickly and Ms O. was now faced with seven men. She tried to show all the necessary documents to the police, but was told that they had no time to listen to her story and that she must do as Mr Pellister demanded.

Ms O. telephoned the bank manager to arrange for her to collect £28.32 plus £22 in cash. Pellister took the money and left driving a taxi.

**Ms G. Ab. of Hillingdon:**

One Sunday this September, Ms G. Ab. was taking some cakes to her father's

house. On her way she passed a group of white youths, one of whom regularly terrorised black families in the neighbourhood. This youth approached the woman, demanded a cake and kicked Ms Ab. on the ankle.

She didn't say anything but hurried on to her father's house. When she returned home she related the incident to her husband, who went outside, saw the white youth, and asked him what he was up to. The youth started shouting and abusing and hit Mr Ab. on the chest. Mr Ab. mentioned calling the police, the white youth pushed him down and kicked him.

The police came but said everything Ms Ab. said was 'hearsay evidence'. The police advised the family to take a summons against the boy privately. When the police left, the boy and his mother returned to the house and threatened: 'If you issue summons we will bring 50 people and you with knives.'

# Music of the do

THE PRESS threw up their hands in horror. The record companies probably rubbed theirs together in anticipation of all those lovely profits. The Transport and General Workers Union asked for a contract to be scrapped and angry workers at a record factory refused to handle some of its products. Why? Because of the furore and free publicity caused by Bill Grundy's TV interview with 'punk rock' group the Sex Pistols.

'Punk Rock' has certainly hit the scene in a big way. But what's it all about?

Its roots are traceable to the bizarre antics of Alice Cooper and the extravagant (some say decadent) looks of groups such as the New York Dolls. It differs from this because it is supposedly 'violent' and 'anarchic'. Women are among its 'stars' — a thing not usually associated with the rock music scene.

The music press are treating it with mild sarcasm, but are trying to prove its validity by comparing it with the 'teenage rebel' image created by the music of the Stones of the early years (this comparison may be because the Sex Pistols' single is entitled 'Anarchy in the UK'). But now 'teenage rebellion' music has been replaced by 'the music of the dole queues'.

The devotees of 'punk rock' are easily spotted — they show a marked preference for wearing safety pins through their noses, dressing in dustbin liners and painting their faces. Enough to make any member of 'the establishment' react against it.

## DISTURBING

But the most disturbing thing about 'punk rock' is not the dress, not the 'foul' language — or indeed whether or not an establishment TV interviewer provoked the Sex Pistols into using four letter words on a 'family' show.

The bourgeois press and the music press are quite right when they describe 'punk rock' as a new social

dole queue. Because thousands of kids today are fed up with everything they see in 'the establishment'.

They're kicking their heels waiting to get out of an enforced extra year at school, only to find themselves kicking their heels in the dole queues. They quite rightly get angry, and they show it by kicking other kids at football matches, kicking policemen, and kicking shop windows in. They also tend to kick black kids.

## RACIST

The Daily Mail summed it up when they said that 'punk rock' appeals to 'depressed and deprived white teenagers'. Unfortunately the Daily Mail didn't draw any implications from this. They did not report, for example, that the student union at Lanchester Poly refused to pay the Sex Pistols after students complained that the groups' act had used racist and fascist references.

You might think that this was accidental, that they didn't mean anything by it. But the fact that the followers of 'punk rock' are white, and the fact that one common design which they paint on their faces is the swastika, suggests otherwise.

'Punk rock' has the aura of masculinity and aggression around it. Its female followers also project the image of toughness, but one gets the impression that this is toughness of the 'bovver girl' type — calculated to please their blokes and to encourage them, whilst still being entirely sub-





# JAMAICA UNDER 'HEAVY MANNERS'



Prime Minister MICHAEL MANLEY

'WE GOT THEM under heavy manners/Michael Manley is a socialist', hammered out the sound system at a ruling party election rally last week in Jamaica.

'Them' is the opposition Jamaica Labour Party, 'heavy manners' is the State of Emergency presently in force in the country, and Manley is the present prime minister and leader of the ruling People's National Party.

That Manley launched his campaign for the 15 December with a rally of 180,000 shows the huge backing for his policies and the confidence of many Jamaicans that he will be returned to power. However that is far from the intentions or predictions of the JLP and its backers, nationally and internationally.

## OPPOSITION

So who are the opposition, and why have at least three of their prospective candidates been locked up under a State of Emergency which is operating during a general election?

Manley imposed the Emergency last June. Introducing sweeping powers of arrest, detention, press censorship and banning of meetings and demonstrations, he justified it as an extreme measure to deal with the break-down of law and order on the island, connected especially with a campaign of political violence and disruption by hired JLP gunmen. The money for guns, it has been proved [notably by the disclosures of Philip Agee], was being provided by the CIA, in a 'destabilisation' operation aimed at discrediting and bringing down the Manley Government.

The main ideological weapon of the JLP and CIA has been an attack on 'communism', with which they equate Manley's 'democratic socialist' policies—for example, his nationalisations at home and friendly relations with Cuba and African nationalist regimes abroad.

Manley has called this description of himself as a communist ludicrous, and he's right to say so. Though he has pursued some anti-imperialist policies, the economic measures he has taken have done little to solve the 25 per cent unemployment, the rising cost of living with inflation at 20 per cent, and a steeply mounting crime rate on the island.

## INSIDE

In fact, in a panic measure to deal with the drift of unemployed youths into crime, the apparatus for detention now being used in the Emergency was set up in Jamaica way back in 1974 through the Gun Court, a concentration camp-type compound in West Kingston which deals with all offences involving firearms, and was given powers of indefinite detention. Most of the detainees there have come from the ghetto areas of Kingston, where unemployment, homelessness and poverty stare you in the face.

Manley has also tried to harness the Jamaican working class through anti-union legislation similar to 'In Place of Strife'.

Despite this, Manley and the PNP



BOB MARLEY, top reggae musician, was shot by right-wing thugs last week. Like many who embrace Rastafarianism, he supports Manley and was due to play at one of his rallies. One of his songs, 'Rat race', brings the point home: 'Political violence fill ya city, yea-ah/Don't involve Rasta in ya say-say/Rasta don't work for no CIA/Rat race, rat race, rat race.'

being pushed further to the left. The JLP, on the other hand, is committed to anti-socialist, anti-working class policies, has declared a crusade against 'communism' and is the party of and backed by big business — as well as the CIA. If it gets in on 15 December, this would be a big defeat for the Jamaican working class and will spell harsh repression for all the forces of the left.

Solidarity with the forces opposing the JLP and CIA interference in Jamaica is essential, and is well underway in Britain. Actions include a picket of the US Embassy this Thursday, 9 December, at 5pm, organised jointly by the West Indian Standing Conference, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, and the Jamaican Workers Defence Campaign.

SHEILA MALONE.

## le queue?



done much to challenge sexism, but after the recently reported incident where men raped a fifteen-year-old girl twenty times after a pop concert, the stress that 'punk rock' lays on a combination of sex and violence must be seen as a threat — not only to women who are struggling to break down this type of exaggerated male-ness, but also to those on the fringes of, or actually involved with, punk rockers.

Without much doubt the press outrage will die down. Punk rock itself may not last much longer — but while it's here we can't ignore it.

People such as David Bowie and Eric Clapton have already made racist comments from stages. But the impact of groups like the Sex Pistols relies more on the influence they have on the younger end of music audiences.

## AUDIENCE

They and their audience have much in common. They are bred out of an atmosphere of deepening social crisis, where the easiest thing is to blame some vague 'establishment' for the day-to-day anger and frustration which young people are feeling.

But when parts of that establishment, indeed the establishment itself (through immigration laws, etc.), are trying to encourage the view that blacks and other minority groups are responsible for poor economic and social conditions, and when that view is repeated from the stage of a pop concert together with an overt espousal of violence, we are dealing with another dimension of racism.

Punks they may call themselves, punks they may well be. But their potential to encourage race hatred and violence must not be underestimated.



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**Women and Socialism** by Hilda Scott (£2.95) is based on extensive research of the Czechoslovakian experience. Hilda Scott argues that what has happened is that inequalities have not been eliminated but institutionalised by the existing system. A useful book.

**Housing and Class in Britain — Vol II** (£1.95). This is the second volume of papers taken from the Political Economy of Housing Workshop of the Conference of Socialist Economists. Topics covered include Marx's Theory of Rent, Owner Occupation, Council Tenants and Housing Policy in the 1930's, and Local Authority Planning. (Note - Volume I of this series is still available at £1.80)

**Middle East Oil and the Energy Crisis** by Joe Stork (£3.40) traces the development of a system

Stork then considers the so-called energy crisis in this context.

**Towards an Anthropology of Women** by R. R. Reiter (Ed) (£3.40) is a collection of articles about women in various different societies. Topics included cover the evolution of sex differences, matriarchal societies, sex bias in anthropology and women and economic development. The societies covered include China, Nigeria, Italy and the Dominican Republic.

**The History of the Working Classes in Scotland** by Thomas Johnston (£5.50). The classic study of the development of the Scottish working class up to the start of this century. A powerful account of the bitter struggles against the inhuman conditions which prevailed at that time.

# Half-baked opportunism

The choice of headline for the front page of Red Weekly of 25 November was most unfortunate. To raise the slogan of 'Defend Free Speech' after the IMG and the revolutionary left have attacked the liberal fetish of free speech for at least two years makes the paper appear hypocritical.

Free speech in the abstract is indefensible. We have succeeded in getting this point across to the vanguard and even broader layers,

and we cannot now turn around and defend Agee and Hosenball on the basis of abstract 'right'.

We defend them because what they have to say is of vital importance to the working class, and the attempt to silence them is an attack on the working class. This principled position is absolutely consistent with us acting to silence those whose every word attacks the working class — the fascist and racist charlatans.

The article on the front page did embody this approach, but this was in flagrant contradiction to the headline which shifted the debate onto the terrain of bourgeois democracy.

This sort of confusion and half-baked opportunism can only damage the struggle to drive the fascists off the streets and the CIA out of the labour movement and out of Britain. We should say: 'Defend the workers movement — and to hell with free speech!' — K.M. and J.H. (Brunel).

Who was the bright spark responsible for the 'Defend Free Speech' headline of Red Weekly (25 November)?

Red Weekly has an excellent record in the struggle against racism and fascism, central to which have been the arguments against giving racists and fascists a platform. Free speech is not an abstract question, nor an absolute right.

Unfortunately the headline of 25 November cuts right across this — and the glib, 'clever' journalism of the lead article fails to allay the confusion caused. The letter in that same issue from L.F. Holley makes clear the need for continuing work to explain in the most lucid and concrete terms the case for denying a platform to racists and fascists; and for locating the issue of 'freedom of speech' firmly in a class context.

# No Absolute Right

Broadening the understanding of the working class on this question is an essential component of the struggle to defeat racism and fascist tendencies within the workers movement. — L.R. FOSTER [Oxford].

such 'freedom' can only be enjoyed by the ruling class who can afford to buy it, and in whose interest the state power can grant a hearing to those who suit it, like the 'Peace People', and deny one to those who threaten its concerns, just as Rees is denying a hearing to Phil Agee in his efforts to expose the CIA.

The workers have no such freedom. They must fight in order to be heard. Socialists have to support that struggle in the clearest possible way.

For example, we have to defend the right of anti-imperialists to put their views in public not because it exists as an absolute right, but because to bring about the conditions where it can become such a right we must both destroy the present myths on the subject and specifically promote the ideas which advance the interests of the working class against the capitalists.

The 'Defend Free Speech' headline only adds to the confusion. Worse, in the context of the article which follows it and rightly take up the challenge to the right of fascists to spread their poisonous ideas, it implies a contradiction and an inconsistency.

I hope that you will make it clear in your next edition that the sort of confusion that could arise from reading this article is unfounded, and that Red Weekly makes no concessions to any such ruling class hypocrisy. — CHRIS YOUNG [Oxford].

# RED WEEKLY

# LETTERS



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No. 176

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## LABOUR BANS IRISH PROTEST, EXPELS AGEE

# DEFEND FREE SPEECH

Not many heard what Labour's Home Secretary had to say in Trafalgar Square last Sunday. A large section of the crowd was determined that the would-be deporter of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball should be drowned in protests. This was all to the good.

But a few sentences of Merlyn Rees's speech did manage to reach the ear of reporters, and one was reported the following day in the national press. Attacking the motion passed at the Labour Party Conference on 'No Platform for Racists', Rees said: 'You will drive decent people in the wrong direction if you stop free speech.'

## Editor's Reply

The confusion over the question of free speech seems to be in the

heads of our correspondents rather than in Red Weekly. We have always defended the democratic right to free speech, recognising that it is only the working class which is the defender of that right.

Our consistent campaign to deny a platform to racists and fascists is part of the same defence of free speech. We have pointed out many times to those who consider the no platform position 'undemocratic' that we are preventing the right to organise of those people who are against the right to free speech.

Of course this right is not 'abstract'. The headline of two weeks ago was quite concrete: 'Labour bans Irish protest, expels Agee, Defend Free Speech'.

Far from being a capitulation to 'ruling class hypocrisy', this headline and the 'clever' article attack that hypocrisy by defending the right to free speech of the working class and its allies. It is comrades Young and Foster who

are abstract in relegating the defence of democratic rights to some future period [socialism, presumably].

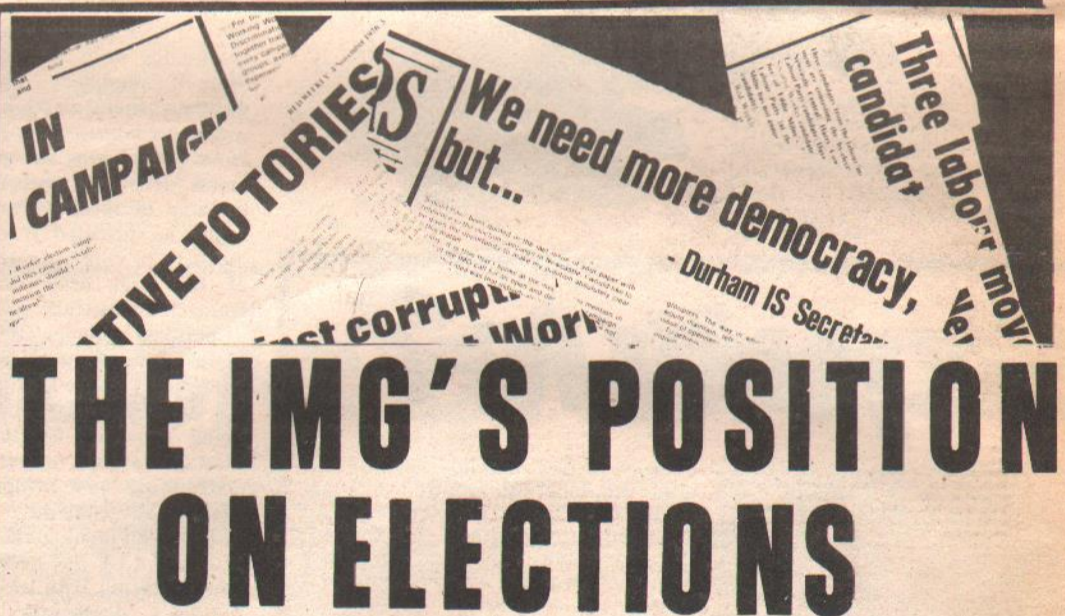
We know that the bourgeoisie mounts no consistent defence of bourgeois democratic rights. In many cases, such as Ireland, Agee and racism, it tramples those underfoot. That is the reason why we defend those rights, recognising them as gains and safeguards for the workers movement.

The line of argument followed by comrades Young and Foster is a dangerous one. Followed through to its conclusion, it would mean revolutionaries turning their backs on the legitimate struggles for democratic rights in capitalist society by abstractly counterposing the struggle for proletarian democracy.

That struggle can only be carried out in the defence of the democratic rights of the working class which are increasingly coming under attack from the state and the Labour Government.



IMG contingent on 21 November anti-racist demonstration defends Philip Agee's right to free speech.



## THE IMG'S POSITION ON ELECTIONS

Red Weekly has received many letters commenting on the IMG's position on recent parliamentary and local by-elections. In Walsall and Newcastle we supported the Socialist Worker candidates put up by the International Socialists, yet in Lambeth we supported the official Labour candidate against IS. Why?

Our position — on elections and all issues — is determined by an assessment of what best stimulates the independent activity of the working class and leads it towards a fight for socialist policies. Today this means supporting those who are actively and practically breaking with the Social Contract policies of the Labour Government and trade union bureaucrats; it means seeking to promote this development in every possible way.

Clive Turnbull (Red Weekly, 2 December) is therefore quite right when he says that the crucial question in elections today is not that of reform versus revolution. Nor can it be seriously argued, whatever the IS say, that the immediate perspective is that of constructing an alternative mass party to the Labour Party. It is not as simple as Bernie Wilcox (Red Weekly, 2 December) seems to think, when he says that the decisive question is whether the revolutionary party will be built from inside or outside the Labour Party.

The problem which IS fail to confront is that the masses still have to be broken from reformism. This will not be achieved by brandishing some magic ingredient — in this case the Socialist Workers Party — in front of their faces, but only through a continual process of 'testing' the Labour and trade union lefts in the task of building action against the Labour Government's right-wing policies.

That means pushing forward those forces which are taking up issues that advance the struggle of the working class and fighting for the left leaders to involve themselves in this process. It will be the refusal of the left leaders to make more than a token commitment to this task which will expose them in the eyes of those — like the tens of thousands of public sector workers on 17 November — who still look to them for a lead.

But if we reject IS's approach to this problem, it would be even worse to relapse into simply exposing the left leaders verbally through work in the Labour Party. This is where contributors like Graham Durham (Red Weekly, 23 September) and Chris Wood (Red Weekly, 25 November) go wrong.

our actions on the relationship of forces which presently exists; hence we should not support far left candidates standing against Labour. But the undisputed fact that the forces fighting back at this stage are relatively small is no argument for not breaking with the Labour left. To refuse to call for a vote for candidates representing forces involved in the fight-back is to fail to pose the key political question of the day before the Labour rank-and-file.

Of course, it would be a million times better if a candidate basing themselves on the fight-back was to come out of the Labour Party. Indeed, the first duty of revolutionaries should be to wage a fight for a Labour candidate to stand on a programme which breaks with the Social Contract — a candidate who would be responsible to the rank-and-file of the working class and not the bureaucracy.

This is what the South-West London comrades of the IMG had in mind when recommending a vote for Marie Montaut in the Lambeth Council by-election. The problem with that particular candidate was that she did not commit herself to workers democracy in a clear way but rather posed her candidature in terms of 'taking a political stand in the council'. While this is necessary, it only has meaning if it extends to breaking from parliamentarianism and basing oneself on the real class struggle actions of the working class — the fight against the cuts, racism, and the like.

It is this thrust of workers democracy which is the underlying basis of the IMG's campaign in elections. It is on this basis that we campaign to link up with the class struggle minorities which are beginning to engage in real fights in the unions and the localities. Such is the aim of the campaign we have launched for the Stechford by-election.

Such an aim also underlay the type of critical support which the IMG gave to the IS candidates in Walsall and Birmingham. The IS party building approach cuts right against our thrust. Nonetheless, they are part of the process of fight-back. It is our view that a vigorous campaign based upon a thrust for class struggle candidates can force a united agreement between the IMG and the IS. This would be a big step on the road to the more generalised emergence of class struggle candidates.

## The Split in the RCG

THE BANE of the left currents in this country that claim a 'Trotskyist' heritage has always been their inability to work out a clear, principled basis on which to determine whether or not they can work inside a common, democratic centralist organisation.

The consequence has either been the constant petty fragmentation of the left, or the formation of unprincipled amalgams that either rapidly split apart or develop in confused and opportunist directions.

The latest example is provided by developments in the small Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), which emerged from the International Socialists two years ago. Best known on the left for its insistence on agreement on a whole range of detailed questions — tactical and theoretical as well as programmatic — as a precondition for serious united action, the RCG leadership has recently expelled a group of its leading members.

The accusation against these people is one of 'great national chauvinism', which the RCG leadership says 'almost overnight manifested itself in our organisation'.

How such a deep programmatic deviation from the principles of the working class could suddenly emerge within the ranks of its central leadership the RCG majority does not say.

But when one reads closer the truth starts to appear: the concrete manifestation of this 'great national chauvinism' was a difference between the majority and this minority grouping over the tactics of the RCG at the recent trade union conference organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Here we have a really classic case of the method of these groupings — the magnification of a tactical difference into an issue of principle.

A statement issued by the expelled minority argues that much more basic questions are involved — essentially the adoption of new perspectives for the RCG which involve an adaptation to the Communist Party. The minority may be correct; there is no doubt that the public positions of the majority show a real credulity towards the claims of the Communist Party of South Africa, and an outright capitulation to Stalinism in that part of the world.

RCG leadership could not dress such a programmatic issue up as a tactical dispute to justify the expulsion without turning itself into a laughing stock before the RCG members and the revolutionary left as a whole, were it not for its established political and organisational methods — for which the minority are equally responsible.

Moreover this rampant adaptationism is simply the other side of the coin to the abstract conversion of every question into a 'principle' to which the RCG minority continue to cling. It was this which left the RCG without clear guidelines as to how to develop political relations and a viable perspective given their tiny size and the dimensions of the task facing the working class vanguard in this country.

The fight that the IMG has been waging over the past period on these questions is one of the few serious efforts to overcome this historical weakness of the British revolutionary left. The far left as a whole need to address themselves to this debate if they are not to condemn themselves to an endless repetition of the sort of experience the RCG minority has just gone



# £15,000 must be raised by May '77

# THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



**The tide of world revolution has turned decisively in favour of the working class and the oppressed masses of the colonial world.**

Only the Fourth International with sections in 51 countries and sympathisers in many more has any prospect of constructing a revolutionary leadership for this new wave of revolution.

In Britain the situation is crying out for a real socialist alternative to meet the crisis and the attacks of the Labour Government. The advanced militants in the working class are looking for answers in the face of the massive betrayals of the Labour and trade union leaders. The time has very rarely been better for revolutionaries to reach out to masses of workers with socialist solutions to the crisis.

**NEWSPAPER**

We need a newspaper more accessible to worker militants. Everyone will have followed the big changes we have made with **Red Weekly** over the past months. We want to expand our room for debate, we want to increase our coverage of problems of everyday life, as well as consolidate all the other changes we have made. This means the launching of a new paper.

**ELECTIONS**

In this period we have to seize every opportunity to reach out to advanced workers. This means also standing in elections. The IMG is fighting for an agreement of all the far left and class struggle forces to present an all-round fighting alternative to that of the Labour Government. This needs massive resources. The undemocratic election procedures systematically discriminate against small parties. We need at least £2,000 for each candidate that we stand.

**INTERVENTIONS**

The IMG needs to step up massively its intervention on all questions facing the working class:

- \* Cuts
- \* Women's Oppression
- \* Racism
- \* Unemployment

We need to produce more pamphlets, and literature on all these issues.

**BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION**

We want full-time organisers for our campaigns. We are acquiring new premises and new machinery in order to strengthen and make a more efficient organisation.

To fight to build a socialist challenge to the capitalist crisis takes organisation and finances. The IMG and the Fourth International are attempting to build that challenge — we need £15,000 to make that fight effective.

## THE CHOICE IS YOURS



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)



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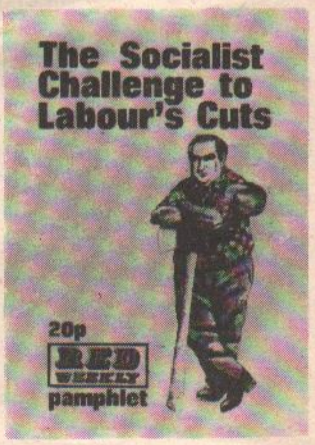
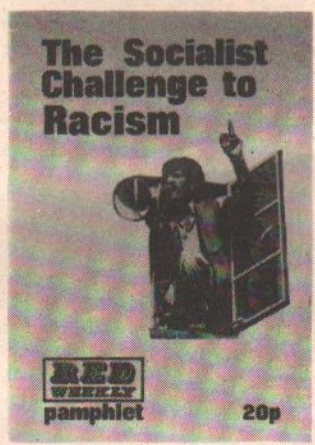
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Last year we raised £11,000 in the Fund Drive. That enabled us to produce the regular 'Battle of Ideas' that now appears in the paper. New machinery was bought to improve the typesetting and

# TOILING MASSES OF ALL

# RELIGIONS, UNITE!

Could you say something about the reaction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the resistance to the Syrian intervention?

You have to go back to the way that the Palestinian leadership understood the counter-attack against the Phalangists, and later against the new Phalangist allies, the Syrians. It was always conceived in a defensive manner, without putting into question the relationship that the PLO had with other Arab regimes. When Syria attacked, the PLO tried first to work on a diplomatic level, but later had to counter-attack on a military level.

The PLO was put in a situation where either it had to break with its understanding of a general Arab bourgeois struggle (including the Palestinians) against Israel, or it had to try what it had always tried: to play on the contradictions between the regime which attacked it and the other Arab regimes.

An example is the case of Tel al Zaatar. The PLO leadership concentrated on calling for all the Arab regimes, and especially Egypt, to weaken the Syrian position. This was very bad for the defence of Tel al Zaatar, not only because it weakened the mobilisation of the Lebanese and Palestinian masses, but also because the only chance for the Palestinian movement and the Lebanese masses was to rely on the mass movement in Egypt, Syria and all the Arab countries.

The call for the Arab regimes to help the Palestinians closed the door to the possibility of generating a mass movement in the other Arab countries to defend the Palestinian resistance. The PLO did its best not to break with the Arab bourgeoisies, and ultimately they were completely isolated before the agreement of the Lebanese and all Arab bourgeoisies, Syria included, against them. This was the practical meaning of non-intervention in the 'Arab regimes' internal problems.

What are the positions of the Rejection Front, and how far do they differ from those of other sections of the PLO such as Fatah and Saiqa? How far are there internal differences between the PFLP, the PFLP [General Command] and the Arab Liberation Front?

The three latter organisations united on the question of the rejection of the Palestinian mini-state proposed by the PLO leadership. But the ALF is different from the other two organisations, in that it is directly built and sponsored by the Iraqi Baathist regime.

Before the Syrian intervention one could not make a clear distinction



Syrian 'Liberators'

between the policy of the PFLP and the PFLP(GC) and that of the other PLO organisations. In the attack against the resistance in Lebanon, it was seen that all the resistance was threatened, so the question of the mini-state was not directly the problem.

The Rejection Front did not bring alternatives to the PLO's substitutionist, military understanding of the war. Their relationship with the masses was very similar to Fatah's. Many militants changed from one organisation to another without making a clear distinction.

When the Syrians attacked, the PFLP didn't follow the line of Fatah in trying to make deals with the Syrian bourgeoisie. It knew that the Syrians would try to attack it more strongly than the other currents in the resistance. The PFLP(GC), on the other hand, was divided. One

**MAJIDA SALMAN, a leading member of the Lebanese section of the Fourth International (the Revolutionary Communist Group), has been touring Britain 'to speak at meetings organised by the IMG. Last week she talked to Richard Carver about the role of the Palestinians and the left in the crisis.**

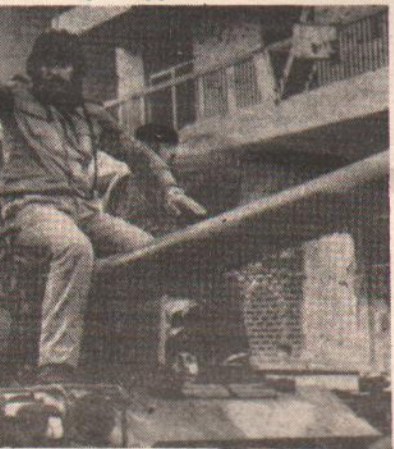
other part was completely anti-Syrian.

Could you explain the role of the Stalinist organisations in tail-ending the bourgeois reformist Jumblatt and supporting the 'programme of national reform'?

The Communist Party has always entered into a front with Jumblatt. The strength of Jumblatt is that he has an electoral base because of his origins as a Druze leader, which gives him strength on the parliamentary level. This meant that the CP had a programme which was the demands of the Moslem bourgeoisie: for example, a parliament of 50 per cent Moslems and 50 per cent Christians, and the leadership of the bourgeois army half Christian and half Moslem.

Another aspect was that while the CP had been devoted to the parliamentary road, it now mobilised for the first time on an armed level. This helped to attract many young militants from the neighbourhoods. But at the same time it had the programme of the Moslem bourgeoisie, which did not represent an alternative to the other nationalist forces.

On the military level one could fight with other organisations, but in Lebanon, where the nationalists were giving the war a religious character, it was crucial for the workers movement to have a systematic revolutionary policy attacking this religious aspect. This would also present an alternative to the masses in a situation where the bourgeois state had virtually disappeared.



Hunger strike in London last week

What was the CP's position on the Syrian invasion? The Moscow bureaucracy adopted a sort of neutral position because of its close relations with the Syrian regime. The Lebanese CP had to find solidarity against the intervention from the French and Italian CPs, now that these parties can have positions independent of the direct plans of Moscow.

The position of Moscow is related to that of the Syrian CP, which supported the intervention. This put the Lebanese CP in an awkward position, because the Syrian CP was supporting those who were killing their own members.

What are the positions of the far left organisations?

The far left in Lebanon was strong from 1967 until 1971-72, when its crisis began to express itself fully. There was a very strong centrist

(OACL). The crisis was so strong that the organisation split.

A pro-Maoist part left, criticising the reformist deterioration. This left split could not find any alternative form and completely disappeared. It has left many individuals who make up a leftist milieu, but has not developed an organised form.

The second part of the OACL was completely on the line of the Communist Party and you cannot differentiate it.

The only far left organisations are the RCG and the Workers League. The WL is a split from the PFLP, which made severe ultra-left errors in the civil war. Their main slogan was long live the soviets! Well, there were no soviets.

Even if they were revolutionaries and made a big step in understanding the need for a centralised communist party in the Arab region, they still saw it as only an Arab thing. They were saying that an international would be built after this party. This showed that they were centrist in their understanding of building the Arab party outside the international working class movement.

And what role did the RCG play?

We were always present on a military level, especially in the defence of the neighbourhoods. We had to be on the barricades every night, especially in two most important Shiite neighbourhoods — Chyah and Nabaa.

We intervened first through our publications, including publications in specific neighbourhoods, very strongly directed against any religious factor. For example, all our publications in the neighbourhoods went under the title 'Toiling masses of all religions, unite!'

When the question of the government or the regime or elections was posed, we raised the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. Our programme was completely opposed to the bourgeois programme advanced by the Stalinists and the reformists.

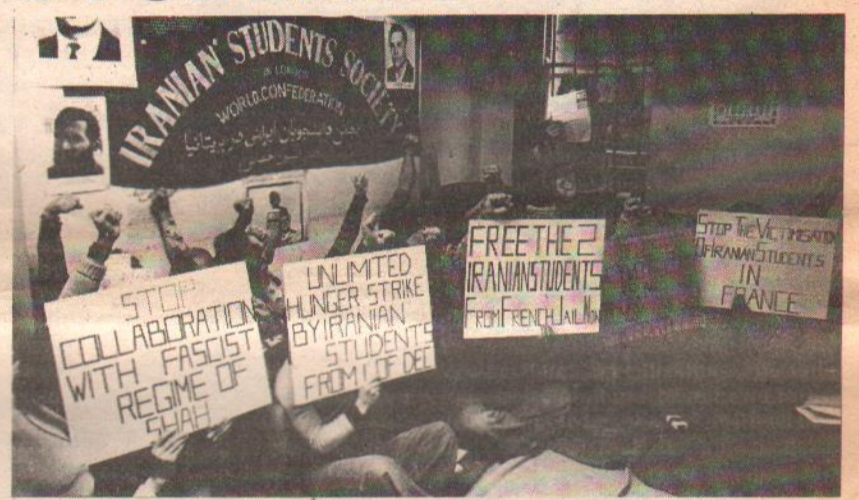
For example, on the leadership of the army we opposed the idea of a mixed Christian-Moslem leadership, and proposed to build a workers and peasants army, militias organised in the neighbourhoods which would elect their representatives. We were able to make some small examples of this in the neighbourhoods where we had some presence.

All through the civil war we tried to stress the importance of the self-organisation of the masses. We could not just say, 'you must build soviets'. That would have been an abstract and propagandist idea.

We tried to choose topics, like the problems of expropriation and food supply, where we could intervene and build the beginnings of self-organisation. We had some experiences of the expropriation of food in the poor neighbourhoods, where the decision was taken by base committees which would elect representatives.

The Syrian army is here to build a repressive bourgeois state, a strong state. This means that repression is prepared for the left, particularly the revolutionary left. We have now to

# FREE THE IRANIAN STUDENTS!



Hunger strike in London last week

THE TRIAL of the two Iranian students arrested for the alleged shooting of the chief of SAVAK operations in France began last week. In spite of unreliable and inconclusive evidence, and the fact that the shooting has been claimed by the 'International Brigade', the French authorities are pursuing a course of direct attack against the opposition in France to the Shah.

It is no coincidence that French president Giscard d'Estaing recently visited Iran, and that there are very important economic deals in the offing between France and Iran. Nevertheless, the case against the two students is steadily getting weaker.

Eye-witnesses of the shooting have gone back on previous statements, and other witnesses' reports are in direct contradiction with each other. On 30 November the two students came up in front of the examining magistrate, who recommended that Nader Oskoui should be released; but the public prosecutor objected, so both are still being detained.

A world-wide response to these victimisations is now taking place. French ministers and the Socialist Party executive have protested about SAVAK's activities. The Confederation of Iranian Students has organised hunger strikes in

Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Sweden, and the USA.

The French Government, however, is not the only one to take on the Shah's dirty work for him. Last year the case of the Iranian 21 showed quite clearly that the British Government was prepared to side with a regime which along with Chile has the worst record of brutal repression and torture. Ten passports are still being held by the Home Office, and two students face deportation from England due to their political activities.

There is also the case of Hassan Ghazi, a Polytechnic of Central London student who was told when he returned from a summer holiday that he could only have a two-week visa — and when he appealed was given only 12 hours to leave the country. Ghazi left voluntarily rather than be handed over to the Iranian authorities, but the campaign is demanding that he be allowed to return and resume his studies.

Future solidarity activities include: Friday 10 December, picket of Sussex University seminar, Institute of Development Studies, 3.45 pm; Wednesday 15 December, picket of French Embassy, 58 Knightsbridge, 12-3 pm.



## BADGE

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## IMG NOTES

IMG STUDENT CONVENORS MEETING, Tuesday 21 December, 2 p.m. at the National Centre.

NATIONAL IMG STUDENT SCHOOL for members and sympathisers interested in joining IMG. Will be held in Birmingham, on weekend 8/9 January. All student members to attend. Details from National Centre.

IMG TRADE UNION COMMISSION, Sunday 12 December, 11 a.m. at National Centre.

IMG SCHOOL on 'The History of the practice and debates of the first three Internationals on Women's Oppression'. For members. Sunday 12 December, 10 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Further details re speakers, agenda, educational kits (£1.50) from: IMG, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

IMG NATIONAL BRANCH ORGANISERS MEETING, for IMG branch organisers (or representative, if organiser unable to attend). Saturday 11 December, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Details of venue from National Centre. Pooled fare will operate.

IMG TRADE UNION CADRE SCHOOL for members of trade union fraction leaderships. 22/23 January. All enquiries to National Office.

NATIONAL FUND-RAISER wanted by the IMG. A really challenging job for someone with flair and organising ability. The IMG has no rich backers and relies on raising funds to finance its campaigns, etc. The National Fund-Raiser will also play an important role in projecting the public face of the IMG. Details from and applications to: Jo Ann Lewis, 67 Caledonian

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



# DEMONSTRATORS "MAY GET SHOT"

Not content with manipulating Merlyn Rees like one of the 'Muppets', the American 'clandestine services' have let it be known that demonstrators who get 'too close' to the American Embassy 'may get shot'.

Incredulous members of the Defence Committee to prevent the deportation of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball were given this news by the police while plans for a demonstration and picket in Grosvenor Square were being discussed. Faced with the combined opposition of the police and unknown numbers of American gunslings, the campaign has modified its plans, and other activity is now planned to follow the picket of the Home Office at noon on 11 December.

CIA lapdog Merlyn Rees is unlikely to be as upset by this news as by the growing support for the defence campaign. Given only fourteen days at first to build support, there has already been a meeting of 350 in Central Hall Westminster, and three pickets of

the Home Office; and a teach-in on the CIA, the picket on Saturday and a national demonstration (to Grosvenor Square) are now under preparation. And several chapels of the National Union of Journalists were due to go on strike during the 8 December 'Day of Action'.

The first London public meeting of the campaign revealed the depth of support for the two journalists. With no publicity and only four days notice, Central Hall was packed. Judith Hart and Ian Mikardo said that support for Agee and Hosenball in Parliament was growing as the implications of Rees's action sank in. Alan Sapper, of the cine-technicians union, ACTT, pledged his union's support, and historian E.P. Thompson completed a broad-based platform.

But the greatest help to the Defence Committee and the campaign as a whole has come from Agee himself. Despite the pressures of fighting 'legal' procedures which might have come from The Trial — no charges, no witnesses,

no cross-examination — and despite being harassed by dozens of often unsympathetic journalists, Agee has supported all the actions organised in his defence.

The campaign strategy has changed now that the 'hearings' have been set for the New Year. Having driven the Home Office back to the extent of allowing Agee and Hosenball a few more weeks, the campaign will now concentrate on getting home the message that the CIA is operating through the Home Office in Britain, and in building for a national demonstration in January.

The calendar which all Red Weekly readers should note is as follows: 12 noon, Saturday 11 December, picket of the Home Office, to be followed by further protest action; Sunday 9 January, national demonstration. Posters, 'CIA briefing' pamphlets, stickers and other information available from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

# SPAIN Socialist International Foots the bill

GENIAL MICHAEL FOOT, deputy Labour leader and erstwhile 'left', has just flown back to London after a 24-hour trip to Spain. The purpose of his visit, he said, was 'to try to find out what is happening in Spain today'.

It is open to doubt whether you can find out much about Spain in one day unless you happen to see the murder of a working class militant by the Civil Guard — there have been 40 days like that in the past year — or the arrest of 154 Basque revolutionaries, or the attacks of the fascist bands on working class neighbourhoods. Michael might have learned something if he had visited the political prisoners in Carabanchel.

He did not bother to find out about any of these things. Instead he was in Madrid to attend the congress of the PSOE, the Spanish social democratic party.

He was in distinguished company. Olaf Palme, fresh from his electoral defeat in Sweden, was there. So was Willy Brandt, the big daddy of European social democracy.

## MISSING

There was one familiar face missing. Mario Soares, with the responsibilities of government weighing heavily upon him, decided not to attend — perhaps on the advice of his namesake, the Spanish Prime Minister.

It was probably a good thing that Soares did not show up.

re-run of events in Portugal.

These luminaries all had their allotted role in the jamboree, the first legal congress of the PSOE since the 1930s. Palme piled on the socialist rhetoric, Pietro Nenni of Italy made them cry with stories of the 1930s. Brandt told them that the Socialist International would support the PSOE come what may. And Michael told them jokes.

## DEMAGOGY

It was left to Felipe Gonzalez, the party's general secretary, to spell out what the PSOE policy means in practice. The PSOE supports legalisation of the Communist Party, since it would rapidly lose ground if it were seen to be clearly to the right of the CP.

It has consistently combined demagogic left positions, for example on the boycott of the syndical elections, with a willingness to negotiate with the Government.

This still holds true. It has been the PSOE which has been in the forefront of setting up a joint negotiating team with the Government, from which the CP (not to mention the revolutionary left organisations) will be excluded.

Gonzalez welcomed the 'reform' plans drawn up by premier Suarez as a step towards democracy, and took an extremely equivocal attitude towards the referendum, because this would be a time when the masses would be

experience of mobilising the masses in the past 40 years. The mobilisation which will take place is of those workers, particularly in the Basque country, who have seen through the reform plan and will be organising a boycott of the referendum.

What Gonzalez did not mention was that the PSOE in the Basque country would be supporting this boycott. After the recent arrest of 154 Trotskyists and the mass action to secure their release, the reformist parties were dragged into united action to oppose the Government and the referendum. Gonzalez cannot have been too happy about this, but he kept his mouth shut.

Why has the Socialist International, including the British Labour Party and union leaders like Jack Jones, been so assiduous in its attentions to the PSOE? Why did it give £350,000 this year to bolster the PSOE's ailing trade union wing? Felipe Gonzalez gives the answer. It is support for the 'project of a Socialist alternative for society'.

## MEMBERS?

This means central planning, but no nationalisation of the banks, and the introduction of a Western European taxation system. That's it.

That is the sort of socialism which will win the whole-hearted support of Willy Brandt, Michael Foot and their friends. Judging by the

# NOEL JENKINSON'S LAST LETTER

# No Peace Without New Ireland

Red Weekly is pleased to publish the last letter written by Noel Jenkinson, the Irish political prisoner framed for the Aldershot bombings, who died two months ago in Leicester prison. The letter, written on 4 October, has only recently come to light. In reading this letter it should be remembered that Noel's information on the situation in the North of Ireland was rather limited by his prison conditions. Certainly the support for the 'Peace People' of which Noel writes is in a rather sorry state today.

The hypocritical support of the NI 'Peace Movement' by the Brit press and government continues and I don't cease to be astonished at the gullibility of those I'm charitable enough to assume are ordinary decent people. How can the people of Ireland, after so much sacrifice, torture and death, even contemplate peace while one Brit soldier remains in Ireland. Peace will only exist in a society of free men.

Peace to me means the right to live a decent life with a promise of the future. It means to me a socially necessary and rewarding job, a house, a good school for children, good hospitals and care for the old. But will this peace movement build one house, make one job [except for the organisers], build one school or hospital or do anything for the old except teach them to pray. So long as the Brits have anything to do with it, it will simply be a recruiting organisation for informers.

The Brit supporters of the 'Peace Movement' are the same people who have been convicted before the world as torturers and who even now are training a new intake of torturers. We know from our experience of them that they would rather lie than speak the truth; all over the world they are recognised as untrustworthy. But the great little Icelandic people have peace — not

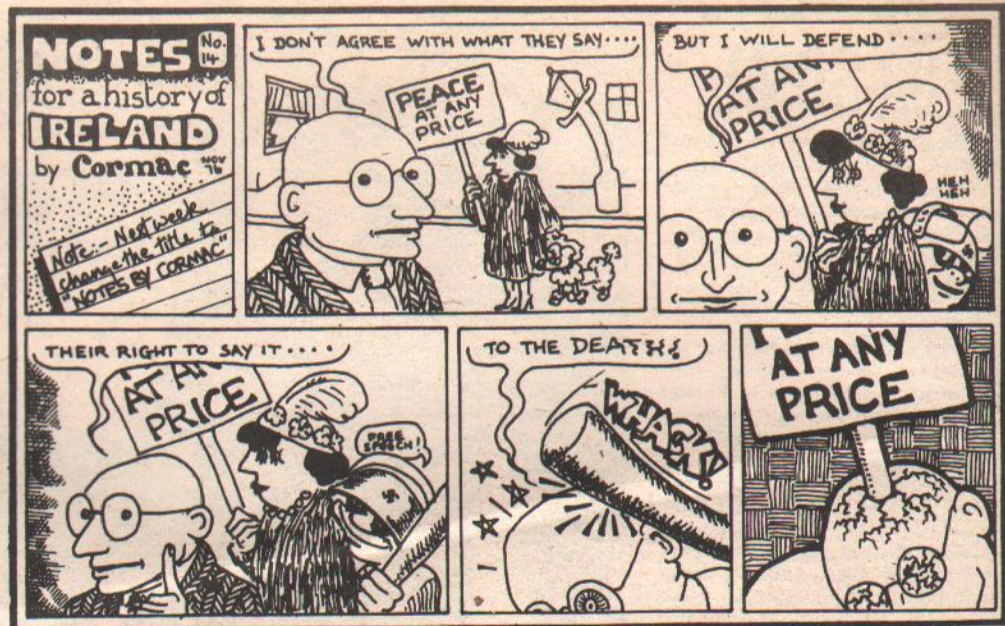
because they bent the knee, but because they said 'get out of our waters — we will no longer sit idly by while you rob us blind'.

I see in the Sunday Times that the 'Peace Movement' has a 'healthy' bank balance. Of course it has and for hundreds of years in Ireland the level of the bank balance has always been in direct proportion to the level of collaboration; but we should remember this — 'if you take the Queen's shilling you must follow the drum'.

Of course people are tired, but who suggested the struggle would be a short one — no-one I can recall. The struggle against imperialism will be protracted but the important thing is it will be successful. Imperialism is suffering heavy blows all over the world and Ireland must also play its part.

We will build a new Ireland and it won't be like the old one where a million farm workers died in order to keep alive the things for which the army of occupation stood and still stands. The harder we work for the new Ireland, the sooner we will all have peace.

With kind regards and comradely greetings,  
Noel  
VENCEREMOS



This photograph shows a 'Peace People' supporter at work on the 27 November demonstration in London, and highlights once more the importance of securing free speech on Ireland. The majority of the arrested pickets at the 'peace' rally have opted to plead not guilty to the charges made against them, which will be heard towards the end of January.

Militants should be prepared to use this occasion to underline the denial of free speech on the Irish question, as well as pointing to the hypocrisy of a 'peace' movement which relies on the type of strong arm tactics illustrated.

## WHAT'S ON

**ENGINEERING** public meeting in Birmingham: 'Which Way Forward for the Unions?' Speakers: Bob Wright (Asst. Gen. Sec. elect, AUEW), Larry Connolly (AUEW Convenor, Lucas BWS), Chair: Dick Etheridge. Australian Bar, noon, Sat 11 Dec. All welcome.  
**PUBLIC STATEMENT** on the split within the Revolutionary Communist Group: What are the political differences that underlie the expulsion of nearly half the membership of the RCG? This statement by the expelled members — now the Revolutionary Communist Tendency — explains the real issues at stake. Copies of the statement and more information available from: John Hill, 103 Helix Road, London SW2 (R/W). Send s.a.e. and state number required.  
**AGRICULTURAL REFORM** in Portugal: meeting with speakers Paul Fauvet (CP) and Dave Harding (PWCC) followed by discussion. Conway Hall, 7.30pm, Mon 13 Dec. Organised by Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class.

**GLASGOW** Socialist Forums: every Thursday night at 7.30pm in the Iona Community Centre. **BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and **Srani-Dal-Biplab** (Fourth International paper) contact: Bengali, c/o Internationalen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

**BIRMINGHAM** Red Weekly Supporters Group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in Australian Bar, Hurst St.

**CAMBRIDGE** Challenge Group — discussion group for regular Red Weekly readers. Meets Wednesdays at 8pm in the 'Man on the Moon', Norfolk St.

**JUST OUT:** 'Women & Revolution' 13 (Fall 1976). Articles on Gay Liberation, Soviet Art before Stalin, 'Socialist Feminism', women as scapegoats for unemployment, and more. 35p from IS-B, BCM Box 4272, London WC1.

**MANCHESTER AREA** Student Red Weekly meeting: Thurs 16 Dec, 6.30. Manchester University Union, on Women and the Family, and Spain.

**CRITIQUE** Conference: 'The Working Class in Eastern Europe'. 7pm, Friday, 10 Dec, and 9.30am, Saturday 11 Dec. Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. Speakers include: E. Baluka (Polish strike leader), Jan Kavan and Ivana

## TOWNSHIP SEALED OFF BY S.A. POLICE



The Rhodesian Army exhibits its 'successes' in the war against the freedom fighters and the peasants of Mozambique.

GUGULETU provides the same service to Cape Town as do the townships comprising Soweto to Johannesburg: the provision of African workers for the city's industries. But Guguletu is smaller than the Soweto area. It has only 55,000 people living there.

Among those 55,000 were at least 19 blacks who have testified to the Cillie Commission, a frame-up body established by premier John Vorster to 'inquire' into black unrest, or why youth have refused to collaborate with the racist regime.

There was another example of this opposition to collaboration last week. The houses of the 19 were wrecked by youths. The next day two

black youths were shot and killed by police.

In an operation designed to be used in case of future upsurges in the larger townships, 600 heavily armed police sealed off Guguletu completely. House-to-house searches preceded 180 arrests.

By the time the police had finished after two days of this operation, 300 youth were in jail for 'screening'.

These youth could face an indefinite stay in jail — like Steve Biko, one of the leaders of the Soweto 'black consciousness' movement, only just released after 101 days detention and 'processing'.

Black youth are not the only forces to be 'processed' in the

past few weeks in South Africa. Twenty-seven people have been banned from activity following their alleged involvement with unofficial multi-racial trade unions and literacy groups. These banings have provoked a world wide protest.

The 'stabilisation' moves of the regime have to be seen against the background of preparatory moves being made by the Vorster regime for an all-out war against SWAPO in Namibia.

South Africa's Commissioner General there has given a warning that the South African army 'may apply hot pursuit tactics to wipe out SWAPO bases in Angola'. The popular base being won by SWAPO, in

opposition to the face of the Turnhalle conference devoted to producing a transfer of power under the control of Pretoria, has encountered the iron fist of racism under its iron glove.

The South African regime's war threat brings them into line with Rhodesia's undeclared offensive against Mozambique.

These events point once more to the necessity of solidarity with the freedom fighters and a campaign against the internal repression in the urban areas. Support for the ICTU week of action starting 17 January is a starting point for the demand for blacking action by the British trade union leaders.

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## GOOD NEWS - FOR SOME

THREE BITS of good news arrived for British capital's relations with Africa last week.

\* An all-time record profit of £87,600,000 was announced for the Lonrho group run by Tiny Rowland.

\* Similar good news arrived for the Racal electronics group, a substantial slice of whose turnover is accounted for by flouting the embargo on arms sales to South Africa. Its half year's profits were £11,524,000 compared with £6,237,000 last time.

\* Finally a judge delivered the final message of cheer to the sanctions-busting firm of Hopkinson's in Huddersfield, in the form of an order banning the six shop stewards fired for handing over documents proving the illegality of the firm's transactions from entering its premises (which have been occupied since mid-November). But the workers plan to continue the sit-in until the men are reinstated.



A picket of South Africa House by members and supporters of the cast of the musical Ipi Tombi protests against the decision to sack actors who protested against their degrading conditions and low pay, and demands the release of a former member of the cast arrested on his return to South Africa. Members of the original cast have been sacked and face the possibility of a similar fate if they too are forced to return. All of them come from Soweto. Members of the replacement cast have also made strong complaints against the conditions which they are forced to endure.

## Engineers get their Voice back

Two weeks ago a new issue of Engineering Voice appeared, brought out by a re-organised national editorial board. Red Weekly talked to John Graham, an Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers shop steward in Birmingham and a member of the editorial board, about the new national paper. He began by explaining the role of the new paper and why it had been re-launched on a national basis:

As in all sections of the labour movement, the right-wing policies of the Labour Government and the unconditional support they are given by the Trades Union Congress has produced a profound crisis. Not only have jobs been lost but there is no clear, commonly agreed way forward, even among those who wish to fight the Social Contract.

I therefore see the first role of the paper as beginning to unite all those militants who want to fight the Social Contract. But this can only be done in the framework of a

full, democratic debate which recognises that at present we are unfortunately not yet agreed upon one particular line of march in the engineering industry as to the ultimate solutions.

What has been the role of the Broad Left in the last few years?

Engineering Voice was born out of the failures of the Broad Left. That is very important. The new paper has only been formed on the basis of a very deep, genuine discontent among more politically advanced union members with the failure of the Broad Left to confront the collaboration of Scanlon and Jones with the wage-cutting policies of the Social Contract.

This collaboration extends to every level of the struggle in engineering — over participation, over amalgamation, over redundancies, over wages, over equal pay. As a result many militants are shedding illusions in the Broad Left.

But this process has only just started. Many trade unionists in-

involved in supporting Engineering Voice believe that the Broad Left can be won to fighting policies. I do not. But who is correct will only be found out in the course of the struggles in engineering over the next few years.

So we have to work in and with the Broad Left despite their inadequacies, and struggle for a real fight-back against the employers and right-wing Labour Government's policies.

How do you see Engineering Voice developing?

The paper must present militants not only with a forum for debate, but also a clear way forward against the Social Contract. This is decisive. Unless the paper takes a militant stance on the key questions it will not win support.

Secondly Engineering Voice must build broad supporters' groups, not just to help build the paper, but to establish in each locality organisations of militants who can fight in practice for the policies of Engineering Voice in

the local engineering unions.

Through taking up campaigns on important questions at the grass roots level, Engineering Voice will develop both as a paper and as part of the struggle of militants against the Social Contract.

Do you think the present policies of the paper are adequate?

What is lacking is not so much a question of a programme but a common idea of how to fight for it. However, with the building of a national conference next year and the tests of real struggles in the future, this question will begin to be sorted out.

Whatever the present weaknesses of Engineering Voice, and there are many, it is at present the only alternative offering the prospect of some sort of fight-back. It should be supported by all militants in engineering.

BERTRAND RUSSELL  
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## Trade Union Action against Repression

The campaign to isolate the racists of southern Africa took some important steps forward last week.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has called for an international week of boycott on South African goods between 17-23 January. This has been endorsed by both the General Council of the TUC and the Transport and General Workers Union. If this decision is seriously implemented, no South African goods could move in and out of Britain for that week.

Red Weekly fully supports this initiative as a first step. However what is not sent one week can easily go the next. This week of action against South African goods has to be the start of a total boycott of all trade and collaboration with the racist Vorster regime. The boycott must also be taken up in those hundreds of factories producing goods for South Africa.

Secondly, the National Com-

mittee meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Movement on 29 November set Sunday 6 March as the date for the national demonstration in the spring.

A massive turnout from the student and labour movements is required to state clearly to the Labour Government that their continued dealings with Smith and Vorster will not be tolerated. Resolutions should be sent to national executives of trade unions and the Labour Party NEC demanding that they mobilise for this event.

Activities are also being organised elsewhere throughout the world to put an end to racism in South Africa. An important call was made at the recent conference of the National Student Coalition Against Racism in Boston, America, for action throughout the United States on 25-26 March to protest against American complicity with the white racists regimes in southern Africa.

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