

# Red Weekly

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## CAPITALIST SABOTAGE TRAPS LABOUR

Last week the Labour Government suffered two humiliating defeats in Parliament: one over its proposal to refund taxes collected from unions who had refused to register under the Industrial Relations Act, and the other over its plans to extend nationalisation.

These two votes lay bare the chains which bind and gag the Labour Party: chains which are held firmly by the opposition Parties—the Parliamentary spokesmen of the capitalist class. How can these chains be broken?

For the Labour leadership the answer is simple: they can always call an election. But even if Labour won the election with a secure majority (hardly certain given its mealy-mouthed reformism), could it then carry out Conference policies unhampered?

The power of the ruling class (despite all the nonsense that is put about) does not rest on Parliament. It lies in the immense economic power of the capitalist class, and in the capitalist state machine.

We have had some important reminders recently of just how much control the 'Government of the day' has when faced with opposition from these quarters.

\*During the recent reactionary strike in the North of Ireland, the Labour Government chose to rely on the Army to carry out its policy. Despite the fact that this was a thoroughly pro-imperialist policy, the Army carried out its orders to deal with Loyalist workers with far less vigour than it has shown against the catholic population. This undermining of Labour's plans by the Army was an important factor in assisting the victory of the strike.

In the recent campaign against nationalisation organised by big business, the main bosses organisation, the CBI, has made open threats about what would happen if Labour tried to pursue its policies, and the capitalist press has mounted a big red-scare campaign.

The big companies will organise outright economic sabotage to get their way. For example, in February the Prices Commission rejected a request from the Shell Company for an increase in the prices of their chemicals. Shell replied by threatening to cut off supplies of essential industrial chemicals to British companies, and export them instead.

The civil servants in the Prices Commission and other 'concerned' Government departments then opened talks with Shell to discuss the way in which a 'fresh application' could be 'resubmitted.' Last week it was announced that Shell had been granted a price rise of 16%.

These are the sort of things that a Labour Government with a solid majority would have to deal with. It would have only two choices: either give in to the demands of the capital-

ist class, or mobilise the working class and use its organised power to smash such ruling class sabotage.

But that choice faces Labour today. For the mobilisation of the working class does not require a majority in Parliament, and a mobilised working class is quite capable of sweeping aside the sabotage of the bosses—whether it's taking place in Parliament, in the Government departments, or in the factories.

Of course the Labour leaders will not do this. Wilson's recent announcement of the secret atom bomb test is

a sharp reminder of just how casually Labour Party Conference decisions are chucked out the window. The plans to spend £100 million on developing new death weapons, while nurses are kept begging and the health service is run into the ground, shows that the Labour leader's concern for the 'defence' of capitalist interests is much greater than their concern for the most basic needs of the working class.

But whatever the Labour bureaucrats do, the working class must take action against the ruling class's schemes. They must force the Labour Government to adopt measures that serve the workers' interests, and must use the organised power of the workers' movement to carry those measures into effect.

That is something which need not wait until it suits the convenience of Wilson & Co. to call an election. It can begin today.



The front ranks of the large IMG contingent on the demonstration last Saturday called to show that the struggle against racism and fascism for which Kevin Gately gave his life will be continued and stepped up

## 'WE WILL STRIKE FOR NURSES' -SAY SHEFFIELD ENGINEERS

Engineering workers in Sheffield, at their Shop Stewards' Quarterly Meeting, have voted to take strike action in support of the nurses' pay claim.

John Wilkinson, an IMG member and shop steward at Firth Brown Tools, moved a resolution for a strike in the Sheffield district on the same day that the Yorkshire miners take strike action. Only six votes were cast against Wilkinson's resolution.

As previously reported in *Red Weekly*, Yorkshire's 65,000 miners are now voting on a recommendation of their Area Council for a solidarity strike with the nurses.

The Emley Moor Branch of the National Union of Mineworkers, along with the Huddersfield AUEW No. 3 branch has called on the Huddersfield trades council to organise a one-day strike in support of the nurses.

Some 200 people attended a meeting last week organised by the Brent Trades Council, to build solidarity with the nurses' pay claim. A

resolution from the Trades Council called for the trade union movement to give all possible support to the nurses' fight, and urged a local campaign in support of the 8 July Day of Action. A local march of nurses and other trades unionists is being held on Saturday 29 June.

A number of convenors at the meeting pledged financial support and offered to arrange meetings in their factories where nurses could speak. These meetings can be used to get other workers to take strike action on 8 July.

A nurse from Central Middlesex Hospital said 'Let's not talk of strike action causing harm to patients. Because of the appalling conditions in the hospitals and the acute understaffing, patients are dying every day. Strikes by other workers in solidarity with the nurses helps to defend the health standards of the entire working class.'

Harrow Trades Council have set up a working group with the Nurses' Action Committee at Northwick Park Hospital. Members of the NAC

are addressing meetings of trade union branches in the area, including workers at the Rotapring factory. Barnet Trades Council has also set up a special sub-committee to organise support for the claim.

It is in the interests of capitalism to get the health service on the cheap. It exploits the health workers by paying disgracefully low wages, making them work long onerous hours and providing shoddy facilities. It is the working class who suffer from the effects of Britain's lamentable health service and who therefore have a vested interest in the victory of the health workers' struggle.

The campaign for strike action by other trade unionists in support of the nurses must make clear, that the nurses are fighting for the interests of the entire working class. The response by important sections of the trade union movement like the Manchester dockers, the Yorkshire miners and the Sheffield engineers shows that workers are prepared to take solidarity ac-

tion.

It is now imperative that these excellent examples be followed up throughout the country. In every area trades unionists should be mobilising for solidarity strikes. This is the way to guarantee a victory to the nurses, and the best possible way of showing to non-trade union members the need to join the unions in order to organise their struggles.

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# IMPERIAL STRIKERS FIGHT ON

It now seems certain that the Imperial Typewriters strike will continue well into July. The meetings last week with management, the T&G and conciliation staff from the Department of Employment got nowhere.

The strikers' position is that they will return to work only on the basis of guarantees against victimisation and of continuity of service. They then want negotiations over the payment of bonuses and the election of shop stewards.

The discussions with the Department of Employment on 19 June lasted from 9 am to 5 pm and were entirely devoted to an attempt to get the strikers to accept victimisation of members of the strike committee. One of the strike committee commented: 'It is ridiculous. No victimisation is not negotiable, so how do they expect us to negotiate about it?'

The strikers have been out since 1 May and the strategy has been to starve them back to work. Some of the strikers now have no money and are deeply in debt. One striker, with a wife and five children, has had his gas cut off. Social Security officials refused to give help on the basis that the strikers had been sacked. They were expected to pick up their holiday pay and their P45s and register as unemployed. The strikers refused to accept that they had been sacked and were therefore given no money.

## Computer staff vote to return

Last Monday a meeting of 80 university computer staff in the Scottish region voted to return to work after a seven week strike. Fourteen voted against.

The return to work followed a recommendation from the head office of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff.

ASTMS had informed its members that national negotiations were opening up with UCNS - University Committee for Non-teaching Staff. The UCNS have removed their pre-conditions for negotiations which were - no technician grades for computing staff and no back dating of settlement. The UCNS had insisted on the participation of the National Association of Local Government Officers in the talks.

Many who voted for the return to work saw simply a 'suspension of hostilities'. The meeting also voted unanimously for a resolution put by an IMG member. This called on the national executive of ASTMS to organise a national delegate conference of all university computer staff in Britain.

Last week's mass meeting also called on ASTMS to prepare a national strike of computer staff in universities. This was placed on the agenda of the proposed delegate conference by Monday's meeting.

## THE DANGER

The danger of the return to work is that the momentum of the strike is lost thus making it harder to re-start next term. Neither will the national negotiations be under the discipline of the strikers and the negotiators can prepare a compromise without the embarrassing position of having to persuade the strikers to accept.

Many staff felt that a strike could not be maintained through the slack summer period. To deal with that danger the preparation for a national strike should start now.

Scottish and British universities like Bath, which have been in struggle must ensure that the projected delegate conference sets a date for strike action in late September. This will hit the universities hardest. It will also make it possible to unite with other sections in the universities, particularly the students.



Imperial strikers and supporters on the march through Leicester a fortnight ago

On 18 June one of the Social Security offices gave in and started to give benefit. This weak link in the Social Security network was the office that had been previously occupied by the strikers.

The task now is to use this breakthrough to smash the Social Security blockade. The T&G did not inform Social Security that a trade dispute exists at Imperial, which would have forced them to make payments. Brian Mathers, the Regional Organiser, claims that he has now done this, but this was done only after payments had been made. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no written statement from the T&G exists.

The situation inside the factory continues to deteriorate. Production has virtually ceased. Office workers have been drafted onto the production lines. The agreement was that this would be for a two week period. Management have tried to extend this and a two hour stoppage resulted. Representatives of the strikers will be speaking to workers at the Imperial factory in Hull and it is hoped that effective support for the strike will be obtained.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the biggest stumbling block to a return to work based on no victimisation and negotiations over grievances is the hostility of the local T&G officials. Both the district secretary, George Bromley, and the convenor, Reg Weaver, are part of the old Deakinite apparatus. Weaver has been a long time member of

both the T&G National Committee and Finance sub-committee. He has been consistent in his antagonism to the strikers and in attempting to build up a backlash amongst the workers still inside. He told those still working that the Regional Enquiry had come to examine complaints of intimidation against the pickets. On this basis he was able to collect some two hundred written statements about the 'harassment' carried out by the picketers. The Enquiry, apparently, was greatly impressed by the fact that the workers not on strike had sent in no complaints about management but concentrated their fire on the question of violence on the picket lines!

Some strikers had alleged that they paid dues but had not received union cards. One striker claimed that he had been issued with a card that had been issued before and the previous name erased. Weaver has now collected in all the cards held by those in the factory and has reissued them with new cards.

If the strikers return to work with their leaders then the days of Weaver and Bromley are over. It is crucial, therefore, for these two to get the strike leaders such as Khethani and N.C. Patel victimised. The most disgusting aspect of this strike is the inability or unwillingness of Mathers and his CP friends, to deal with the Deakinite hacks.

The Enquiry found itself unable to report for four whole weeks

in a situation where some of the strikers are reduced to living off just bread. The strikers are determined to fight on. They will have to hold themselves together over the difficult first two weeks in July when the factory is on holiday.

Meetings should be set up to allow the strikers to present their case. Pressure must be mounted on the T&G to declare the strike official.

Money and resolutions to:  
Imperial Strike Committee,  
33 Hartington Street,  
Leicester.

## STOP PRESS

Strikers are up in arms about the tragic death of Harilal Ratansi, a 36 year old disabled worker. Harilal had been given permission to work by the strike committee on medical grounds.

Last Friday at 2.00 p.m. he went to the toilet and vomited blood. The charge hand saw him but did not send him to the medical room. Later whilst working he fainted and when he came to went to the sick room. The nurse gave him two pills and sent him back to work. At 4.00 p.m. he left work and went to his own doctor who called an ambulance.

Although the hospital operated, he died later that evening. His brother says: 'This was the fault of the company.'

The coroner has refused to hold an inquest and only after considerable pressure and at the family's insistence did he record that he worked at Imperial.

## Working Women's Charter campaign gets under way

Saturday's meeting in London of the Working Women's Charter laid the basis for future activity in the campaign.

Dodie Wepler, a spokesperson for the IMG, argued for placing the campaign firmly in the working class movement, but also recognising the severe limitations of the trade union structures.

## ALL ASPECTS

She explained that the importance of the Charter was that it tried to tackle all aspects of women's oppression. This included nursery facilities, contraception and abortion, legal status, etc. It does not separate these into trade union issues and 'political' or social questions.

The IMG therefore suggested that besides having trade union, workplace, and trades council affiliations, women's groups, political organisations and other bodies should have delegate status providing they showed their active support of the Charter's demands. The women's movement had valuable experience in fighting around the political content of many of these demands.

## OUTSIDE

The International Socialists - putting

in their first appearance of the campaign hammered away on the theme of rank-and-file movements. They argued that women's organisations were on the outside.

They suggested that women who wanted to get involved could do it through trades councils. Irene Brady, leading spokesperson for IS was unclear what was the purpose of having political organisations affiliated. In IS, she said, it was not the role of women to take decisions on such matters.

The IS policy boiled down to showing that we were serious, in order to get the support of male workers. This simplistic approach fails to answer why the majority of working women are not in trade unions. Nor does it explain why the majority of men in the unions remain indifferent to this. Furthermore it has no answer to how 'highly militant and very democratic activity' in the factory, situated in the present terms of reference of the unions is going to have any decisive effect, either on the practical situation or consciousness of women.

The conference agreed that delegate status would be open to union branches, trades councils and shop floor groups working around the Charter. Other organisations - including women's groups - could send delegates if they showed their ability to mobilise on the Charter. Individuals could attend without voting rights. The proposal to include

political organisations was defeated by one vote with six abstentions.

## EAST ANGLIA

The East Anglia Working Women's Charter Group was set up at a conference held in Colchester on Equal Pay and attended by over 50 delegates, from unions, jobs and organisations.

The conference discussed the problems of unionisation, low pay, discrimination, maternity leave, and prejudice against women - by both employers and unions.

A play by the Red Ladder Group pinpointed how the many difficulties and problems faced by women are rooted in the woman's situation in the family.

The conference ended with a discussion on the Working Women's Charter, and agreed to set up a regional Charter Group committee.

When the first meeting of the Charter Group took place it was decided to get as much support in the local trade union movement as possible. A regional committee was set up and delegates committed themselves to organise groups in their own localities. The main campaign will be on the issues of low and equal pay. The Group will also organise support for women workers fighting for higher pay and union recognition - struggles which are already taking place in the Colchester area.

## CALL FOR ACTION COMMITTEE TO LEAD NALGO STRUGGLE

With the Pay Board report on London pay due out at the end of June, NALGO's [National and Local Government Officers Assn.] London Weighting struggle still needs to be stepped up. The boost given to the campaign by the national conference decision to continue the strikes, in spite of the National Executive, must be echoed by meaningful organisation and action at branch and district level.

On Thursday, 27 June, the Metropolitan District Council is meeting to consider proposals from various branches for escalation. Among the proposals will be the call for the formation of an action committee to lead the struggle, composed of delegates from branches already taking action and those wanting to start selective strikes. The need for the development of this kind of organisation for the struggle can be seen from the waverings of the official 'leadership.' This was most clearly shown when they proposed calling off all action with very few guarantees from the Local Government employers and no guarantees at all from Electricity employers - thus leaving the electricity workers now on strike completely out in the cold.

Various newspaper reports are now speculating on the proposals coming from the Pay Board - £206-Inner London, £145-Outer London says the *Guardian*. The *Evening Standard* suggests £350-Inner London, £250-Outer London. The proposals would increase the existing differential between the two areas and, more importantly for the campaign, would split off the Inner London branches, who have proved themselves to be the most militant from those in Outer London. This makes essential a fight for the full claim over the whole London area. The unions national claim also must now be given prominence. With a worsening economic crisis in Britain and more cuts threatened in social spending, the employers may very well try to make London a 'special case' at the expense of the rest of the union nationally. This can only be challenged by action now in London for both claims.

The negotiating body for Local Government, the National Joint Council, will be meeting on 1 July to discuss the Pay Board report. A lobby, march and meeting are being planned for that day so that the rank and file can show both that they intend to take over the leadership of the campaign and that they intend to fight for the full claim, regardless of the attempts of the bureaucrats to sabotage the struggle.

Alan Bennett

Lobby of NJC - 12 noon, July 1st at 41 Belgrave Square, SW1.

# RED LION SQUARE: CARRYING THE FIGHT FORWARD

THE 'Battle of Red Lion Square', as the *Sun* and *Mirror* called it, or 'Bloody Saturday' as it is more accurately termed in the left press, has raised some burning issues throughout the labour movement.

Many calls have gone out for an enquiry. These have come from the Tribune group of MPs, the National Union of Students, the Divisional Council No. 15 of ASTMS and literally dozens of local trade union and student bodies.

But to be really effective any enquiry has to be independent of the police and the capitalist State of which they are a part. Judges and legal experts have already shown that their role is to protect the police. This is why it is important that both Nottingham Trades Council and Liverpool Trades Council have gone on record demanding labour movement or trade union enquiries.

## SPG

Also being rapidly revealed is the role of the Special Patrol Group. This army trained police group is the shock troops of the ruling class who have been used against Hull dockers, against Imperial Typewriters workers and against other picket lines. It has now been confirmed, even by papers such as the *Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*, that the Special Patrol Group was sent into action against the Red Lion Square demonstration. This organisation will undoubtedly claim deaths in the workers' movement in

the near future. The demand for its disbanding is a crucial one and has already been supported by Camden Trades Council and Waterloo branch of ASTMS among others.

But the main line along which work must be directed in the aftermath of Kevin Gately's death is in the cause for which he gave his life—the struggle against racism and fascism. The fascists of the National Front are not yet a mass threat. But they are building up their respectable front and roots from which later, as the crisis deepens, they will

try to develop a *mass* base. They must be smashed now, while they are still weak, and before they have the chance to become a mass force.

The fascists themselves understand this. No less a fascist than Joseph Goebbels said 'If the enemy had known how weak we were, it would probably have reduced us to jelly... It would have crushed the very beginning of our work', but once the fascists become a mass force then the working class must pay a very high price. As Hitler said 'Only one thing could have broken our movement — if

the adversary had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed, with the most extreme brutality, the nucleus of our new movement.'

## 'FASCIST' LABEL

There is no doubt that the National Front are worried by the way the left's campaign is pinning the true label 'fascist' on them. Tyndall, the Chairman of the NF, was forced to write a letter to the *Times* on 24 June in which he spoke of the campaign against the National Front which was leading people to say that all its 'marches and meetings should be banned in future'. He bleats on about how this is against 'free speech and democracy'.

This shows quite clearly that the NF, who carefully try to avoid being associated with the deadly label of fascist, are getting rattled by the left's campaign.

The campaign against the fascists can take another big step forward with the demand that the Labour Government bans the National Front/Orange Order marches planned in Birmingham and London and in the organising of a massive counter-demonstration. Support is developing rapidly for this. George Anthony announced at Saturday's demonstration that the North London AUEW had adopted this demand. Nottingham Trades Council, Camden Trades Council, Waterloo ASTMS, and East London NUT have also taken it up. It appears likely the NUS will take up

the slogan, and the *Morning Star* has been campaigning for this position.

Other resolutions calling for a stepped up anti-fascist campaign have come from Liverpool Trades Council, the Coventry branch of UCATT, and Coventry AUEW/TASS no. 1 branch. The UCATT National Conference has passed a resolution supporting the original Red Lion Square demonstration.

Finally Warwick University Students Union, Kevin Gately's University Union, has passed a resolution with only one vote against calling for a ban on the NF/Orange Order demonstration, and setting up an anti-fascist action committee with trade union forces and with £500 voted from the Students Union, and calling for a national conference of trade union and student organisations on racism and fascism in the autumn. This can provide an important focus for continuing activity.

If these beginnings are developed we can start to see a working class response which can crush the fascist and racist vermin in the egg. Then Kevin Gately will not have died in vain.

\* For a working class enquiry into the police acts leading to the killing of Kevin Gately

\* Disband the Special Patrol Group

\* The Labour Government must ban the National Front/Orange Order marches in London and Birmingham and the labour movement must mobilise to impose the ban.

"I remember him....hitting the tall man with his truncheon." — Red Lion Square eye-witness.

Red Weekly has received a copy of an eye witness account of events which took place at the anti-fascist demonstration in Red Lion Square on 15 June.

The author of this account briefly outlines the events leading up to his entry into Red Lion Square. Then, just around the corner into the square, he describes the following occurrence:

'I remember looking up at the policeman directly in front of me (about five yards at this time). He was pushing his horse into the front of the demonstration... Between myself and the front row of the demonstration at this time there were about three rows of people. Standing in the front row directly in front of the mounted policeman there was a very tall man. He was head and shoulders above the people around him and had, as far as I can remember, longish brown hair. My attention was drawn to him by the action of the policeman. He appeared to be very angry and I can vividly remember him leaning forward in his saddle and hitting the tall man with his truncheon. He hit him twice in rapid succession with so much force that I can remember wincing and wondering how it would affect him... The front line seemed to disappear at this point... We were pushed back and the pandemonium continued.'

The author of the statement goes on to point out that he is not aware of any of the details surrounding the death of Kevin Gately, and does not know whether or not they bear any relation to the events he describes.

However, our examination of other written accounts and the photographic record leads us to believe that the events described above took place shortly before Kevin Gately's collapse, and in the vicinity of the area where his body was found.

We understand that a full, signed copy of the above statement has been lodged with the National Council for Civil Liberties.



'If all the people here had been mobilised last Saturday, the police would never have dared to attack the demonstration in Red Lion Square, and Kevin Gately would never have been killed.' These were the words of IMG member Jackie Stevens (inset), speaking on behalf of Warwick University Students' Union at a rally last Saturday which followed the 8,000-strong demonstration through the streets of London (main photo).

The Red Lion Square anti-National Front demonstration and its aftermath has forced sections of the left to define more clearly their positions on the struggle against the racists and fascists. Perhaps the most important change of position is that which now appears possible in the largest revolutionary group—the International Socialists.

On paper IS has always had a more or less correct position on fascists—no free speech for fascists and racists, in the struggle against fascism violence is inevitable, etc. However, in practice IS has not taken this question very seriously.

On the Red Lion Square demonstration, for example, the IS, despite the fact that it is the largest organisation of the revolutionary left, had a contingent which was *very much smaller* than the IMG and the CP. There has already been a letter to *Socialist Worker* from IS members commenting about this.

Because the IS has not taken the question of the struggle against the fascists seriously this also meant that their political line after the Red

## IS and the struggle against fascism

Lion Square demonstration, and after Kevin Gately's death, was extremely confused. Their leadership tried to divert the developing campaign from an anti-racist and anti-fascist axis by raising not anti-fascist slogans but the slogan for the disbandment of the Special Patrol Group (SPG). However, many rank and file IS members felt the real dynamic of the situation and voted for IMG resolutions. These also called for a working class enquiry into the police actions and for the disbandment of the SPG, but centred on the struggle against the racists and fascists and called for a Labour Government ban on, and a counter-demonstration to, the proposed Orange Order/National Front demonstration.

In Canterbury the IS comrades

voted for such a position and in Birmingham University the IS branch put up mobilising posters with the three slogans originally advanced by the IMG. In understanding the real axis of anti-racism and anti-fascism, the political instincts and reflexes of the IS membership were undoubtedly better than the political line of their leadership.

Now however there are signs of a change in line by the IS leadership. Why this has occurred is not clear—hopefully because they now realise their previous line in practice was incorrect or perhaps because they have simply seen the important impact revolutionaries can make on the working class movement by anti-fascist actions. In any case the IMG has received a letter from the IS leadership proposing a discussion on

how to organise a joint counter-demonstration to the National Front/Orange Order march—the IMG had already put out a call for a counter-demonstration.

The IS is still politically confused on some questions—for example, why the demand for the Labour Government to ban the National Front march is a correct one. But any strengthening of IS's anti-fascist activity would be a positive development for the whole of the left in Britain. Discussion on the line for fighting fascism, its importance, and the line of the IS over the past weeks is of course legitimate and necessary. A revolutionary organisation should be *at its best and clearest*, not at its most confused, when faced with events of national importance which fix, even if only temporarily, the attention of hundreds of thousands of people. But such discussion must not be allowed to get in the way of future united action against the fascists.

Such action, as the events of the last two weeks have shown, can find a real echo within the working class movement. The IMG will be fighting both nationally and locally for a united front of all socialist and working

class forces against future fascist activities. As the IS is the largest organisation of the revolutionary left the fight to ensure its full participation in anti-fascist activities is a vital one.

## NF: new threat

The National Front have now made an announcement that they intend to hold two more national demonstrations in London this year, as well as demonstrations in other major cities.

This is an obvious provocation. The NF are confidently expecting the police and the Labour Government to protect their provocative act as they say they are expecting counter-demonstrations.

The working class movement must mobilise to the full against this challenge. The fascists must not be allowed to demonstrate. We must demand that the Labour Government bans these marches.

# STRUGGLES OVER THE THRESHOLD

AS THE PAY FIGHT HOTS UP, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE employers are adopting a tougher and tougher attitude. The refusal of British Leyland to pay threshold rises, and the resistance of Plessey and other employers shows what is in store.

Meanwhile the Confederation of British Industry continues to utter threats. It has said that if its profits are not-protected it will take extreme action.

In this situation it is vital that militants understand what the TUC is up to with the new proposals it has recently made and how its policies can be combatted and reversed.

## SELL-OUT

Even before the election the TUC sold out the fight against Phase 3. It has taken every opportunity since to put this sell-out into practice.

The circular sent out by Len Murray on this is quite unambiguous: 'The general pattern of settlements which has been established in recent months should continue for the present period' (ie within Phase 3). Murray spelt this out still more clearly at the APEX conference when he said: 'There will be no more "special cases".'

This complete retreat on the principle of incomes policy is reaffirmed in the latest TUC proposals drawn up two weeks ago. But in these latest proposals the TUC has even gone beyond acceptance of Phase 3, agreeing to the Confederation of British Industry's demand that no wage settlements in any industry should be made within twelve months of the last one. This means no re-negotiation of Phase 3 settlements, and no putting in of new claims as soon as Phase 3 expires. This is capitulation to the Tory incomes policy with a vengeance.

What this amounts to, when coupled with the TUC's other proposals, is that the TUC is allowing the Labour Government to impose a cut in the living standard of the working class.

The TUC says on paper that wages should be allowed to rise to keep up with price increases. In fact, the working class is entitled to expect a rising, not just a stationary, standard of living. But apart from this, the TUC proposals are just whitewash for what they have really accepted.

This year prices will go up anywhere between 15 and 25%. With

taxation cutting into wage increases, pay has to go up much faster than that to keep up with inflation. Even at the present rate of price increases (and the pace is going to get faster) the *Guardian* newspaper has calculated the following: 'wages are lagging well behind the cost of living. The earnings index for April was 12.2 per cent above the level 12 months before, while the retail price index has now risen more than 15 per cent. It is generally acknowledged that earnings must increase 20 per cent faster than prices to keep level because of the effects of increasing tax and National Insurance contributions, so earnings would now need to reach 18% above a year ago to keep up.' In other words the working class's standard of living is already falling.

With inflation still speeding up it means that to keep up with prices wages have to go up this year by between 25 and 30 per cent. The TUC is not proposing anything like those types of pay increases.

As for threshold agreements, while it is important to win them, they do not, in their present form, give complete protection. First, they do not take into account taxation - which is why the 'indexation' proposals of some bourgeois 'experts' (that is increases for each 1% increase in prices) are such a fiddle. Second, they are based on an anti-working class cost of living index. Third, they only start after prices have already risen by a certain percentage, which means that not all wages are covered. Fourth, the 40p increases are too small to make up for inflation.

## LOW-PAID

The latest TUC proposals completely sell the low-paid and women workers down the river. The TUC has made some noises about a £25 minimum wage, but even this they do not seem to be proposing should be

made compulsory by law - which makes the whole thing useless. In any case £25 is far too low.

As for equal pay, the TUC talks of this, but it doesn't propose that it be made compulsory now, and it doesn't even name a date when it should be in the future. Neither does it propose any way of combatting the thousands of re-gradings, re-classifications of jobs, and other fiddles which employers are using to try to avoid giving equal pay and decent wages to women workers.

But while the TUC is retreating, there are some good demands coming out of the union conferences and the wages struggle is hotting up. The London NALGO and teachers' struggles have shown real militancy. The decision of the NALGO conference to overturn the executive decision on calling off the London struggle was a real black eye for the bureaucracy.

The threshold struggle has really hotted up with the occupation of the Plessey factory in Beeston in the lead. *Not one single claim* adopted at a union conference would fall within the TUC's proposed guidelines.

But despite the beginnings of a fight-back, there are still big dangers. It is obvious that, quite apart from the resistance of the employers, the TUC, the Labour Government and most union leaderships are going to sabotage any real fight to protect working class wages. This means militants have to wage a real fight to ensure that a real struggle is put up for the claims, that the most effective methods of struggle are used in fighting for them, and that efforts are made to ensure that the widest possible unity is achieved in struggle.

Fortunately the elements of a policy that can overcome these dangers are coming out in the struggle. It is possible to see in practice the beginnings of a fighting programme which can unite the working class against the employers, the State, and the bureaucracy.

By ALAN JONES

## Program for Action

The first crucial thing is that the whole business of incomes policy must be rejected for the fraud and pro-capitalist measure which it is. The only thing an incomes policy has ever done for the working class is hold down its standard of living. The ASTMS and NALGO conferences have shown the way here by rejecting incomes policy.

The fight must go on to prevent any retreat on the wage claims decided on by the union conferences. Preparations must be made long before the claims are to be met to win over the membership to a determined fight. Action committees in the unions are vital here.

Although things did not go far enough, developments in the AUEW during the last engineers' claim showed the way: there were two national meetings of convenors of shop stewards committees, and at least some factories put out regular bulletins on the progress of the claim. These types of developments can be taken up in other unions.

It is clear that every struggle is going to be met with big resistance. Police and employers' tactics are getting more and more vicious, as Shrewsbury, Imperial Typewriters and hundreds of other examples show. This means that the most militant, and most democratic, forms of struggles such as occupations, flying pickets, strike committees and so on, are going to have to be used to win. The Beeston struggle over thresholds is a real example here, as it shows how occupation tactics should be extended to wages questions as well as just redundancy.

## SLIDING SCALE

It is vital that a method of protecting wages against price increases is fought for. The present threshold provisions run out in November, but prices will continue to soar long after them. Workers must demand not simply that thresholds are kept, but that they are extended and improved. A real sliding scale of wages must be fought for: the thresholds must be made compulsory under law, they must be based on a 'nil-norm', they must be totally automatic (no monthly negotiations or 'periodic reviews'), there must be no ceiling, threshold rises must be incorporated into basic pay and used for the calculation of overtime and bonuses, a working class cost of living index must be drawn up, and the sum paid must be increased to really compensate for the increase in the cost of living, taxes and so on. Such a sliding scale must apply not only to wages, but to unemployment pay, pensions, student grants, and all state 'benefits'.

On low pay several unions - agricultural workers and teachers for example - have submitted claims demanding a £40 minimum basic wage. This can provide the basis for a campaign for a national minimum wage - one of £40 a week, and not the TUC's miserable £25.

On equal pay the correct position was taken by the AUEW National Committee when it resolved that the Equal Pay Act could not be relied on to gain equal pay and other action must be taken. This can provide the basis for a campaign of industrial action in engineering and other industries for equal pay. The victory won at the North London Letherick's factory shows what can be won on this front.

Very important here is the campaign which is getting up steam around the Working Women's Charter proposed by the London Trades Council, Hackney and other Trades Councils are holding conferences around this. There are also moves afoot to call a national conference of trade union organisations around the Charter in the autumn. A day of national industrial action for equal pay, to tie together existing developments and start a real campaign, is what militants have to fight for here. Trade union bodies must prepare machinery to police the enforcement of equal pay laws.

If we tie together all these points, a clear programme for struggle emerges:

- \* No acceptance of any form of incomes policy, from any Government, under capitalism

- \* All union wage claims to be met in full

- \* A sliding scale of wages - a nil norm threshold, with full coverage of wages for every increase in prices. This to be extended to all pensions, unemployment pay, student grants, and state benefits.

- \* Formation of preparation and action committees to campaign for the wage claims in every union

- \* All strikes to be run locally and nationally by democratically elected strike committees, strikes to be occupation strikes wherever possible, with the organisation of strong picketing forces and flying pickets where needed

- \* National minimum wage of £40 a week

- \* Equal pay for women now.

## Towards a General Strike!

The economic crisis is getting worse and worse, and the tactics of the employers tougher and tougher. It is becoming clear that the old ways of winning working class demands, factory by factory or even industry by industry, are no longer enough. Some employers, for example the Engineering Employers' Federation, have even held international conferences on how to co-ordinate the fight against the trade unions. All this is in addition to the centralised attacks by incomes policy and other methods.

The fact that workers are more and more fighting nationwide problems, for example inflation, also shows the need more and more clearly for united actions going beyond the bounds of individual factories and unions. Indeed, judging by the recent threatening line of the CBI, if united action is not decided upon some very serious defeats indeed could face the working class.

But, despite the pressing needs of the situation, the union bureaucracy continues to play its usual tricks of allowing each section of the working class to go into struggle individually. Last winter, for example, they separated the struggles of the miners, engineers and the train drivers - all of whom were moving towards struggle at the same time. The result was that although the miners won a famous victory, the train drivers did not achieve all their demands and the engineers' struggle ended in a humiliating sell-out. A united struggle could have won everything. Even now no united



One of the hardest fought battles for a threshold agreement has been at the Plessey factory at Beeston, Nottingham - photo shows pickets during strike



The bureaucracy has sold out on all fronts— notably on the Shrewsbury pickets. Here militants lobby the UCATT conference last week, at which the Executive was censured for its line on the issue.

struggles are being prepared on thresholds, national minimum wage, equal pay etc.

### BUREAUCRACY

At the present time the bureaucracy is doing nothing to develop a united fight around the thresholds, a national minimum wage, or equal pay.

In this situation militants have to be continually looking for demands (for example, equal money increases for all, a united struggle for a national minimum wage, a sliding scale of wages) and forms of struggle (such as action committees and strike committees), which can unify workers in struggle.

The employers' resistance to thresholds is a perfect example. Various employers in the same town, whole companies, and even industries have refused to grant thresholds. For example, in Coventry the big car firms, British Leyland and Chrysler, have refused anything, while GEC are trying to set a £1.60 maximum. Both the British Leyland and Plessey combines are refusing thresholds, while the Engineering Employers' Federation is telling its members only to concede monthly reviews. It should be obvious in this situation,

to all except the union bureaucrats, that united struggles should be launched against these various groups of capitalists. An action committee in Coventry co-ordinating and centralising all the struggles, a united combine-wide fight in British Leyland, or a national struggle against the EEF would soon bring the 'reluctant employers' to heel.

### NOVEMBER

An even more serious development will occur in November. Then all the threshold agreements run out nationally. You can bet your life that the employers are going to really fight against giving any important protection against inflation at all when that happens. But what reply are the unions going to give? The union leaders, left to themselves, will almost certainly decide to leave individual groups of workers to try and get what they can. But that will allow the weak and low-paid to go to the wall. Since any employer who makes concessions is likely to open the dam, we can expect all the employers to centralise their action. Even the strongest groups of workers face a very hard fight.

*The alternative to this is clear. Millions and millions of workers will see even the minimal protection against inflation they have won threatened. Precisely because they face the same problem, the struggle of all these workers could be centralised into a massive fight, a general strike if necessary. This could not merely defend the thresholds, but could win a real sliding scale of wages.*

These types of class-wide problems (thresholds, unemployment, low pay, equal pay) are going to keep coming up in the coming months and years. The campaign has to start now for a united struggle on all these questions. Militants must base themselves on the perspective of a general strike to secure the most important basic working class demands.

*The start of this campaign must be the fight for united industrial action to defend the thresholds, and extend them to a real sliding scale of wages, in November.*

ALAN JONES

# HEALTH SERVICE IN CRISIS



Photo: PAVEMENT

The decline and steady disintegration of the National Health Service has provoked protests from even such archaic and deeply conservative bodies as the British Medical Association. Dr Stevenson, secretary of the BMA claims that the service is only 'ticking over' by exploiting staff from 'porters to consultants'.

The effects of this crisis are evident in every section of the service, from badly-paid nurses to ward closures, and new buildings not used to their capacity because of staff shortages and chronic under-financing.

### BASIC

There is a basic tendency for the cost of the Health Service to rise. First, there is the labour-intensive nature of the NHS. If wages in the Service follow the national trend, costs must therefore constantly shoot up, even to maintain the miserable facilities which now exist. It is difficult in this labour-intensive service to offset higher labour costs by boosting productivity.

Moreover, the proportion of the elderly in the total population has increased from 10 per cent in 1931 to 16 per cent in 1971. As the elderly account for over 33 per cent of NHS expenditure this is another inbuilt factor in increasing costs.

The third factor in increasing costs is the rising expectation of the working class, who expect an improvement in their living standards with improvements in medical care as part of this. The scandalous revelations that came out of Ely, Whittingham and South Ockenden mental hospitals have given ammunition to those fighting for improved conditions.

### STATE

The State has waged a consistent battle to restrain these expenditures. Other areas of social expenditure are expanding fast, such as education, social security and grants to British industries, and are in competition with the NHS.

Taxation, a traditional method used by all post-war governments to finance social expenditure, has, from the standpoint of the employers, an 'undesirable' impact on wage claims. Under the 1964-70 Labour Government, net, real wages, after taking into account taxes and price increases, rose by less than half a per cent each year. This was the underlying cause of the wages' explosion in 1970.

Capital, the State and the working class, each try to obtain a higher share of the slowly growing real resources by seeking to push up respectively, prices, taxes and money wages. This is the cause of

the crisis in social expenditure and determines its links with incomes policies.

As these inbuilt tendencies have led to swelling costs, capitalism has attempted to place the burden for these on the net real wages of the working class. In the last three years a higher proportion of revenue has been raised by borrowing, but all this has done is to fuel the rise in prices.

### FALLING

Money spent on the NHS rose from £493 million in 1951 to £2277 million in 1971. As a percentage of the gross national product the rise was much slower.

In the 1950s the share spent on the health services actually fell. By diverting large amounts of taxes, it rose by one percentage point during the 1960s. But this does not mean that in real terms expenditure increased.

As a result of mushrooming prices, health expenditure at constant prices fell as a share of the gross national product and stuck at the paltry level of 3.7 per cent during the 60's. As this figure includes more capital expenditure on new hospitals, which was almost nil until the early 60's, current spending continues to fall as a share of the gross national product. The results stand out like a sore thumb in the form of poor equipment, primitive and ramshackle buildings, long waiting lists and the abysmally low pay of many health workers. The cuts introduced by the Tory Government in May and December 1973 will worsen this crisis still further.

The last White Paper published in December 1973 proposed a growth of 4.6 per cent per annum in expenditure on health up to 1977/78. Taking into account the relative price effect noted above, this immediately drops to 3.5 per cent in real terms. Increasing demands arising solely from changes in the age structure of the population chops it by about 3/4 per cent. The higher running costs of new hospitals takes another 2.5 per cent. Thus one quarter of a per cent per year will be left for all other improvements such as new buildings, wage rises etc. And this was before the last cuts.

### SIMILAR

Both Labour and Tory Governments have produced similar 'solutions' to the crisis of health expenditure. Each has financed the NHS out of taxation— income tax, social security contributions, indirect taxes and local rates. These are paid out of the workers' wages, either directly or indirectly. Payments by patients for various items and services come to five per cent of total costs. The capitalists

have reaped the benefit of a healthy, more productive working class paid for by the taxation imposed on their workforce, and the exploitation of health workers.

Furthermore, both Governments have tried to resolve the crisis of the NHS by maintaining very low wages, increasing productivity and speed-up, putting greater emphasis on 'community care', improving managerial efficiency, and raising charges and developing private services.

### VAST

The labour force employed in the health service is vast. In 1972 there were almost one million workers — the huge majority of whom are paid abominably low wages. The major groups such as hospital nurses, ancillary staff and technical and clerical staff have in recent years suffered a decline in their real incomes.

The domination of pay negotiations by the nine Whitley Councils and the lack of workshop organisation and almost non-existent representation, have been big factors in keeping down wages. The presence of 80,000 trainee students or pupil nurses who suffer from onerous restrictions, the cultivated 'vocation' image (given a new lease of life by a big influx of spinsters during the inter-war years), and the high proportion of women workers (70 per cent of hospital ancillary staff) lacking trade union backgrounds, have been other factors working against wages militancy.

This has made hospital workers one of the most exploited groups, and allowed various governments to operate the NHS on a shoe-string budget. The revolt of hospital workers against these conditions will pose 'intolerable' demands on the NHS. To raise wages even to the minimal level will cost £500 million.

Although the number of NHS beds has declined the number of in-patients treated has doubled since 1940. Despite the doubling of medical and nursing staff, the workload goes up more than proportionately to the throughput of patients. The method of quicker discharges after operations means patients are more ill when they are in hospital and therefore require more care. For technical and ancillary staff the faster turn-around of patients has boosted their workload. At the same time the proportion of unqualified staff has risen — in 1949 there were 27,000 nursing auxiliaries, by 1970 there were 70,000.

This article is the first in a two-part series on the Health Service written by TOM WILLIAMS

## CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND AND EXTEND THRESHOLDS

In November even the paltry protection of wages against inflation provided by the present threshold agreements will expire. The campaign to gain real protection against inflation has to start now. Three vital steps must be taken immediately to get this campaign underway:

1. All trade union branches and trade union bodies should immediately adopt resolutions expressing their alarm that the only form of protection the working class at present has against inflation — the threshold agreements — run out in November, while prices will continue to soar. They should demand that their union, in alliance with other unions and the TUC, wages a fight to defend and extend the thresholds. They should call for a nil-norm threshold which will continue permanently after November.

2. Local conferences of the working class movement should be called to work out how to carry on this campaign, both on the local and national level (this could lead towards co-ordinated local strikes to defend thresholds).

3. All bodies of the rank-and-file movement — the engineering convenors' conference, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, combine committees, rank-and-file groups, etc — should be recalled in order to discuss how to carry on the campaign to defend and extend the thresholds.

SEVERAL recent incidents have dramatised the growing importance of the police 'Special Patrol Groups' (SPG's) in this country.

In February last year two members of an SPG unit shot and killed two young Pakistanis in the Indian embassy. These young men were staging a demonstration against the treatment of Pakistani prisoners-of-war by the Indian army. They were 'armed' with toy pistols.

Since then the London SPG's and their counterparts in other parts of the country have been busy. They have been in action against students, as at Essex University, and workers, as in the present dispute at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester.

#### KEVIN GATELY

Their presence at the 15 June anti-fascist demonstration was to be expected. There they helped set a record for police violence which resulted in the death of student Kevin Gately.

The SPG is the beginning, in this country, of what most capitalist countries established long ago: a specialised force trained and equipped

# SPG - CRS - 'Tac' squads SPEARHEADS OF REPRESSION

to deal with mass political activity through police violence. Britain has only been able to put off the creation of such a force because for a long time the ruling class has been prepared to meet social discontent with concessions. The economic crisis in which Britain is now embroiled will end all that.

In France, the years after the war saw the rise of a mass movement of workers fighting for better living and working conditions and a better society. The French ruling class, after gaining a breathing space by taking

the Communist Party into the Government and throwing out a few sops, turned to meet this movement head on.

#### CARL OWEN

This was a job that required a special team: and so, in 1947, the CRS ('Republican Security Company') was born. This was a police force that was recruited, trained and equipped to handle all those who tried to protest about the way in which the ruling class was running things.

Their first assignment was massive strike breaking. In the first year of their existence they managed to crack thousands of heads. Several workers died at the hands of these guardians of 'law and order'.

In the early 1960's France was thrown into a big political crisis over its colonial domination of Algeria. The right-wing Algerian OAS ('Secret Army Organisation') - which had many friends in the French police - launched a campaign of assassination and violence to back up right-wing political groups who wanted to see France stay in Algeria.

But thousands of French people, workers, students, and intellectuals mobilised to oppose the OAS and French colonialism. In February 1962, after a particularly violent OAS attack in which 10 bombs went off in Paris in one day (including one at the home of a Government minister), a mass demonstration was called by the trade unions, student, and left-wing organisations. The Government tried to ban the demonstration, but ten thousand people turned out to denounce the OAS anyway.

#### CLUBS & TEAR GAS

The CRS was also there. They attacked the demonstrators with clubs and tear gas, provoking street fights that lasted over three hours.

In one particularly infamous incident, police charged a group of unarmed and peaceful demonstrators. The crowd fled, and tried to take refuge in an underground station, only to find the entrance gates locked. The CRS then forced other demonstrators down the stairs on top of those who were already trapped. They picked up two men and threw them over the railings on to the crowd below. Then they picked up marble-topped tables from the cafes and hurled them down on the trapped crowd. When the police had finished their work eight demonstrators were dead.

The CRS played a similar part in the great political upheaval that swept France in May and June of 1968, when millions of workers and students fought against the plans of the ruling class and for a better society. CRS squads attacked picket lines, cleared out occupied buildings, and broke up demonstrations. Thousands of people - activists and bystanders alike - were gassed and clubbed. Several people were killed, before ruling class 'order' was restored.

#### UNITED STATES

In the United States, the discontent of blacks and young people produced a growing movement of political protest from the mid-60's on. The oppression of the black people, the Vietnam War, and the use of the universities to promote the needs of the ruling class rather than serve the majority of the people, were among the most important grievances. Mass demonstrations and the occupation of university buildings were among the most important forms of struggle.

Most major American cities set up and expanded special riot or 'tactical' squads to deal with this situation. Increasingly political protest was met with police violence.

This reached its height at the Democratic Party Convention, which was held in Chicago in 1968. Tens of thousands of protesters entered the city to protest against what the American Government was doing to the Vietnamese people. They were met with the full, brutal force of the Chicago police.

It was not only demonstrators who fell under the police clubs: bystanders, journalists, TV cameramen, doctors and ambulance men - anyone who got in the way - were brutally beaten.

The violence of the police was so uncontrolled that even an official Government enquiry described it in its report as a 'police riot'.

Similar scenes took place in every major city in the United States as the new police squads went into action. In one operation at San Francisco State University that city's tactical squad arrested 450 striking teachers and students in a single swoop.

It was also in San Francisco that American workers began to realise that the police club was not reserved for students. In 1969 striking workers at the Standard Oil Company had their picket lines smashed by police, who beat and arrested workers, their wives and children.

Last Saturday was just a taste of what the SPG has in store for us if it is allowed to stay in business. As the bankruptcy of British capitalism becomes more and more obvious to an ever larger number of people, the threat to the privileged position of the ruling class will grow. The ruling class will reply with brutality and repression - and the SPG is designed to become the spearhead of that reply.

That is why it is so urgent for the labour movement to mount an immediate campaign for the disbandment of the SPG's, and similar units which are set up to mete out repression to the mass movement.

Next week we will take a closer look at the aims and organisation of the SPG and their counterparts in other countries, and discuss in more detail what the ruling class is up to.

## WHAT'S ON

**BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and *Lara* (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mulwiden, Box 3274, 10385 Stockholm, Sweden.

**LIVERPOOL RED BOOKS:** Revolutionary literature - Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Eastern Europe, Third World, Ireland, Women's Liberation. 81a Renshaw Street, Liverpool. Tues-Fri: 12.30 - 3. Sat: 11 - 3.

**NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES:** Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

**IMG GAY GROUP:** Contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds for further information.

**LONDON RED FORUMS:** New series dealing with basic questions of Marxist theory. Every Tuesday at 8 pm in 'General Picton', Caledonian Road 15 mins Kings X tube.

**'IRELAND: Why Labour Must Withdraw Troops Now'** - public meeting, Monday 1 July, 7.30 pm in Unity House (NUR headquarters), Euston Road. Speakers include Stan Thorn MP, Joan Maynard (Labour Party NEC), Bob Purdie, Paul Foot. Organised by Troops Out Movement.

**FIGHT AGAINST RACIALISM:** Communist Mazdoor Dal Meeting, Saturday 6 July at 6.15 pm at Slough Community Centre, Farnham Road, Slough.

**COMMUNIST MAZDOOR DAL** public meeting on 'The Political Crisis in the Indian Sub-Continent', Monday 8 July at 7 pm in Conway Hall, Holborn.

**SOUTHALL RED FORUMS:** Every Friday evening at 8 pm in 'Featherstone Arms', Featherstone Road, Southall (near Dominion Cinema). Friday 28 June: discussion on the workers' states. Friday 5 July: discussion on the position of women in the family and at work.

**WORKERS FIGHT FORUM:** John Cunningham on 'Communism and Social Democracy', Sunday 7 July, 7.30 pm, 'Golden Lion', Kings Cross Rd/Britannia Street. Second in series of forums on basic questions of Marxist politics. Details: 98 Gifford Street, N1 0DF.



## FIGHTING FASCISM IN THE THIRTIES WORKERS 1 BLACKSHIRTS 0

George Cummings is a veteran of the fight against Mosley's blackshirts in Leeds. George, now a member of the district committee of AUEW spoke to our reporter about pre-war anti-fascist struggles.

When did you first meet the blackshirts?

In the early thirties. They came down to the Labour Exchange distributing leaflets which blamed the Jews and the reds for causing unemployment.

What else did the fascists do?

They daubed fascist slogans all over the city - this made them appear more numerous than they really were. Leeds had a very large Jewish population. There was no black community like there is now, so they concentrated on anti-Jewish propaganda. Also they would engage in individual terrorism. This was because they were not big enough to take on the meetings of the left and smash them up, although this was obviously their aim. When the meeting ended they would follow you home. Then they would either beat you up or lob bricks through your window with a warning attached. Sometimes I personally could not get out of the house for days until some comrades could come and escort me through their gangs at the end of the street.

This tactic drove a number of people out of the Labour Party, particularly the young people.

What did the left do?

The Labour Party's policy was to treat the British Union of Fascists with ridicule, or ignore them completely. Their favourite remark was 'They will die a natural death.' The Labour League of Youth were much more on the ball. When the fascists started holding meetings in the centre of the city the Communist Party also moved into action.

There was a united front of the CP, the Unemployed Workers' Movement and the Labour League of Youth which never let a fascist meeting go unchallenged. The Trades Council in Leeds was split down the middle over this.

The high point came in the mid-thirties when the fascists planned a north of England rally with Mosley speaking. This was due to take place on Holbeck Moor, Leeds. About 2000 turned up. The left organised a counter-demonstration and thousands of us marched down Farnham Street and smashed up their rally. The Jewish Defence Corps was marvellous. They hurled slates at the fascists and smashed up their PA system with rocks. I can remember very few of us got arrested. The BUF never had more than 200 members in Leeds and this more or less put paid to them. We did the same to them in Manchester and Newcastle. We chased them all over the place.

One of the many incidents in the struggle against fascism in the 1930's. Here the police, as usual, are attempting to clear a way through for a car carrying fascist officers through the East End. Red Lion Square was nothing new!

What was the social composition of the fascists?

They never got anywhere with the organised working class... we never let them! They were mostly small business men and students. They differ from the National Democratic Freedom Movement (a breakaway from the National Front which they say is too 'liberal'). The NDFM is made up mostly of young workers who are often envious of the more 'successful' working class kids. In this respect the NDFM could become more of a threat than the BUF was in Leeds.

What lessons does the labour movement have to learn from the struggles of the thirties?

With the NF and NDFM it is not just a matter of numbers it is a matter of policy. With the crisis of world capitalism deepening the bourgeoisie will increasingly start to lean on these types of organisations. Look at Italy for example. If it is not nipped in the bud the labour movement will live to regret it - and may not even manage that. The Labour government already has enough legislation to stop them. But I doubt very much if it will do so unless we in the labour movement mobilise our forces to stop them first.

The Leeds ad-hoc anti-Fascist Committee is producing a pamphlet tracing the history of fascism in Leeds during the thirties and the fight against it. Readers with material relevant to this period, please send to 156 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2. Orders for pamphlet also to that address.

# Spanish CP steps out on Chilean road

Twelve thousand supporters of the Spanish Communist Party flocked to Geneva from all over Europe last Sunday to hear Party secretary Santiago Carrillo and 78-year-old Dolores Ibaruri ('La Pasionaria') of Civil War fame.

The rally took place at a time of growing upheavals in Spain. Few expect the invalid General Franco to survive for very much longer; yet the ruling class is deeply divided on the formula to guarantee the succession. At the same time the regime is having to cope with an extraordinary rise in the number and militancy of workers' struggles in the last two or three years.

In this situation the policy of the Communist Party is a question of great importance. Although it remains clandestine, the Spanish CP is extremely well organised, and restoration of democratic liberties would undoubtedly make it the dominant political force in the country. So how do Carrillo and Ibaruri see the struggle developing?

## BOURGEOIS ALLIANCE

The basic perspective of the CP is to forge an alliance with big business in Spain, offering to keep the working class movement under control in exchange for the removal of Franco and the inclusion of the Party leadership in a new Government. The problem is that in order to maintain its base in the working class as a bargaining counter, the CP has to play a certain role in organising and supporting workers' struggles; and these very struggles tend to frighten the 'anti-Franco' sectors of the bourgeoisie back into supporting

the dictatorship, rather than face the nightmare of an all-out working class offensive following the dismantling of the dictatorship.

The Geneva rally was intended therefore both as a show of strength and as an occasion on which to renew the pleas for an alliance to the Spanish bourgeoisie.

Carrillo's speech outlined this perspective as follows: 'The working class, employees, students, women and youth will develop their protests and struggles, culminating in a national strike . . . for national reconciliation! At the press conference which followed the rally, Carrillo was challenged on this patently utopian notion by a *Red Weekly* correspondent, who pointed out that in Portugal the workers had attempted to enforce their control over sectors of the mass media and industry following the fall of Caetano.

Would Carrillo encourage such struggles should a similar situation develop in Spain? It was a 'complex' question, answered the Party secretary. He did not know exactly what had been happening in Portugal, but in general he thought the issue of workers' control was something 'for a later stage' of historical development.

With these words Carrillo spelt out the key idea with which the CP leadership hopes to be able to confuse — and thus control — the Spanish workers: namely, that 'at this stage' their struggle must not be a struggle for socialism but simply one for democracy. Hence it must not 'at this stage' bring them into fundamental conflict with the Spanish



Part of the wildly enthusiastic audience at Geneva last Sunday

capitalists — according to Carrillo, it is in the interests of the whole Spanish nation (with the exception of Franco and a few hangers-on) to see democracy restored.

## ARMY 'MISUSED'

At this point the Party secretary explained where the Army — now a central issue in Spanish politics — fits into this perspective. Blithely ignoring the lessons of the Civil War — where the insistence of the reformists on treating the Army as 'neutral' allowed the reactionary generals led by Franco to regroup and launch the counter-revolution — Carrillo claimed that the real problem lay in the *misuse* of the army by the dictatorship!

'The regime has treated the armed forces as a police corps destined to protect it against the popular forces struggling for liberty and justice,' he said. The Communists, on the other hand, wished to see them restored to their rightful role. 'The military must be the guarantors of national independence and sovereignty. It must be given the necessary technology and resources to play the role that the nation requires of it in the national interest.'

The Communist Party would therefore support the Army and struggle for 'a reconciliation between the people and the Army'. More than

that — Carrillo complained that the Franco regime was starving the Army of resources. The Communist Party would fight for a new Government to step up military spending.

Here Carrillo excelled himself. The problem was that to fight the 'internal enemy', the Spanish people, the Army only needed poor quality weapons; but to fight 'in the national interest' it would need good quality weapons. Therefore, according to Carrillo's brand of dialectics, if the Army had modern weapons it would *only* use them against foreigners and not against the Spanish people.

Unfortunately this is by no means the first time that such a notion has been put forward. Most recently it was the Popular Unity Government in Chile which claimed that everything would be all right if only the Army was sufficiently pampered with modern weapons and nationalist appeals. The only difference between the two cases — that in Chile there was no previous fascist tradition in the Army, whereas in Spain it is very strong — hardly strengthens Carrillo's argument.

## 'LA PASIONARIA'

But if it was Carrillo who most clearly spelt out the political perspectives of the Spanish CP, it was the presence on the platform of the legendary Civil War figure 'La Pasionaria' which had drawn Spanish workers from all over Europe to Geneva.

Speaking simply and directly this seemingly frail old woman succeeded



'La Pasionaria' on the rostrum

in arousing the wildest enthusiasm on the part of her audience in a matter of minutes. Their slogans broke in thunderous waves over the auditorium: 'Dolores to Madrid', 'Long Live Socialism', 'Liberty'. A huge banner proclaimed: 'Dolores is our banner' Civil war veterans cheered as the tears rolled down their faces.

Yet here, too, the underlying theme was the same. Having evoked such tremendous enthusiasm, what did 'La Pasionaria' urge her followers to do? Nothing other than to embrace General Spinoza and the men like him in the Spanish Army — Spinoza, who fought as a volunteer alongside Franco in the Civil War, who fought as a staff officer in the fascist Blue Battalions on the Russian front in World War II, and who is now putting down strikes, maintaining colonial wars, and censoring the press, all with the help of the Portuguese Communist Party.

'Create two, three, many Chiles' — that was the logic of the platform speeches at Geneva on Sunday, a logic which spells disaster for the international working class movement. It is one which will be fought unrelentingly at every twist and turn of the class struggle by the comrades of the Fourth International. The fight for socialism is once more on the immediate agenda in Europe. Compromises of the sort outlined on Sunday will only produce defeats.

BOB WILLIAMS

# Portuguese junta steps up strike-breaking

POLITICAL CENSORSHIP has been reintroduced in Portugal. This is the effective meaning of a measure adopted by the Portuguese Government last Friday (21 June).

While newspapers will not be subject to official scrutiny before publication, any violation by the press, radio or television of this new Government decree is punishable by a fine of up to £80,000 and suspension of publication for up to two months. Offending journalists or editors may also be subject to charges under military law.

## OFFENCES

Among the offences set out in the new law are: incitement, even indirectly, to disobedience of military commands or the violation of military law and regulations; insults to the President of the Republic, his Council of State or the Government; insults to the heads of state of foreign countries, or their accredited diplomatic representatives in Portugal; the publication of any reference to confidential military operations without the authorisation of the military high command; incitement to strike, to stop work, or the promotion of demonstrations that are not authorised by existing laws.

This comes on top of a decision by the Government on 14 June to take over

direct control of the radio and television services.

The new censorship law has received the full backing of the Government including the Portuguese Communist and Socialist Parties — and its enforcement will be the immediate responsibility of a Socialist minister, Raul Rego.

The law has been justified under a provision in the programme of the armed forces that action might be taken against 'disturbances caused by the aggression of the most reactionary ideological circles'. However it is clear that the new law will be applied against the left and workers' movement. Already the editor of a Maoist paper has been arrested under military authority because of the propaganda his paper was conducting among soldiers against the colonial wars.

This also makes it perfectly clear that the Portuguese CP's much-vaunted policy of 'unity with the armed forces' means unity with the top military brass, not with the rank-and-file. For the new law is a big obstacle to carrying out effective political propaganda within the army. After all, who made the 'military law and regulations' and who do they serve? And how is it possible to build effective rank-and-file organisations in the army without even *indirect* 'incitement to disobey military commands'?

## STRIKE-BREAKING

This latest crack-down comes at a time when the Government is turning to strike-breaking with a vengeance, again with the full backing of the Communist and Socialist Parties.

A strike by the country's 30,000 postal

and telecommunications workers ended last week under threat of massive military intervention. A joint statement issued by the Prime Minister and the commander-in-chief of the army laid out a plan for a massive military scabbing operation to begin on Thursday afternoon throughout the postal and telecommunications services. In response the leaders of the postal workers' union called off the strike, blaming its defeat on 'the divisive manoeuvres of the Communist Party and its allies'.

The workers were demanding improved overtime and holiday pay, a guarantee of one full rest day per week, a 35 hour week, and wage rises based on the demand of the trade unions for a minimum wage of 6000 escudos per month (about £25 per week). The Government had been prepared to meet some of these demands, but had only offered a revised wage scale with a minimum wage of 4300 escudos per month (about £16.50 per week).

This offer had been rejected by a mass assembly of workers delegates from across the country, and the strike was supported by virtually the entire workforce, except for the technicians who were split down the middle.

The Communist Party and the 'Inter-syndical' trade union federation, under CP influence, opposed the strike.

The latest news is that the Portuguese Government has placed the striking crews of four Portuguese oil tankers in the Persian Gulf under martial law, and ordered them to resume work under threat of court-martial. The crews are taking industrial action as part of a movement for better pay and conditions throughout the Portuguese Merchant Marine.

RAY ALEXANDER

# Brazilian exporters run into difficulties

A team of Brazilian exporters, bankers and government officials, visiting Canada to win new export contracts, has run into major difficulties as a result of actions by local socialist groups.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) first became aware of preparations for the tour in May. It immediately issued a call for actions in the four major economic centres — Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal — to be visited by the team, and local united front ad-hoc committees were rapidly set up.

As a result of the work of the committees the Brazilian tour has received a rather different kind of publicity from that expected by the Brazilian Government. In Vancouver protesters lay in pools of ox blood to dramatise the repression in Brazil, while others held a rally outside the Royal Bank of Canada, which has helped finance the Brazilian 'miracle' of exploitation.

When the team arrived in Vancouver for its opening press conference on 17 June, the event was completely disrupted by twenty militants of the Brazil Action Committee. Eventually the organisers offered in desperation to allow the BAC representatives time to speak; once they had done so the meeting effectively terminated.

A public display of Brazilian goods was also turned into a fiasco — the

presence of 100 demonstrators meant that it was limited to businessmen with special invitations to look at the produce of Brazilian labour exploitation.

The tour is a return visit following a tour of Brazil last year by 200 Canadian business, government and military officials. Socialist militants have stressed in their campaign not only the repressive nature of the Brazilian regime, and its role in preparing the Chile coup, but also the imperialist nature of Canadian involvement in Latin America.

The *Old Mole*, paper of the RMG, explained: 'Active opposition to the tour would not simply be a visible display of our solidarity with socialist forces and political prisoners in Brazil today. Any international challenge to the vitality of the Brazilian economy could concretely alter the conditions under which Brazilian workers and peasants must struggle.'

It is important for European socialists to take note of these events, because the Brazilian officials have stated their intention to send similar tours to Sweden, Britain, France and Germany in the near future. Similar actions here can help to further disrupt the trade and diplomatic relations of the junta with the advanced capitalist countries, and thus enable the workers' and peasants' movements in Brazil to struggle in ever more favourable conditions.

WALTER DAVIS

# STUDENT LEADERS SCAB ON PICKETS

One hundred and three students came up on trial last Monday in Colchester. They were charged with offences ranging from obstruction to criminal damage. The latter charge can carry up to a 15 year sentence. The charges arose from the long struggle that was waged by students at Essex University to defend their standard of living and their right to organise. Nearly all the charges came from an incident where over 400 policemen broke up the students picket in one of the largest scale battles ever on a picket line in the last year.

A fairly major event one would have thought. Particularly in view of the fact that the struggle hit the front page in every newspaper in the country for three weeks. Leading figures in the academic world foresaw it as the end of academic freedom and the leaders of the NUS swore that all their resources would be swung behind those militants who were leading the student movement in their stand against harassment and police repression.

When the trial came up the press went silent. Not surprising, as spotlighting another example of massive

police harassment of students so soon after the death of Kevin Gately is a bit too much for Fleet Street.

## PICKET

There was a picket of students from universities and colleges all over the country — notably from Sheffield, Kent, Oxford, Norwich, London; a speaker from Doncaster NUM; a contingent of shop stewards and workers from the Sheffield and Rotherham Shrewsbury Defence Committee, and a speaker from Warwick University — where Kevin Gately was a student. *But not one of the demagogues from the NUS Executive, Communist Party or the International Socialists.*

The small size of the picket was also a little surprising until one was told by the militants present that the 'Broad Left' members of the Essex Student Union had done everything conceivable to sabotage any mobilisation on that day — even to the extent of locking up the letters that were to be sent to various bodies in the labour movement, to try to ensure that they went out too late.

No thanks to the efforts of the NUS Executive and their co-thinkers in Essex University, most of the pickets received conditional discharges on their charges of obstruction. Others were more unfortunate and will face trial by jury largely on criminal damage charges.

Ironically the death of Kevin Gately and the crisis in the police force contributed more to the release of those in the court than did all the 'efforts' of the Broad Left and the International Socialists. The forces of 'law and order' have rather more on their plates at the moment than they can manage as far as relations with the student movement go.

If the *Red Weekly* appears biased in its coverage of this event it is only fair to recall that the NUS Executive was *not totally unrepresented* on Monday. Alistair Stewart, a member of NUS Executive and heavily tipped as the next president of the NUS was in Colchester. However in the manner beloved of NUS bureaucrats he found the hurly-burly of the picket line a little overpowering and was forced to spend his stay in Colchester in a local pub.

RAY BURNS

## Strachans stabbed in back

The union officials have stabbed the Strachan's workers in the back. After 17 weeks a struggle to save 600 jobs is over.

Since 1 March the workers had remained solid in the face of lies and distortions by the press, the snoopings of the Special Branch and a massive police attack on the factory.

Support was increasing. The blacking campaign had begun to bite. Dockers at Southampton and Newham had agreed to black Ford products from 24 June. As Fords were the firm's main contractors this could have sealed a victory for the strikers.

## Police harass TOM militants

On Friday 21 June members of Manchester T.O.M. were delivering leaflets in Ancoats, a working class housing estate in the centre of the city. Soon after they commenced leafletting policemen arrived in panda cars and took two of them to the local police station.

They were held and questioned by plain clothes police officers for an hour and a half. They were asked questions about where the TOM met, who its

On 20 June a meeting was arranged with the national officers of the TGWU, the AUEW, ASTMS and the Sheet Metal Workers.

At a mass meeting the next day of the TGWU and Sheet Metal Workers' members, the officials told the workers that if they did not accept the company's offer of £50,000 compensation, the unions would withdraw support. This was against the policy of mass meetings of strikers which had voted for a policy of all jobs back and no money compensation sell-outs.

Faced with the attitude of their union officials a majority voted for accepting the offer. Local officials had said they 'were too busy' to organise a local conference to build support for the strike. They were not however too busy later to put the knife in.

leading members were. The police no doubt having in mind the Arrowsmith case, also closely questioned them about incitement to disaffection — they were asked whether they would incite troops to disaffect, and what they would say to a hypothetical soldier.

The TOM intends to make a formal complaint to the police about this unwarranted harassment, and has also contacted the *Manchester Evening News*. The TOM intends to leaflet Ancoats again on Tuesday 25 June, to show that we will not be intimidated by the police action.

## Squatters fight pitched battle

Squatters at the Canal Flats, Harrow Road, London had a one hour pitched battle with police and bailiffs on 17 June.

## FUND DRIVE

We'll certainly manage to keep going. That's the message from another good post of £67.54, which means we're almost up to that minimum £300 mark.

Contributions this week have come from: B. Beaumont £20; London IMG £12.30; Canterbury IMG £11.24; Leeds IMG £9; Bristol IMG £7; G. Roberts £5.20; J. Taylor £2; Norwich IMG 80p.

That makes a grand total for June of

**£268.59**

But we need to do much, much more than just reach the £300 mark each month. If we can boost that figure to £400, then we can start planning now for a 12-page paper in the autumn — the kind of political weapon that our movement is crying out for in this situation of deepening crisis.

There's less than a week to go — but with your help we can do it! Rush all monies to RED WEEKLY FUND DRIVE, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1. Let's make this month's effort a real bumper success.



Among those on strike for thresholds are canteen workers at all Ford plants

## NEW THRESHOLD STRIKES BREAK OUT

The strikes for threshold agreements continue to gather momentum.

Yesterday white collar workers at Standard Triumph Coventry voted for all-out strike action. The main assembly plant at Canley has now been shut down and several thousand production workers laid-off.

The GEC strike for an open-ended threshold agreement which began last week remains solid with GEC plants in Coventry at a standstill.

Workers at the Corley Service Station on the M6 link between Birmingham and Coventry are also taking strike action over thresholds. The two hundred workers are picketing the station which has been virtually closed all week.

The workers—employed by Trust House Forte—are aiming to spread the strike right along the motorway. Meanwhile BLMC's refusal to pay any threshold increases is meeting growing resistance amongst its workforce. Manual workers at West Yorks Laundry, part of the BLMC group have now been

Although the 70 squatters—including ten children and four pregnant women—were finally evicted, their struggle and their campaign has led to growing support for their battle against Westminster Council.

Westminster Trades Council is now supporting their fight and a week later the squatters took over eight other Westminster properties.

The six blocks of flats had been defended by heavy barricades. Missiles of garbage, oil, urine, cement water jets were also used. Water-cocks in the road were cemented up to stop bailiffs cutting water off. Representatives of the Trades Council and the Tenants' Association formed part of the anti-eviction squad.

It took the one hour for the police and bailiffs to enter every block. It was a further two hours before they had tossed out all the squatters and their belongings. Rush-hour crowds were able to see the

on strike for over a week for a threshold payment. The Leeds district committee of the AUFW have made the strike official and called on the union's national executive to do the same.

Workers at the Plessey Plant at Beeston, Nottinghamshire have been offered a payment of £2.50 following their strike and occupation of the factory. This was intended by the company to be a once-and-for-all payment. The workers have however taken only £2.40—the payment due under the threshold agreements. They have told the management that they intend coming back for more.

The fights for open-ended threshold agreements are breaking out right across the national scene. But still the trade union leaders fail to give these movements any coordination. As prices rocket the need to protect living standards by securing nil-threshold agreements is vital. The urgent need now to unite the different struggles.

policies of the Council at work families piled on the rainsoaked streets. One copper remarked: 'This must not be seen. We should have started earlier.'

After the eviction, as agreed beforehand, squatters and supporters occupied the nearest Social Security office demanding re-housing for all. After rejecting offers of bed and breakfast some families did accept hotels—total cost £180 a week! They intend to re-squat if they do not get permanent accommodation.

Turning the squat into a collective demonstration worked. Everybody struck together. The occupation was used as an organising centre. Fresh squats were taken over that afternoon, a move endorsed by a rally-type meeting where people from the Trades Council and Tenants' Association were present. The Social Security were forced to pay for squatters to transport their belongings to the new squats.

## FORDS PICKETS GO ON TRIAL

Four Ford workers are due to be tried on 1 July. They are charged with obstruction and threatening behaviour. The charges arise out of the strike against the seizure of AUEW funds by the NIRC.

The arrests were made by the Special Patrol Group who swooped on the Body Plant picket lines arresting four workers. Ironically, the over-zealous police accidentally 'knocked off' a scab going into work. It was clear that the arrests were planned with the aim of intimidating the Ford strikers.

Resolutions have been carried in the Ford TGWU 667 branch and Harold Hill AUEW branch, recognising this as an attack on the right to picket and calling

for defence of the arrested workers. Neither the official union structure, nor the CP-led Body Plant Shop stewards' committee has taken any action to organise a campaign on this, and have simply restricted the matter to providing legal defence. These people seem incapable of learning the lessons of Showbury.

Militants in the factory and on the stewards' committee are organising a picket at the factory gate on the day of the trial. A demonstration will also leave Barking Park that day at 9.15 a.m. to picket Barking Magistrates' Court. Jo Richardson, the local MP has pledged support.

## Troops Out Movement Day School

'The situation in Ireland and the British labour movement'

SUNDAY 7 JULY, 10 am — 6 pm

Entrance 20p

NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London W.C. 1. (off Theobalds Road)

SESSIONS INCLUDE:

- Origins of the crisis in Ireland (speaker Richard Boam)
- The current situation in Ireland, the meaning of self-determination, can a Northern Ireland State be democratic (speaker Gerry Lawless)
- The labour movement in the South of Ireland; the national question and the economic and political struggle in the South (speaker Paddy Pronderville)
- The British labour movement and Ireland (speaker Michael Walsh, Birmingham Trades Council)
- The Troops Out Movement: the way forward (speaker Alistair Benwick)

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