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The struggles
that toppled
Heath's union
bashers

CENTRE PAGES

TORIES ARM FOR BATTLE



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Benn runs from fight

Anthony Wedgewood Benn's decision to pull out of the Shadow Cabinet and withdraw to Labour's back benches is a cynical attempt to cover his tracks and repholster his tattered and threadbare 'left' image.

Benn has correctly recognised that within the defeated Labour Party the climate will now be increasingly favourable to those fighting for socialist policies against Callaghan's right wing positions.

No opposition

But of course Benn has no such socialist policies to offer. Nor can he even claim to have stood out in opposition to the anti-working class policies of either Wilson or Callaghan.

For both these leaders his presence in the cabinet was a useful 'left' camouflage.

They knew that while Benn occasionally made loud ambiguous noises, he always helped to defuse any real opposition to their programme of wage cuts, unemployment and repression in Ireland.

Benn now claims that the Labour government went "off the rails" at four turning points: its abandonment of nationalisation pledges in the 1974 manifesto; its deal with the IMF; entry into the Common Market; and Phase 4 (not 1, 2 or 3) of wage control.

Yet at no point did Benn wage any serious campaign against Callaghan or Healey on these questions: least of all did he fight for their removal.

NEB investment

And all he has to offer now as alternatives is the tawdry Tribune policies of investment in industry through the NEB and import controls.

Last week in the aftermath of an election defeat his collaboration had helped cause, Benn allowed Callaghan to go forward once again unopposed as Party leader.

Then he made his play for the limelight. While this has delighted the Stalinists of the Communist Party—the *Morning Star* praising his "valuable asset" of being in the Cabinet—it has nothing to offer socialists in the Labour Party.

There the task is to take forward the fight to expose Benn and every other 'left' faker and to construct a revolutionary alternative capable of ousting the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

'Lefts' revel in post-election blues—page 5.

"By their friends shall ye know them". The truth of this old adage was richly confirmed this week in the first actions of the new Tory government.

A mere two weeks after a brutal killing of anti-fascist Blair Peach by truncheon-wielding Special Patrol Group thugs, Tory Home Secretary Whitelaw announced a cash handout for the police.

They are to receive an immediate 20% pay increase on top of the 20% already paid to them last September by the Callaghan government.

Promised by Callaghan

The next day Defence Secretary Pym announced a similar 8% bonus for the armed forces.

These hefty pay rises to the armed bodies of men that defend British capitalism had, of course, been promised for future payment by the Labour leaders, whose anti-working class policies opened the door and laid out a welcome mat for Thatcher's return.

But the Tories' rush to purchase the enthusiastic allegiance of these uniformed strikebreakers is a clear expression of their determination to prepare the ground for inevitable large-scale confrontations with the working class at home, and an intensification of the imperialist war in Ireland.

Pay boost for strikebreakers



Howe

The thrusting of additional cash into the already bulging pockets of the police and army—at an annual cost of £160 million—stands in stark contrast to simultaneous Tory moves to attack the most downtrodden sections of the working class.

Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin has launched an offensive against supposed "scroungers" who needlessly

remain unemployed.

The objective here is to exploit unemployment by forcing some of the 1½ million now on the dole into the most degrading and low paid jobs.

At the same time leading Tories are looking for ways of effectively destroying even the 'fimsy' reforms embodied in Labour's Employment Protection Act, in the hopes of making it even easier for employers to sack unwanted workers.

Selling off

Plans are also well in hand to begin dismantling the system of council housing by selling off existing council houses at knockdown prices to tenants.

This is aimed at removing these houses for all time from the low-rent public sector. It will compel thousands of young working class families to pay extortionate prices to private Tory landlords in order to obtain a roof over their heads.

Even now Tory Chancellor Geoffrey Howe is drawing up a list of swingeing public spending cuts designed to finance the pay rises to police and army scabs, and to pay for the tax handouts he plans to give to the rich. Every one of these spending

cuts will hit the working class, whether through cutting back on jobs, or slashing public services that are a part of workers' living standards.

The Tories know this. And they know that the rest of their programme—new legal attacks on trade union rights; racist attacks on immigrant workers; denationalisation of profitable sections of state-owned industry and further rationalisation of industry at a cost of thousands more jobs—will also provoke mass resistance from a militant and undefeated working class.

And they remember all too bitterly that such mass resistance brought down the Heath government in 1974, and defeated Callaghan's 5% pay limit.

This is why they are so keen to enlist the wholehearted support of the police as picket-busters and strike-breakers; and in Ireland the army will be called upon to step up repression of the growing anti-imperialist struggles in the occupied six counties.

The Tories are not the only capitalist government faced with the problem of waging such

attacks on their working class: last week saw a conference of police chiefs from 17 European capitalist countries gather in London.

They were not discussing crime. Called together by Metropolitan Police chief McNee, they centred their debate on methods of "crowd control" and the policing of mass political demonstrations and protests.

Whitelaw, addressing the conference, spoke of the need for the police to cater for "social problems".

The "social problem" faced by the working class is the naked rule of crisis-ridden capitalism exercised through the Tory Party.

Yet many of the policies now adopted by the Tories for attacking workers simply build on the precedents set and decisions taken in the last five years of anti-socialist Labour government.

In building the mass movement to defeat the Tory attack and remove this bosses' government, the workers' movement must also drive out the right wing Callaghan leadership and build a principled socialist alternative.

Italy's election begins with a bang

The Italian general election campaign opened on 3 May with an explosion—of a bomb, placed (allegedly) by the Red Brigades in the Rome headquarters of the ruling Christian Democratic Party.

Those who placed the bomb escaped, killing a policeman in the process.

Apart from its somewhat devastating physical effect, the bomb was symbolic of the collapse of authority of the Italian capitalist class at just the moment when more than ever before it needs to impose more rigorous discipline and more austerity on the working class.

It has been used as a further pretext for massive police surveillance and repression, including the recent frame-ups of the alleged kidnappers of Moro.

Strike call

The first reaction of the Stalinist, reformist and Catholic leaders to the bomb was to call a strike—not in defence of the interests of the working class, but in defence of the Tory Christian Democrats against the terrorist attack!

It was a symptom of the purpose to which the CP leaders are putting this election campaign.

It has become a massive propaganda exercise to prepare the way for the CP's direct entry into a Christian Democratic government after the elections.

Italy, says CP secretary-

general Enrico Berlinguer every hour of every day, is ungovernable.

Ungovernable, that is, without Stalinist ministers in the bourgeois government.

It was the refusal of the Christian Democrats to accept that which precipitated the present elections.

Unchanged

The public opinion polls at present suggest that the parliamentary situation after the elections will leave this impasse virtually unchanged.

The polls at present give the Christian Democrats 40% (compared with 38.8% in 1976), the CP 31% (compared with 34.4%) and the Socialist Party 11% (compared with 9.6%).

What the calling of elections did achieve, however, is to allow both the big parties to readjust the balance of candidates among various wings of the parties so as to make it easier to set up some grand class collaborationist government structure.

Factional battles in the Christian Democratic Party over the candidates meant that they were last to present their lists.

But in the event Party secretary general Benigno Zaccagnini failed in his bid to get a larger proportion of candidates on the CD lists who might be more favourable to a deal with the CP leaders.

Independents

The CP meanwhile has used the opportunity to fill its lists with non-members, "independ-



Berlinguer

dent" fellow-travellers of the party.

These could then be put forward as the CP's representatives in the Cabinet should the die-hards of the Christian Democrats not accept actual CP members.

Meanwhile unemployment is growing fast; wage demands of 10 million workers remain unsatisfied; and the Confindustria (Italy's CBI) is stridently calling for an all-out attack on wage costs and rejection of union demands for wage increases and cuts in hours.

There seems little chance therefore that, even if the CP does get its nominees into the Cabinet, Italy after the elections will be any more governable for capitalism than it was before.



Zaccagnini

Iran's new dictators split

After two hundred executions of members of the Shah's regime, Iran's would-be Islamic dictator Ayatollah Khomeini, has abolished the death penalty for all crimes except murder.

This move is part of an effort to hold together the increasingly split leadership which is trying to rule Iran today.

The capitalist government under Bazargan, is increasingly fearful that the executions, fostered by the most zealous Islamic leaders, will carry away some of their own close collaborators and collaborators in Iran's ruling class.

Discontent

But more than that they fear the growing discontent of the working class and the oppressed nationalities who are less and less impressed by spectacular executions of their former oppressors when the job is being done by new oppressors.

So far the government has still failed to take any steps at all to solve the acute and pressing material problems faced by the 3.4 million unemployed or by employed workers combatting inflation.

Instead of tackling these problems, the regime is obsessed with how to enforce its own authority against militant demonstrations, especially by unemployed workers and the oppressed nationalities (Kurds, Turkomans, Arabs, Baluchis).

Still unable to reconstruct the Shah's army and police in a credible way, the regime has

now been forced to declare the Islamic militia, the Guardians of the Revolution, an official arm of the state.

This militia has been responsible for some of the worst attacks on "communists" which has now become a synonym for all opposition to the reactionary Islamic regime.

The "communists" themselves, however, have certainly not reacted to growing anti-communist attacks by putting forward any resolute policy of resistance to Islamic reaction or any kind of programme behind which the oppressed masses could unite to carry the anti-Shah revolution through to a socialist conclusion.

The Stalinist Tudeh party, for example, continues to welcome publicly the Islamic republic—it had called for a 'yes' vote in the referendum.

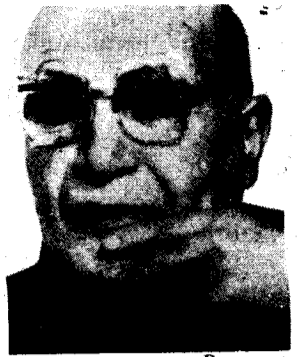
It organised one of Tehran's four separate May Day demonstrations—not in its own name but behind a trade union front organisation.

Its leaders did not appear in person and its members carried no banners.

Certainly this was in marked contrast to the other non-Islamic demonstration (reportedly mobilising a similar number—100,000—to the Tudeh's demonstration) organised by various left wing organisations.

Guerrillas held

These included the "Marxist Leninist" Fedayin Khalq (People's Guerrillas, 40 of whom are currently being held by Khomeini's militia), the "Trotskyist" Socialist Workers Party (supported by both the



Bazargan

French OCI and the USFI), as well as organisations of unemployed workers, of women and of trade unionists.

Also on this march were the petty-bourgeois National Democratic Front—led by the grandson of former Premier Mossadeq—and numerous students.

On this demonstration the main slogans demanded the nationalisation of foreign capitalists, the right to strike, democratisation of the mass media, and the participation of workers in drawing up the constitution.

Evidently the political line of the demonstration was dominated by the bourgeois democratic programme of the National Democratic Front which coincides with the two-stage "revolution" strategy of the "Marxist-Leninist" guerrillas.

Plans for repression

The four main features of the Iranian situation are: the growing confusion and disunity of the reactionary Islamic forces; their plans to step up anti-communist repression against all left opposition; the grave economic and political problems of the oppressed masses and their willingness to fight; and the failure of the Stalinist and guerrilla leaders to offer any way forward for the mass struggle.

These four facets of the situation emphasise both the urgent need and the opportunity which now exists for the building of a revolutionary Trotskyist party to lead a successful struggle for socialism in Iran.

Bolivian workers face a choice of bankrupts

Part Two:

Continued from last week

The coming Bolivian elections will see the main bourgeois electoral front—the Democratic and Popular Unity (UDP)—challenged by a motley crew assembled in the National Revolutionary Alliance (ARN).

This grouping is led by the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), whose head, Victor Paz Estenssoro, was President between 1952 and 1956 and the chief architect of the process of evacuating the 1952 Revolution of almost all its progressive content.

Paz, formerly a supporter of military dictator Banzer and a part-time economics professor in California, in addition to claiming the fealty of the old party bureaucrats, has managed to entice into his alliance groups as diverse as the Christian Democrats and the Maoists of the Communist Party Marxist Leninist.

The latter party has embarked on a path of flagrant opportunism that outdoes even that of the pro-Moscow Stalinists since the Maoists have established a substantial record of militancy, particularly amongst the peasantry of Santa Cruz.

Paz's alliance, unlike the UDP, is not attempting to drum

up jingoist fervour over the question of Chile's annexation of Bolivia's coastline which was lost a hundred years ago this March.

Neither, however, is the ARN succeeding in drawing much support from the working class—at the May Day rally held in La Paz the President of the general workers federation COB—a supporter of Paz, was jeered and barred from speaking.

Hold of reformists

One of the main difficulties facing the parties of the revolutionary left is the tight hold of the reformist bureaucrats over the organisations of the Bolivian proletariat.

The personification of this influential group is Juan Lechin Oquendo, who for a while in the late 40s flirted with Trotskyism and then fled to the MNR camp, where he became its 'left' defender through his leadership of the miners' union FSTMB and the COB, which he controlled by means of an efficient bureaucratization.

Since the early 1960s Lechin has led the PRIN (Revolutionary Party of Left Nationalism) which now leads the FRI (Left Revolutionary Front). The FRI failed to make an impact in the 1978 elections and now appears to be falling apart.

Lechin, himself, however, retains considerable influence over the proletariat and particularly the miners by virtue of his demagogic and "marxist" posturing and his control over the union organisation.

There are three main 'Trotskyist' groups in Bolivia. The best known of these is the POR (Workers Revolutionary Party) headed by Guillermo Lora which was affiliated to the OCRFI until that organisation's recent crisis.

Lora has been at the forefront of political affairs for over 30 years and was responsible for drawing up the Thesis of Pulacayo (1946) which has long been the central programmatic reference of the working class.

The Lora group has announced that it will fight for a united Anti Imperialist Front candidate in the elections but it is not yet clear how far this plan has progressed.

'Modified Boycott'

In the 1978 elections the party adopted what might be called a 'modified boycott' by demanding of the regime that in place of putting a candidate's name on the ballot papers it should be allowed to insert a short version of its programme.

The Vanguardia Obrera



Bolivian miners

(Workers Vanguard) party, led by miners' leader Filemon Escobar, split from the POR several years ago and is severely critical of Lora over his alleged suppression of democratic centralism and assimilation of 'petty bourgeois' elements.

The VO is putting up Escobar as its presidential candidate.

In the last elections the Escobar group supported the candidacy of Domitila de Chungara, the celebrated leader of the Housewives Committee of the Siglo XX mining camp who is not a member of any political party.

The POR (Gonzalez)—attached to the USFI—calls Lora's party 'defeatist' and workerist.

It itself wields little influence inside the working class and its politics have been

severely prejudiced by its disastrous affiliation with guerrillas.

The coming elections are in part a concession to the masses.

On the other hand, whilst they provide an immediate means to confront the reformists and the national bourgeoisie they must not become the principal strategic concern of the revolutionary left.

The Bolivian masses have over the last forty years shown themselves time and time again to be capable of concerted resistance and rapid revolutionary mobilisation.

What is now required is a clear revolutionary leadership to direct the extraordinary political strength of the working class.

Without this there can be little doubt that the poll in July will be little more than a

pirouette through which the bourgeoisie will trip before the return to another Banzer and a further period of abject misery for the people of Bolivia.

The first step must be to stand a workers' candidate committed to a programme which includes the following demands:

*Destruction of the military dictatorship!

*Restore all democratic rights!

*A freely elected Constituent Assembly!

*A sliding scale of wages and the fixing of prices in workers' stores!

*Force all workers' parties to break alliances with the national bourgeoisie!

*Workers' control in the mines!

*An end to the peasant-military pact!



Sahara war rattles imperialist stooges

The war in the Sahara has overthrown another government in Mauritania.

Last month a military coup toppled the existing military dictatorship of Ould Salek, which itself had come to power only last July by ousting the one-party regime of Ould Daddah.

Lt. Col. Ould Bouceif, the new prime minister, has made clear the two main lines of his government's foreign policy—peace in the Sahara, and a continued alliance with the Moroccan state.

Engineered

This latest coup has been engineered as part of the present concerted diplomatic campaign by imperialism to restore bourgeois stability in the Maghreb (Arab-dominated north-west Africa).

The Mauritanian economy has been shattered by the years of war in the Sahara, and every day of fighting increases the pressure on the government to resolve the conflict.

But the war, and the policies followed by Ould Daddah, have also virtually enslaved Mauritania as a vassal of King Hassan's reactionary dictatorship in Morocco.

The whole Saharan adventure was designed by Hassan, and the occupation of this tract of 'Greater Morocco' remains essential to his foreign policy.

Ignoring every setback to his ambitions and defying all attempts at persuasion, Hassan has so far obstinately refused to entertain the possibility of limiting Moroccan rule, let alone abolishing it to establish an independent republic in the Western Sahara.

Disintegration

But the pressure from Rabat for the Mauritanian leaders to present a united front has become less effective as the economic crisis and social disintegration of Mauritania have reached staggering new heights.

Ould Bouceif has followed his military predecessors in negotiations with the Polisario Front.

These have almost certainly focussed on the exchange of a truce between the two sides for the establishment of some kind of autonomy for the Tiris el-Gharbia (the southern part of the Western Sahara, occupied by the Mauritanian army after its 1975 Madrid agreement with the Francoist and Moroccan dictatorships).

'Left' nationalist

The imperialist powers, and the 'left' nationalist leaders of Algeria and Libya would eagerly welcome such a 'solution' to the demands of the Sahrawi (Saharoui) people for self-determination and independence, and such an end to the liberation struggle being waged by



Best of friends—Hassan and Carter

the Polisario Front.

Whatever opposition is mounted by the Polisario against a shoddy deal of this kind, they will certainly be placed under massive pressure to accept from their main backers, the Algerian ruling bureaucracy.

The petty-bourgeois clique of the Algerian 'Revolutionary Council' has long been seeking respectable means to offload the embarrassing burden of its commitment to the Polisario.

Annexations

The Libyan dictatorship has played a less prominent role in the Sahara.

Gaddafi has declared support for the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

Now he has taken time off from his annexations and other exploits in Chad to work more actively towards a restabilisation of the Maghreb.

But Gaddafi's diplomatic initiatives have met an equally energetic rival, the Francoist Suarez government in Spain.

Separated from the Maghreb only by the narrow Straits of Gibraltar, the Spanish bourgeoisie has major economic and military interests in the region, which did not end with the 1975 'decolonisation' of the Western Sahara.

Neutralise conflicts

Today Suarez is playing a cautious but ambitious game to reconcile or neutralise all the conflicting interests within the Maghreb in a 'peaceful coexistence' that can offer golden opportunities to ailing Spanish capitalism.

So far Suarez has been astonishingly successful.

The UCD, ruling party in the Spanish government, has recognised the Polisario Front—but the government itself has not gone beyond careful hopes that 'liberty' will somehow reign in the Western Sahara.



Gaddafi

Over recent months, Spanish ministers and ambassadors have been front-runners in the intense race of diplomats from one capital to another.

Already the 'normalisation' of relations between Algiers and Madrid has produced tangible results, with the Algerian 'socialists' abandoning their support for autonomy or independence in the Spanish ruled Canary Islands off the Moroccan coast.

Little to show

If Suarez has so far profited from his Sahara campaign the French imperialists have very little to show for their more costly investment.

French military training has built up the Moroccan and Mauritanian armies, and last year jets from the French armed forces bombed and strafed the Sahara to strengthen their war of aggression.

But the military involvement of French imperialism in Africa (Sahara, Chad, Zaire) has provoked growing resistance from the French working class. At the same time, President Giscard could derive little comfort from the progress of the war.

Far from being obliterated, the Polisario has been able to extend its military activity into southern Morocco, and inflict considerable defeats on Hassan's army.

This situation is

dangerous enough for the imperialists in itself. But its gravest threat lies in the impact of the war on the crisis in Morocco.

Moroccan workers

Today, the future of the Maghreb lies with the proletariat of Morocco. The masses of Mauritania are weakly organised, with little experience of political struggle.

In Tunisia, the working class is recovering from the exertions and bloody defeat of last year's general strike.

The peasants and workers of Algeria remain for the moment demoralised and confused by their precarious but tenacious petty-bourgeois rulers.

Yet in Morocco, the working class is moving forward in a new surge of struggles generated by the economic crisis, and the war which has worsened it many

times over.

Of all the Arab states, Morocco is geographically farthest from Iran.

But in social and political terms, the Morocco of Hassan closely resembles the Iran of the 'White Revolution', and as a 'revolutionary monarch', Hassan took his lessons in tyranny from the Shah.

The example of the Iranian revolution was not lost on the Moroccan masses, and the temporary presence in Morocco of the deposed Shah could only spell it out more clearly.

Hassan was forced to rid himself, as soon as decently possible, of a dangerous guest who provoked violently hostile mass demonstrations wherever he appeared.

Dizzy spiral

But the Shah's departure has brought no end to the dizzy spiral of inflation or to the constant drain of material and human supplies in the war.

This year has already seen massive strikes on a broadening and deepening scale: railway workers, bank workers, miners, postal and hospital workers, the Casablanca dockers, textile workers, teachers and workers in the civil airline.

All have taken strike action on their economic demands, and alongside them have come the school and college students.

The situation is fast becoming uncontrollable by Hassan's usual methods of repression.

Moth eaten

Last month he played a well-tryed card in changing the head of government.

The new prime minister Maati Bouabid, has moth-eaten 'left' credentials.

But already he has shown himself determined to prosecute the Sahara war

and the internal repression with unflagging force.

The old trump cards do not have their old power in this new crisis. The phantom of Iran stalks through Morocco today with strength enough to break a thousand Bouabids.

Hassan's dictatorship has never been weaker. Its agony has helped spur the French and Spanish imperialists into their frenzy of diplomacy to resolve the Sahara 'question'.

But in his hour of need, Hassan can call for help on a force which the Shah had denied himself.



The former Shah

The traditional populist, reformist and Stalinist leaders of the Moroccan masses have offered only accommodation and collaboration with the dictatorship.

Hassan's throne now rests upon the ability of these bureaucrats to control, divert and strangle the developing mass movement which holds the power to overthrow imperialism in Morocco.

It is in the struggle to defeat these old traitors and build a new revolutionary leadership, that the immediate future of the Moroccan workers and peasants will be decided.

Trotskyists launch Danish paper

The Trotskyist Workers League, a newly-formed Danish organisation in political solidarity with the Workers Socialist League, chose May Day for the highly successful launching of their paper *Trotskyistisk Synspunkt* (Trotskyist Viewpoint).

Issue number one—containing articles on the Danish government's intervention into the new pay contracts; Iran; the Danish CP and Stalinism; an interview with members of the Danish Left Socialists; and an analysis of pay struggles by brewery workers—sold rapidly on the large Copen-

hagen May Day March organised by left groups outside the Communist Party.

One feature article called for a boycott of the coming EEC elections while another examined the splits and divisions that had emerged within the Pabioite 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International over the wars between Stalinist states in South East Asia.

Fortnightly

The Danish USFI section, the RSF, has recently been forced to pull back from weekly publication of their paper *Klassen-Kampen* to a fortnightly schedule, and to postpone

the planned transformation of the RSF into the Socialist Workers Party.

RSF members showed a keen interest in the new Trotskyist paper.

Emerging at a time of growing militancy in the Danish working class, and a profound crisis in both the Social Democratic and Stalinist Communist Parties, the Trotskyist Workers League has real opportunities for political work in the coming period.

And by challenging the political confusion among RSF and other left groups, it will play an important role in furthering the struggle for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

Butcher Mason gets in parting shot - at Irish gays

Fine Gael votes for gay rights

Roy Mason, Labour's Minister of Torture, fired a well-aimed parting shot before handing over to the Tories the task of upholding British imperialist rule in Northern Ireland.

This time the target was gay men in the occupied six counties.

The Westminster legislation of 1967 legalised certain types of private sexual acts between consenting males over the age of 21.

Never extended

This partial reform was never extended to the armed forces, Scotland or Northern Ireland, where the vicious penalties of the 1885 laws still remain in force.

With the suspension of Stormont and imposition of 'direct rule', Mason had it within his power to extend law reform to British-occupied Ireland simply by an Order in Council, and 'yes' vote in Parliament.

In fact, a draft law was published last June, after a concerted campaign by NIGRA (Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association) which had led to embarrassing exposure of British imperialism in the European Commission of Human Rights.

The forces of clerical reaction at once swung into hysterical activity. The hierarchy of the Catholic church thundered its usual condemnations of such 'blasphemous' behaviour.

The Rev. Ian Paisley used his bases in the 'Free' Presbyterian Church and the 'Democratic'

Unionist Party to organise the 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign, which claimed a petition of some 70,000 signatures.

Judges

This unholy alliance was swelled by senior judges, and no doubt by representatives of the 'peace-keeping forces'.

The Labour leaders quailed before this assault—all the more because they have never held any serious commitment to gay rights.

The 1967 reform was introduced by a private members' bill from David Steel, and the Wilson leadership ensured only a free vote from the PLP.

Any suspicion of a principled stand on such basic democratic rights was completely smashed in the spring.

Faced with the prospect of a parliamentary defeat, Callaghan bargained with the Ulster Unionists for their support. Amongst a whole series of demands, the Unionists insisted on the dropping of the draft law.

The Unionists were successful. In its submission to the European Commission on Human Rights, the Northern Ireland Office argued that:

"The subject is a particularly sensitive and controversial one. It is therefore reasonable [!] for the law to be less liberal than that in England."

In the north, it is British imperialism which has continued the oppression of gays.

But in the republic too, clerical reaction has combined with this same force to produce



Paisley

legislation easily among the most severe in the world.

Part of the legacy of British rule is the threat of life-imprisonment which hangs over gay men, however adult or consenting they may be.

At its recent conference, the Fine Gael party overwhelmingly adopted proposals for legal reforms on the Westminster model.

But Fine Gael is conveniently in opposition, and the Catholic hierarchy has not yet opened its assault on this move.

The oppression of gays throughout Ireland is just one aspect of the clerical reaction which denies any freedom of sexuality and restricts the rights of women.

The fight for an end to discrimination against gays must be waged in a struggle against that religious bigotry which holds sway throughout the island, and which is a basic prop helping to perpetuate the imperialist oppression of the British state in the north.



PAY STRUGGLES HINDER LYNCH STRATEGY

Postal workers in the Irish republic are at the forefront of continuing resistance to the attacks on working class living standards being plotted by the Lynch government and its lackeys in the Irish TUC.

Their 13-week pay strike has wreaked havoc on business communications and threats to disrupt the campaign for the June 7 European elections by preventing the circulation of election addresses.

Militant picketing by postal workers led last week to court injunctions barring workers from picketing Dublin's Henston or Connolly stations, where employers had been using an express parcels service to get around the strike.

Intimidatory

As a result the POWU leadership called an "intimidatory picket" of the offices of the Confederation of Irish Industry and of the parcels service's Sheriff Street office.

The strike has attracted international support, including blacking action by UPW members in the North, and cash aid from the German postal workers union.

But it is not the only front in the side of Lynch's efforts to hold down the slave labour wages paid by Irish employers—whose rate of return on capital is among the highest in the world.

The decision ten days ago of the Irish TGWU bureaucracy to oppose the "National Under-



Lynch

standing" drawn up by the government, bosses and Irish TUC chiefs, has struck a body blow at this strategy for disciplining the working class.

The "Understanding" dangles an exceedingly skinny carrot—involving puny tax cuts and a 15% wage rise over 15 months—in front of the Irish working class, in an attempt to lure workers into a stringent no-strike agreement.

With the ITGWU rejection means that the biggest single union delegation—65-strong—will be voting against it.

But ITGWU leaders have not rejected the deal on principle. Rather they are haggling over details.

There was not enough for the low-paid, they argued; they prefer flat-rate increases to percentages (echoes of Jack Jones!); they are not happy with the tax concessions; they

want guarantees that the government will honour its side of the bargain; and they are not happy about no-strike clauses.

Whether or not they move in the next few days to swallow these objections and buckle down to accept the deal will depend on their assessment of their ability to contain potential rebellion within the ranks of their membership.

Certainly the ICTU itself is doing everything possible to railroad in the deal and to damp down the militancy on wages indicated by last month's massive general strike in Dublin and other cities against Lynch's PAYE laws, which benefit Irish farmers at the expense of the working class.

Thousands of workers stopped work in a similar protest on May Day—but only on pain of disciplinary action against their unions by the ICTU.

PRESS GANG



An IRA spy in the ranks of the British Army generals?

This intriguing prospect was hung out for a brief period following revelations by the IRA that they had received a copy of a top secret Army intelligence report.

It was with considerable relief that the press decided—after army briefing—that the spy did not have stars on his shoulder but was a postal worker.

Talk of hounding IRA sympathisers within the UPW has a comforting ring about it.

Some papers even spoke of an IRA 'infiltrator' into the Post Office as if no postal worker could possibly hold or develop such sympathies.

Not all papers carried quite the same story. The *Daily Star* for example, said that it was quite simply a straightforward theft of mail—later sold to the IRA.

But whatever the precise formulation each paper was

quite definite in its speculation and each paper used the issue of how the document was leaked to divert from what it said.

One other clear symptom of careful military briefing of the 'free' Tory press was the formulation of the way the document was presented in *Republican News*.

Despite their differences, the *Telegraph* and the *Star* both described *Republican News* as "the mouthpiece of the IRA".

Embarrassing

Every paper said the leak was "embarrassing but not politically dangerous".

But if the IRA leak caused embarrassment, the decision by a Californian court to refuse to extradite Peter McMullen—alleged by British police to be involved in a bombing at Ripon army barracks in 1974—caused fury.

The court ruled that under the 1972 agreement no extradition could take place for political crimes

and McMullen—who had been held in a Californian jail for a year—could be deported instead to the Republic of Ireland.

The *Telegraph* raged: "This is more than bad law. It strikes at the very basis of law . . . Murder, mass killing, extortion, bank robbing, torture, can be all exempted on political grounds".

The *Sunday Telegraph* admitted in despair:

"A growing number of Americans (now including many with no Irish affiliations) plainly believe that what is going on in Northern Ireland is an attempt by the British to maintain one of the last bastions of empire, not an attempt by the IRA to deprive Ulstermen of the right to self-determination".

It ruefully concluded: "There would be much to be said for sending a powerful mission to the United States to counteract IRA and Dublin government propaganda there."



Dublin workers march against PAYE system

'Left' cynics revel in post-poll blues



For a party whose whole motive for existence is to participate in elections, the loss of one is a traumatic experience.

Hence the gloomy soul-searching of Labour's house-journal *Labour Weekly*, which this week searches in every direction except a serious examination of the record of Callaghan's government in the hope of explaining away the General Election defeat.

The reality is of course that while hostility to Thatcher's anti-working class campaign ensured that the Labour vote actually increased—from 11.46 million in 1974 to 11.5 million in 1979—the lack of any serious Labour answers to the problems of plunging living standards, mounting unemployment and crumbling social services allowed the Tories to scoop up an additional three million votes.

One million of these came from the wilting Liberal Party which lost 20% of its 1974 support.

Others doubtless came from among the 2 million inexperienced new voters added to the electorate since 1974, many of whom would only dimly remember the horrors of the Heath government, but be all too aware of the bankruptcy of Callaghan's right wing policies.

Devoid of socialism

Labour's campaign and manifesto—totally devoid of anything resembling a socialist policy—offered young voters no prospect of a change in the miserable future laid before them by five years of Wilson-Callaghan government.

But nor should it be forgotten that 1½ million Tory voters stayed at home in the October 1974 Election having failed to return Heath in

February of that year. Many of these forces no doubt came out again to put Thatcher in office.

When confusion, the impact of massive Tory press propaganda and demoralisation of Labour supporters are taken into account, the General Election result can be seen very much as a statement of the class polarisation brought about by crisis-ridden capitalism.

1½ million workers have stuck behind the Labour Party despite the betrayals it has carried through.

As opponents of Toryism they will be rapidly joined by hundreds of thousands of people that will be alienated by the actions of the Thatcher government, and rapidly realise how they have been duped by soft-soap about tax cuts into voting for the scrapping of their hard-won social services, and for the closure of their own workplaces.

But this does not mean that the Labour Party in search of these supporters, will not, under Callaghan and the right wing, swing even further to the right in search of "the middle ground".

Labour Weekly declares that: "The party must strengthen its base, broaden its appeal, and win back those missing 1½ million voters who are needed to give the party a mandate to govern".

Tory policies

When right wingers talk about "broadening appeal" they invariably mean a lurch towards more Tory policies.

But the other danger in the aftermath of the Election is the re-emergence of the 'left' fakers.

They will set out consciously to disguise their own wretched past compromises with Callaghan's rightwing policies, and in campaigning for 'socialist' policies, will aim to restrict Labour's programme to the Tribune group's nationalist line of seeking import controls and increased government investment in private industry.

Foremost among them is of course Benn, who in the latest funeral issue of *Labour Weekly* heads his "eight point plan" to rebuild mass Labour membership with the plea that:

"There must be no personal recriminations about the last five years".

This appeal should be seen as not merely shielding Callaghan and the right wing from the legitimate anger of Labour militants, but also, of course, sheltering Benn himself from

police charges could be dropped. Perhaps the Commissioner might agree also if you had the same view."

At pains to point to his own concern for 'law and order', Bidwell argues that many of the youth arrested could face jail-sentences if convicted on the charges brought against them by the police.

"If they are put in prison it could launch them onto a career of crime", he whines.

Whitelaw has already shown unmistakably where he stands by his immediate cash bonus to the paid thugs of the police and armed forces.

Bootlicking

The task in defending the 342 is not to lick Whitelaw's boots and grovel to police chief McNee, but to mobilise the broadest possible support within the labour movement for solidarity action.

Such a campaign, and the labour movement inquiry now being launched must set out to expose as thoroughly as possible to the entire working class that the brutality of the Southall events is not a one-off "excess" but the real face of police preparations to confront the mass struggles of the workers' movement against the attacks of capitalism.



Southall demonstrators mourn Blair Peach

BIDWELL CRAWLS TO WHITELAW

Left Labour MP Syd Bidwell has taken up the case of the 342 workers and youth arrested amid savage police violence in the Southall anti-fascist demonstration.

Foremost among the victims of the rampaging thugs in blue was anti-fascist Blair Peach, killed by a blow to the head from a Special Patrol Group truncheon.

Another, Clarence Baker lies still perilously close to death from brain injuries in a local hospital.

A whole series of trade union bodies have already called for a labour movement inquiry into the actions of the police.

What, then, has Bidwell done about this brutal racist assault?

Has he, for example, demanded the removal of former Labour Home Secretary Rees and his fellow cabinet scabherders in the Callaghan leadership, who presided over and defended the operation?

No, nothing like that. Bidwell has written a bleating letter of protest to Tory Home Secretary Whitelaw asking for support!

According to the *Ealing Gazette*, Bidwell's letter says: "It would be marvellous if



SYL youth demand speaking rights from LPYS National Chairman Phil Frampton at anti-SUS demo after being excluded from platform for shouting anti-Callaghan slogans.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

Benn

attack for his scurrilous role as a servile, if left-talking' hod-carrier for the Callaghan cabinet and its reactionary policies throughout its period of office.

Laughable

Laughably, only days after being thrown out of his office in Callaghan's strikebreaking, wage-cutting, job slashing Labour government, Benn announces that:

"First, we must defend the interests of working people and

their families against any policies—at home or abroad—which would threaten world peace, restrict our democratic rights, reduce our living standards or undermine our civil liberties."

Such cynical posturing by Benn will be facilitated also by the tame cat "Marxists" of Labour's 'Militant' group.

Their post-election editorial article limply describes the Callaghan government as a "failure".

Climbing down to right wing attacks on the winter's pay strikes, 'Militant' even lashes out at what it astonishingly describes as:

"the unskillful tactics occasionally adopted by some of the public service workers—who had little or no previous experience of strike action".

Are we to believe that the subtle manoeuvres at the 'Militant' editorial offices could have found a way to take strike action in a hospital without a frenzied Tory press witch-hunt?

Or isn't this rather just a back-stabbing attack on the strikes that did occur, for supposedly damaging Labour's election chances?

'Militant' says nothing of the importance of these strikes in preparing the basis of a fight against Tory attacks.

Indeed it is back to the parliamentary arena and the inner-party debate, rather than to political developments from such mass struggles, that 'Militant' looks for hope in the future:

"Tony Benn and the Tribune MPs have rightly called for a return to fundamental socialist ideas.

Regrettably, [!] the parliamentary left's opposition to the leadership's policies was muted [!] during the campaign".

Again 'Militant' distorts reality and covers up for the 'lefts'.

Not only was the opposition of the Parliamentary 'lefts' non-existent during the election campaign, it had been all but invisible for the preceding five years!

But 'Militant' has no desire to challenge this record.

Like the 'lefts' themselves, the 'Militant' leaders also oppose the demand for a fight to kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

Their call for a return to "fundamental socialist principles" takes place in the context of accepting continued right wing leadership of the Labour Party, and covering up for the continued retreats by the Tribuneite 'left'.

Socialist Press calls on all its supporters in the Labour Party to redouble the fight for the removal of the Callaghan right wing whose policies stand utterly discredited.

This fight will expose the real position of every variety of left faker.

It will open the struggle for a programme capable of mobilising the working class—not as pure election fodder for the Labour machine, but in mass action to defend its independent interests against the Tory enemy.



Callaghan on his ill-starred campaign trail

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

*Defend the unions! Mass action to defeat anti-union laws! Reject the Concordat!

*No wage controls! For increases protected against inflation through cost-of-living clauses!

*No sackings! Demand work sharing on full pay! Open the books of the employers that threaten redundancy or closure, to elected committees of trade unionists!

*Nationalise the major industries, banks and trusts without compensation, under workers' management!

*No cuts! Occupy threatened facilities and fight for supporting strike action.

THE STRUGGLES THAT TOPPLED HEATH'S UNION-BASHING TEAM

By John
Lister

The working class certainly has the strength and confidence to confront and defeat the right wing Thatcher government.

This is the clear lesson from three and a half years of Tory misrule under Heath, in which an equally determined group of businessmen and bankers also set out hoping to tame the trade unions and drive up the profitability of crisis-ridden British capitalism.

Having started out with characteristic Tory arrogance and ruthlessness, the Heath government faced a mounting tide of working class opposition on every front—and was forced from office in disgrace in the midst of the miners' pay struggle in early 1974.

Pessimism

At a time when pessimists will see the 1979 election as a major defeat, and reformists of every stripe are seeking excuses to explain Callaghan's electoral disaster and Thatcher's success, it is particularly important to focus on the continuity of the class struggle which, in the case of the Heath government, vividly refuted the idea that working class involvement in politics revolves around five-yearly elections or the Parliamentary arena.

Only the emergence of the extreme right wing Thatcher leadership in the wake of Heath's defeat, and fading memories of his period of office, make it possible for Heath to be viewed now as some kind of 'moderate' Tory.

The opposite was the case. In many ways the Heath government marked an

abrupt change from the methods and personnel of the Tory governments during the 'boom' period—the infamous 'thirteen years of Tory misrule'.

Aggressive

The crisis facing British capitalism in the collapse of the boom was so intense that the most aggressive sections of the British capitalist class were thrust to the forefront of this party of big business, displacing the old layers of landed gentry—the MacMillans, the Douglas-Homes, and their fellow tweed-clad gentlefolk.

The bloody pleasures of grouse-shooting were replaced with the frantic hunt for ways of screwing increased profits from the working class.

Forward from the Tory ranks came such business advocates as former CBI chief John Davies, investment tycoon Peter Walker, building boss Sir Keith Joseph, and others with extensive business interests including Anthony Barber, Edward Du Cann, Reginald Maudling and Robert Carr.

Alongside these men were retained those aristocratic and landowning elements best suited to co-ordinating the all-round offensive on the working class—Whitelaw, Carrington and Lord Hailsham (then Quintin Hogg).

Ruthless

The policies this new team wanted were more ruthless, more abrupt, than the traditional anti-working class policies pursued under previous Tory governments.

And they wanted them implemented with an urgency suited to the



Heath

mounting crisis of British capitalism.

But they did not campaign openly for such policies in the 1970 election. Instead, Tory campaign strategy rested on hiding the reality of their policies behind a barrage of generalities.

These generalities were first spelled out for the benefit of the Tory press in January 1970 at a shadow cabinet meeting at the Selsdon Park Hotel.

Heath's men—much as Thatcher's team has done in the 1979 campaign—proclaimed themselves advocates of 'law and order', of reduced taxation, of restricted immigration, and of 'reforming the unions'.

Confidence trick

Among their more effective confidence tricks in the run-up to the June 18 1970 election was Heath's vote-catching televised speech two days before the polls promising to "cut prices at a stroke", supposedly through the abolition of Selective Employment Tax and the introduction of Value Added Tax.

The echo of this farcical pledge was also heard in 1979—in Thatcher's endless rant about the Labour

government's record on prices and her repetition of promises to cut direct taxes and substitute indirect taxes.

The reality in either case is of course that top paid managers and employers receive thumping tax cuts on their already inflated salaries, while working class families pay for them through steep price increases on basic goods in the shops and slashed social services.

Heath's pledge on prices was to become one of the most notorious election promises on record: but in the wake of six years of right wing Labour government under Wilson it helped to secure the votes needed for a 30-seat Tory majority on June 18.

Once safely in office, the Tories' real plans could be set in motion. Prices were to go up a record 10.5% in Heath's first 11 months in office—the biggest single increase since the food price index was set up in 1962.

By October 1970, Chancellor Anthony Barber was ready to present a mini-budget that doubled prescription charges, ended free school milk, raised charges for school meals, spectacles and dental treatment, and withdrew sub-



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

TUC leader Vic Feather: TUC looked for ways not of removing but working with Tories

sidies from food and rail fares.

Sick pay ended

Charges were introduced for admission to museums and art galleries, and sick pay for the first three days of absence was ended.

For the rich, however, it was a tax bonanza, with a 6d cut in income tax bringing hefty increases in bosses' take-home pay. It was working class families who found themselves worse off, with school meals increases alone swallowing up their tax cuts.

Abandoned were cynical election pledges to make £30 million available to relieve poverty. Instead, Sir Keith Joseph presided over the miserly £8m funds allocated to "Family Incomes Supplement"—a direct government subsidy for low-wage employers.

Meanwhile within two weeks of taking office Heath had plunged headlong into talks on entry into the Common Market.

This move was designed to forge greater links between European and British capitalist industry, at the expense of huge increases in food and other prices, and massive rationalisation of industry, forcing thousands of workers onto

the dole.

In Heath's view no expense was too great for the working class to bear in solving the desperate problems of British capitalism.

The "negotiations" on EEC entry, headed by Geoffrey Rippon, proved as farcical as Heath's own election pledge on prices.

The Industrial Relations Bill took rather long to get under way—but only because the Tories kept adding to it as it emerged. By December 15 1970 it was receiving its second reading in the Commons.

Unsuccessful

Based largely on Wilson's unsuccessful 1969 anti-union bill 'In Place of Strife' (which Wilson had withdrawn, after massive protests by workers, on the basis of a 'Concordat'-style 'solemn and binding' undertaking by TUC leaders they would police the actions of their members) the Tory Bill set out to enmesh the trade unions in a straightjacket of legal restrictions.

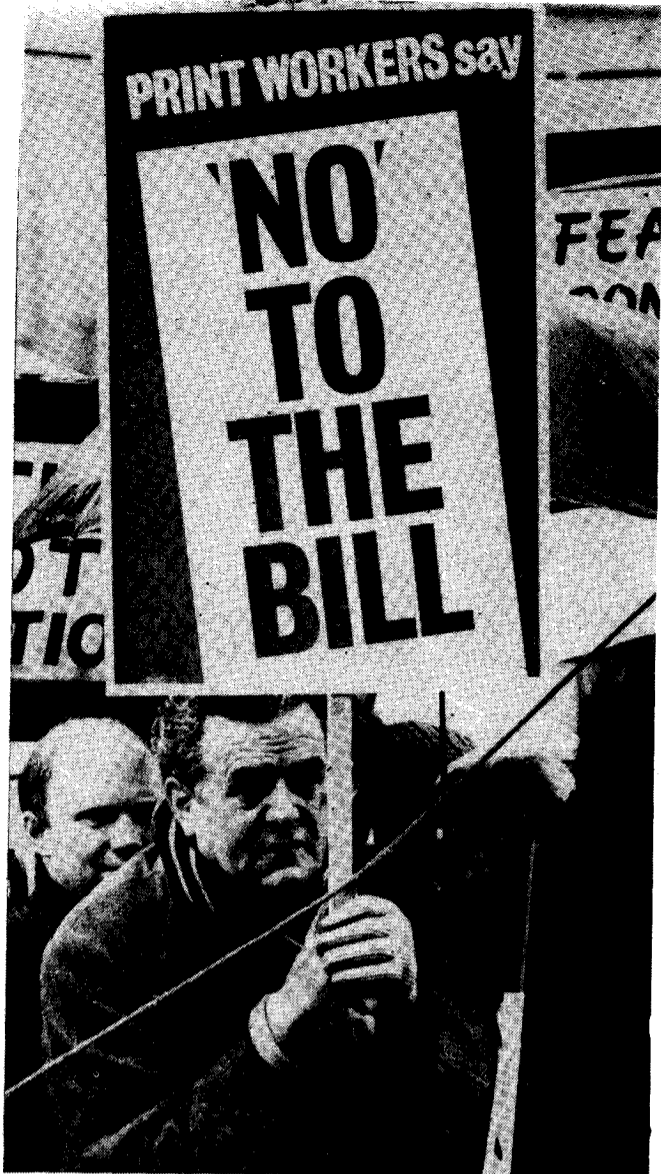
It set up a compulsory register of 'recognised' trade unions, from which existing unions were forced to de-register in order to withdraw, but which afforded



Thatcher—Heath's milk-snatcher Education Secretary



In charge of I.R. Act—Carr



Demonstrations and token protests fail to kill the bill.

recognition to a whole number of tame staff associations and bosses' house unions as a means of blocking unionisation.

Union rule books were to be vetted by the capitalist state.

The Act made written collective agreements legally enforceable—in a step towards US-style three-year contracts, which specifically outlaw strike action even over safety issues.

Breaches of such agreements would therefore lay unions open to unlimited claims for damages in the courts.

New court

As arbiter of the immensely complex Industrial Relations Act a new court—the National Industrial Relations Court—was to be set up, with legal powers to order workers to suspend strike action for a "cooling off period" of up to 60 days and to order the holding of secret ballots.

In keeping with the undisguised city-slicker image of the Heath government, the court even abandoned the theatrical pretence of impartial 'justice' represented by the wigs and robes of the judiciary: instead its president, Sir John Donaldson, meted out the arrogant dictates of British capitalism clad in an ordinary, if expensive, suit.



Wigless Judge Donaldson

But as was to emerge clearly, this was a *real* court, with the power to fine unions, sequester their assets, and jail trade unionists.

The Act itself was immensely long and complex—containing also, for example, provisions to restrict the freedom of the press in industrial reporting.

Much of it was never even discussed in Parliament, as a result of the "guillotine".

Its central thrust, however, was unmistakable: it was a conscious move to strip away the legal rights

won in struggle by the unions and set back the clock to 1901, when the historic Taff Vale judgement had made unions liable for damages arising from industrial disputes.

The objective was to legally blackmail the collaborators in the trade union bureaucracy into acting as policemen over their membership—for fear of penal fines.

No mood to accept

But, as we shall see, the working class was in no mood to accept such measures from a Tory government, having already defeated a much milder form of legal attack from Wilson in 1969.

Heath was to have more success however in enforcing Tory policy on other key issues.

The supporting role played for the Tories in the 1970 election campaign by Enoch Powell was acknowledged in a vicious Immigration Bill, which created second-class citizenship for black immigrants and imposed further restrictions upon them.

Heath himself had posed unconvincingly as a 'liberal' on the race issue during the election campaign, but had refused to separate himself in any way from Powell's viciously racist and red-baiting election speeches, which went so far as to implicitly allege that figures on coloured immigration were being manipulated by 'traitors' and 'Maoists' in the main government ministries.

The Tories' commitment to smaller and larger landlords, and their bitter hostility to council housing which keeps down rents in the private sector was also spelled out unmistakably in the Housing Finance Act—misnamed "A Fair Deal For Housing", introduced in 1971.

Withdraw subsidies

The objective of this Act was to withdraw housing subsidies to the tune of £500 million per year—which could then be handed out to big business and

employers in tax concessions.

At the same time councils would be required, in stages, to raise rents on their housing to the prevailing market level—the Tories' idea of a "fair" rent—meaning in many instances more than doubling existing rents.

Council house building would be effectively halted.

Resistance to this punitive measure was immediate: previously moribund tenants' associations sprang back to life; new tenants' bodies were formed. Militant demonstrations took place—particularly in the North West.

Ignominious

But the ignominious retreat of Labour councils—only a handful of whom offered even verbal resistance to implementing the Act—and the refusal of the trade union bureaucracy to champion the fight, left the struggle in the last analysis at an individual level.

The gallant exception was the Labour council at Clay Cross, which stood firm in its defiance of the Act, and proceeded also to flout Heath's pay laws.

Upheld by Wilson

For this the councillors faced legal penalties including removal from office and compulsory repayment of the money they had spent or refused to collect—penalties that were shamefully upheld by the returned Wilson government in 1974.

But if the *British* working class faced a battery of repressive measures, then so did the Irish people.

Wilson's government had sent troops in 1969 to halt the process of radicalisation of the Irish working class reflected in the Civil Rights campaign.

Far from "protecting" the oppressed Catholic minority in the six counties, the British army had sent only after the "Battle of the Bogside" had proved the ability of the nationalist population to defend itself

and defeat the sectarian loyalist thugs of the 'B' Specials and the RUC.

But for the Tories this military repression was not enough.

1971 saw the introduction of internment, imprisoning hundreds of suspected republicans, and of vicious methods of torture of republican prisoners that later became an international scandal, whitewashed in the Compton Report.

As routine army terror using CS gas and rubber bullets against protestors plainly failed to check growing resistance to imperialism the Tories cold-bloodedly plotted the slaughter of 13 unarmed young demonstrators, shot in the back by the Parachute Regiment in the Bloody Sunday massacre of January 30, 1972.

Provocations

When these murders actually led to an *increase* in IRA recruitment, the Tories went even further and through Defence Minister Lord Carrington, plotted a series of provocations carried out by the Littlejohn brothers, Kenneth and Keith, designed to discredit the IRA and create the climate for still further repression.

And it was the Tories that in April 1973 rail-roaded in the no-jury Diplock Courts, designed to rubber-stamp convictions on the unsubstantiated word of a concealed police officer, or on the basis of confessions beaten from supposed "suspects".

Throughout this period the scandalous compliance of the Labour leadership to every aspect of Tory military repression in Ireland left opposition restricted to a comparative handful of socialists and internationalists within the labour movement.



Heath's government massively stepped up repression in Ireland

However, the fact remains that wherever a spark of leadership was offered, the working class showed itself ready and willing to fight tooth and nail against the Tories and everything this businessmen's government stood for.

Immediately prior to the 1970 election a strike by SOGAT printworkers had brought the national press to a standstill for five days.

And within a month of Heath taking office a docks strike fighting for an improvement of a 4-7% pay offer brought the government to declare a State of Emergency.

The winter of 1970-71 brought the bitter pay battle by power-workers—headed off by the first of a series of "special case" inquiries into pay and conditions.

Fringe benefits

Relying on the collaboration of right wing EETPU leader Chapple, the Wilberforce inquiry failed to improve the basic pay offer to the power workers, but offered instead an improvement in fringe benefits.

The Tory moves to legislate the Industrial Relations Bill in late 1970 proved an important testing ground for the leadership of the working class.

The Trotskyists of the Socialist Labour League correctly argued that this frontal attack on the working class and its organisations could be defeated not by parliamentary debate or by protest marches and token strikes, but only by the mobilisation of a General Strike to bring down the Heath government.

This position—denounced by reformists, Communist Party Stalinists and other left groups as a "sectarian" view, an impossible ultimatum to the working class—was however vindicated by every succeeding event.

The one day strikes and protest marches, despite their size, *did* fail completely to so much as hinder the passing of the Act.

January 1971 saw strikes of 20,000 and 160,000, and a huge 100,000 strong demonstration on the TUC day of action against the bill.

A strike called on March 1 brought an even bigger stoppage by 1.5 million workers as did March 18—but the Bill still ground its way relentlessly through

it grew the militancy of important sections of the working class—in particular the miners.

Barber's March 1971 Budget took place under conditions of incipient recession. Rolls Royce, a centrepiece of the engineering industry, had gone bankrupt: other firms including Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and BSA were teetering on the brink; production was actually *falling*, and unemployment was over the 800,000 mark—an increase of one third since Heath took office.

Unperturbed, Barber simply continued with his previous policy of tax hand-outs to the rich.

And the TUC continued looking for ways not of removing but of cooperating with the government that was preparing war on the unions.

Collaboration

Nor was this line of collaboration broken in the struggles following the bankruptcy of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in June.

Even while 30,000 Glasgow workers struck and marched in solidarity with the 6,000 threatened workers at UCS and in opposition to a spate of sackings in Scotland, Stalinist covenors were looking *not* to the prospect of building up independent working class action to force out the Tories, but to a seemingly endless succession of negotiations with alternative private employers.

The UCS 'work-in', begun on July 30, 1971, and generously supported by trade unionists throughout Britain, could have been the centrepiece of a campaign for action to remove the Tories.

Instead it began and ended as a monument to Stalinist class collaboration,

which eventually wound up with thousands of jobs lost and a wretched deal with the giant Marathon shipbuilders which included vicious speed-up and no-strike clauses.

Puffing clouds of 'militant' rhetoric, the UCS leaders trekked gamely up and down between millionaire employers and the Tory Industry Minister Sir John Eden.

But all the time the Tories were forging steadily ahead with the preparations for the first sessions of the National Industrial Relations Court.

Continued next week

AN APOLOGY FOR SMALL TOWN USA

Film review by David Whitfield

Take a hero—make him a young man, a steel-worker in the closely-bonded community of a small industrial town in Pennsylvania.

Provide him with two companions, from the same background, and subject them to a terrible ordeal—the experience of war in Vietnam, where one companion is crippled, and the other breaks apart psychologically and dies in horrific circumstances.

Structure the events of the narrative so as to present the moral progress of the hero.

At one level, that is the essence of 'The Deer Hunter'. Produced with an extensive budget and impressive resources, the film has attracted huge audiences, and rave reviews.

But this praise has been exaggerated out of all proportion to the conscious or unconscious political preconceptions of the reviewers.

'The Deer Hunter' is a thoroughly reactionary work, though not *because* of its treatment of the war in Vietnam.

The scenes in Vietnam *express* the reactionary positions which lie far deeper than any apology for US foreign policy, or even for the international role of imperialism.

Steel mills

The opening scenes give a long and loving portrayal of Clairtown, with its tight community of Russian descent.

The town's economic life is based on the steel industry, and Cimino actually takes the camera inside the mills.

But the film stops short at reproducing the violence of the noise, fire and moving weights.

No attempt is made to show anything of the social relations which dominate this process of production—the men are not seen as living here, but as passing numbed through the whole experience.

At the changing lockers they begin to revive, and once outside the gates they emerge as individual humans. Michael, the hero (played by Robert de Niro) spends his leisure time getting pissed up with his buddies, and going off into the mountains to hunt deer.

The climax of this section is the wedding feast, where the forces of religion and the family integrate all the classes of the community into one united whole which can contain every kind of potential conflict and yet survive as a source of strength to its members.

After this celebration of faith, the film cuts to Vietnam—and to war. In a sense, the two are not related.

Not political

'The Deer Hunter' is not a 'political' film. On the surface, it has no direct concern with the Vietnam war, and certainly no concern at all with its political reality.

The film's concern is with U.S. society, and a community within that society which is presented as completely self-contained, totally unaware of any outside developments and absolutely lacking in any political consciousness at all.

From this perspective, the Vietnam war has no history—

it is simply a grotesque irrational experience which cuts across 'normal' every-day life and has no connection with it.

But it is an experience which has to be seen through to the bitter end.

The war scenes are certainly presented with immense power. The horror of war, and the terrible pity of war are conveyed relentlessly to devastating effect.

But just as the steelworkers were shown as having no conscious or social life within the mills, so the three Americans from Clairtown do not appear as soldiers in an army.

Individuals

They are simply individuals caught up in a war that is not of their making, subjected to attacks and so forced to fight back in self defence.

Faced with these incomprehensible obstacles, they must either respond with dumb heroism, or go under—only American 'grit' or 'guts' can see them through.

Michael—a solid, unexceptional guy in Clairtown—passes the test with flying colours (and a row of medals for gallantry). In the crucial scene, all three are imprisoned by the NLF in a water-cage. Above, their captors gamble by forcing the Americans to play Russian roulette.

It is Michael who urges on his fellow prisoners to defy the terror of the situation, and then gives them their due praise: "You've done it, you've shown them". It's a cliché from any one of the thousands of films celebrating machismo.

But in 'The Deer Hunter', the cliché draws its force from the way 'they' are presented. Throughout, the Vietnamese are portrayed as 'aliens' with barbaric practices—in fact, scarcely human in the terms of the screen Clairtown.

Atrocities

The NLF commit endless and wanton atrocities, while the Americans act decently and from the necessity of self-preservation. But the anti-communist element in this ridiculous perversion of history is entirely subordinate to the dominant racism.

In Saigon, different Vietnamese are shown busily exploiting the Americans through gambling, prostitution, drugs and the black market.

And of course exploitation is a form of relationship completely foreign to the friendly cooperation of Clairtown.

It is to this city of corruption that Michael returns, after his term of duty has been completed, to rescue his great buddy, Nick.

Steve has already received the appropriate deserts for a failure of courage—he is now a wheelchair cripple, legs and an arm amputated.

Mindless wreck

Nick has become a mindless wreck, repeatedly playing Russian roulette in gambling dens. When Michael finally tracks him down, the predictable happens and Nick at last fires a loaded chamber.

In one of the three major scenes which form the



US airmen rush to load up bombers: is this individual self defence?

conclusion of the film, Michael breaks down, shaking the body and sobbing, "Nickie, Nickie, I love you". With this unconvincing line, the film sums up their relationship in totally confusing terms.

Mike and Nick form another link in that apparently endless succession of devoted male buddies (but never lovers) which have infested American cinema ('Casablanca', 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' etc.).

They embody masculine solidarity in superiority to the demands represented by women, and security from the burden of domestic life (the province of women).

What Michael has apparently achieved from his experience is

the ability to articulate the value of their relationship to him. It is, really, just as well Nick is dead at this point—it is difficult to see how the film could have coped with their future relationship if he had survived beyond Michael's moment of self-knowledge.

The film ends with the funeral-party of friends after Nick's body has been flown back to Clairtown. Helpless, unable to absorb the experience which has thrown their lives into catastrophe, they resolve their confusion by joining together to sing 'God Bless America'.

As a conclusion, this is totally unprepared and a disastrous artistic failure. But Cimino is not just throwing

caution to the winds and staking everything on a desperate last fling of blatant jingoism. The message is far more subtle, and none the less reactionary for that.

The 'American nation' has had to undergo the terrible experience of war in Vietnam.

But this has not all been disruption and loss—it has also been a process of education, of learning the importance of the values which sustain American society.

Perhaps the purging of war was even necessary for this purification to take place.

America needs God's blessing, because it's been through a bad time, but now it's humble, trying to learn from past mistakes.

The crude political conclusion which flows from this is that US foreign policy should return to the days of 'splendid isolation'—with the small proviso that it may be necessary to break this rule from time to time in order to keep the world a place where men are free to make their peace with Nature, free to take wives, and where buddies can go on meeting just as good friends.

Forlorn

Ten years from now, 'The Deer Hunter' will seem laughable, a forlorn attempt to breathe new life into the commonplace pieties of American liberal humanism.

The film is not an apology for the role of US imperialism in Vietnam, but a hymn in praise of the traditional values of American society with all its bourgeois forms and the massive apparatus of bourgeois ideology.

In the USA of 'The Deer Hunter', all are united in one nation, where (white) immigrants of any nationality are accepted as equal citizens, where class is an irrelevancy and the class struggle non-existent.

It is a reactionary fantasy projected with considerable force, in its way, a heroic effort.

But the artistic weakness of 'The Deer Hunter' is not accidental or avoidable. It is a direct product of the inability of bourgeois ideology—however liberal or well-meaning—to present an image of US imperialism that fully corresponds with its reality and can explain the crimes it has committed, not only against the Vietnamese and other peoples, but against the working class within its own frontiers.



Victims of US pattern bombing in Vietnam

CACTL SPOTLIGHTS WAR ON UNION RIGHTS

Johnny Byrne reviews *Whose Law and Order?*

Since its formation in 1974 the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) has attempted to raise within the labour movement and within squatters' organisations the issue of occupation against closures.

Over the last period

CACTL's correct orientation to the organisations of the working class has built up an important list of affiliations including 150 trade union regions, districts and branches (including all 4 AUEW sections and North West Region TUC), 70 trades councils, 30 Labour Parties, the NUS and 60 students unions, and a large number of political, legal, housing and community organisations.

The production of this pamphlet, *Whose Law and Order?* comes at a particularly significant time when the rights to occupy, strike and picket are coming under increasing fire from the state (police violence and reactionary judges), from the Tories (with their promises to smash the most fundamental of union rights) and from the leadership of both the Labour Party and the trade unions (with

the 'Concordat' and all manner of restrictive 'codes of conduct').

In this sharpening situation CACTL has extended its brief beyond occupations to take in attacks on the right to strike, to picket, to black goods and to demonstrate.

In doing so the campaign provides an invaluable guide to the development of the attacks by the state and from the right wing.

But the pamphlet entirely fails to take up the role of the trade union bureaucrats in masterminding the deals with capitalism which undermine trade union rights just as surely as any Act of Parliament.

Whose Law and Order? gives a comprehensive analysis of the state's build-up towards a confrontation with the unions.

It shows clearly that in order to win that clash the state is already whittling away at the right to picket, strike, occupy and demonstrate.

Survey

The pamphlet includes a chronological survey of developments over the last nine years—though again the role of the bureaucracy is not brought out.

For example, under 1978: "Gamers strike begins—police limit pickets to six".

There is no mention here of the collaboration of TGWU Region 1 officials who proposed, engineered and still defend the whole deal!

In stressing the point that CACTL fails to take account of the role of the present working class leadership I am not simply making some minor carping criticism.

It is the most important political lesson to be drawn from the whole fight to defend basic rights.

Unlike some organisations waging campaigns within the labour movement, CACTL has a clear position on the militancy of the working class.

The willingness of workers to fight comes over strongly in much of the pamphlet.

All the more reason then to raise the crucial question of the kind of leadership the working class has.

CACTL itself has recently come under attack from the TUC leadership at the highest level (see SP 134) for trying to organise regional conferences on the attack on basic union rights.

Whose Law and Order? was written at the time that Callaghan and the TUC were formulating the 'Concordat', the so-called "Better Way" which sought to re-establish the labour bureaucracy's control over the rank-and-file after the lorry drivers' and public sector workers' strikes.

The actual terms of the government/TUC 'codes of conduct' mirrored accurately proposals put by the police.

As such, in the General Election the working class was presented with a "choice" between an attack by Labour's grovelling reformist leadership, arm in arm with TUC bureaucrats, or by the Tories themselves.

Despite this, *Whose Law and Order?* is noticeably vague on the implications:

"The advantages of such a code are obvious—it would be the unions rather than the state which would have to enforce it."

"The importance of the precedent which would thus be established is a matter which has not only been taken up by many within the movement but also by the Judge hearing the United Biscuits case against the lorry driver picket."

"In his summing up one of the reasons he gave for granting the injunction was that the picket was acting against union instruction".

In other words the union leadership provides the bullets, while the state finally pulls the trigger. But CACTL does not attempt to draw any such conclusions.

Instead it pulls back from facing the vital question of leadership.

Nowhere in the pamphlet, for example, is there a call for strike committees to retain absolute control over picketing.

Fighting for workers control means challenging all those in the leadership of the labour movement who refuse to go all-out to defend basic union rights.

We have no political control over the Tories, the police or the judiciary, but we do have the duty to take up a fight within the Labour Party and the unions to direct towards a revolutionary perspective which will actually show a way forward to defend the rights to strike, picket, demonstrate, black goods and occupy.

Occupation

Such a programme must be based on tactics of occupation linked to strike action, with work sharing on full pay to combat redundancies and sackings, with workers' defence squads set up to defend the picket line, and with an end to all court interference in union affairs.

We urge readers of *Socialist Press* to get copies of *Whose Law and Order?*, to support affiliations to CACTL and to fight against Len Murray's attempts to sabotage the organisation of regional TUC conferences: on occupations and strikes.

The booklet is an important compendium of developments over the last period; but it is in the failure to tackle the question of the role of the present union leadership that it betrays its lack of perspective for the sharp struggles that lie immediately ahead.

'Charity'—no

Andrew MacDonald meets

'Rough Justice'.

answer

Being poorly housed myself and a non-protected tenant I was keen to buy *Rough Justice* (subtitled "The Problems and Issues Confronting Homeless Single People"). Since it was a so-called 16-page 'special' issue I bought it.

But when I read the magazine it turned out to be completely different from what I suspected it to be and I feel I have been somewhat conned.

Rough Justice is the magazine of the National Cyrenians. I'd never heard of them before.

The dictionary described them as "hedonistics" (people who believe pleasure is the chief good) of Aristippus of Cyrene.

This meant even less to me; but it confirmed what I suspected—that the Cyrenians are a rather obscure sect.

However the Cyrenians described themselves as being "the group living with the single homeless".

They claim to: "provide various services for some 27 affiliated groups throughout Britain. Between them these groups run over 40 projects for homeless ranging from night shelters and day centres to long-stay houses".

The magazine has three pages of news, most of which is about squatting and hostels for the homeless.

But the main bulk of the issue is devoted to institutions.

Institutions are the modern

equivalent to the Victorian workhouse which "from outside and inside appear to be like prisons or mental hospitals".

Institutions which house homeless single people have hardly changed from the Victorian era.

Being out of sight and little known, they seem to have been missed by all but a few of the most thorough social reformers.

The appalling conditions in one particular institution—Camberwell Green Reception Centre—are dealt with in *Rough Justice*.

Here the staff had been regularly beating up homeless men, stealing their belongings, and generally mistreating the users.

When complaints were made they were dismissed by first the management and then the police.

An official cover-up similar to that employed at Hull prison was used but this time it even involved a Civil Service union, which threatened to strike if investigations against seven staff members being carried out by the charities CHAR and SHELTER were not dropped.

The case of Camberwell highlighted how anachronistic are these institutions, as well as the difficulty of obtaining any information because of their shut-off nature.

The reception centres are, of course, used only as a last resort by the homeless.

The Homeless Persons Act (now due to be abolished by the Tories, who advocate a return to

Rachmanite practices) hardly affected their users.

Sections of the Act were from the start more or less impossible to enforce.

Whilst *Rough Justice* does make an attempt to publicise the maltreatment of the homeless its charitable and middle class individualistic approach to the acute social problem (which is undeniably a product of capitalism) means it is unable to reach the root of the problem.

Other articles talk about how to 'fiddle' the state into getting a grant for various projects which the Cyrenians think are good ideas—such as de-toxication centres (which they think should be run voluntarily).

The other thing I learnt from *Rough Justice* is that apart from the two mainstream charities CHAR (the campaign for single homeless people) and SHELTER (the national housing charity) there are various other splinter group charities, such as the Housing Action Campaign and Network.

Such organisations obviously thrive in the middle class milieu in which they exist, along with Oxfam, Health Food Shops, co-ops, student drop-outs and anarchists.

But such middle class protest and charity is hopeless. It can never point to the reality of the problems it seeks to solve or challenge the capitalist system which creates such social evils.

Only a revolutionary party can do this.



Greeting for police at the first eviction in which the new Criminal Law Act was used



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CPSA delegates must throw out Whitleyism

As the CPSA Conference meets this week, the NEC's recent sellout on the pay claim will be to the forefront of delegates' minds.

There are several motions on the agenda censuring the NEC for their lack of leadership over the pay campaign.

In the light of the betrayals of the pay claim there will be increased support for motions calling for CPSA withdrawal from the Whitley Council set-up, the Pay Research Unit and the 1974 pay agreement.

There is also a series of motions censuring CPSA General Secretary Ken Thomas for supporting the document "A Better Way"—which advocates a permanent incomes policy—and for signing the TUC 'Concordat' in contravention of CPSA policy.

There are very few motions on public expenditure cuts. The only motion proposing more than token protest is an important emergency motion from the Oxford DHSS branch calling for the union to adopt a policy of strike action against the cuts and to fight for a sliding scale of

public spending.

At a period when the Tory government is launching a vicious attack on the right to strike and picket it is important that conference supports those motions which call for defence of "secondary" picketing and defence of the right to strikers' families to supplementary benefit.

On women's rights there are motions censuring the NEC for their failure to fight for workplace nurseries and their participation in the reactionary "Family Day Care Scheme". The NEC will be censured yet again for not providing a creche at this year's conference (instead they have issued delegates with a list of childminders!).

The motions on abortion are all inadequate as they merely call for affiliation to NAC and for support for demonstrations against restrictive legislation.

They ignore the fact that attacks on abortion rights are part of the cuts in the NHS.

On Ireland, there is a motion calling for the abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

There is also a completely

inadequate motion calling for troops out "at some time in the future—and this could mean decades".

It is extremely unlikely however that these motions will be heard, since the CPSA bureaucracy is determined that there be no discussion on Ireland.

The right wing dominated NEC have on the agenda several motions and documents which they want conference to endorse.

Their proposals are all extremely dangerous and if passed would strengthen the hold of the bureaucracy in CPSA.

Their document "A Review of CPSA Strike Policy" would severely restrict CPSA members' right to strike and would clearly sabotage any future campaign on the cuts or on pay.

The document totally rejects the tactic of all out strike action and sees selective action as the only way.

It also seeks to restrict what issues the union can strike over.

"Industrial action designed to change the political course of

the government is normally unlikely to be successful."

If accepted this would ensure that there would be insufficient union funds to sustain a strike of any length, since it proposes that the amount of subscription credited to the Strike Fund be restricted to 10% and that strike levies should be abolished.

There is also a proposed new rule on discipline which if passed would enable militants to be removed from office and expelled from the union without the present right of appeal to annual conference.

These moves taken with the proposed change of method of election procedures to the NEC, reflect the new influence of the right wing leadership.

The task in the coming period is to mobilise the newly radicalised sections of the CPSA that have come to the fore in the recent pay struggles in order to ensure that these right wingers are removed from the leadership and a principled alternative built within the ranks of the union.



WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN US

Whichever way you look at the struggles and problems now facing the working class throughout the world, one thing stands out above all: the necessity for a principled leadership capable of leading the struggle for state power and the establishment of a socialist society.

The massive revolutionary upheaval that has now toppled the seemingly impregnable might of the Shah of Iran and which is now already coming into conflict with the restrictions placed upon it by its Islamic "leaders" serves as a vivid reminder that socialist revolution is not only possible, but essential if the apparatus of capitalist repression and exploitation is to be destroyed once and for all.

But such a revolution requires a conscious Marxist leadership. And the fight to construct such a leadership is inseparable from the fight in the day-to-day struggles of the working class internationally for the principles, method and demands of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme. The Workers Socialist League has time and again proved to be the only movement in Britain that fights patiently and relentlessly on such a perspective.

We alone are the movement that does not shrink from even head-on battles with the existing leaders of the working class — whether these 'leaders' be open right wingers, 'left' talking Labourites or Stalinists of the Communist Party.

Of course this policy has made us no friends in the trade union and Labour bureaucracy, or amongst the opportunists and centrists of the British 'left'. But it has meant that the WSL has consistently offered the most powerful lead to workers in struggle.

The strength of our movement lies precisely in our rejection of any attempt to find "short cuts" around the necessary fight to construct a Marxist leadership in the working class.

In each struggle we set out to prove to workers both in theory and in practice the necessity of a new, revolutionary leadership and for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers in struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

This is why the WSL has featured at the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland and the public sector, in the fight against redundancies and closures, in struggles against the cuts, unionisation fights, and the fight for democracy in the labour movement.

This method of approach — rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy or concession to the labour bureaucracy — is of course essential not only in Britain but internationally.

In taking up international issues in the labour movement the WSL stresses not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revolutionary struggles such as those in Iran and Southern Africa, but also the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of socialist revolution.

The WSL is not the biggest movement on the left in Britain; but its approach to both theory and practice make it the only really serious revolutionary movement.

WHY NOT JOIN US?

Fill in the form below for more details, or approach your local branch, who will gladly supply more information about our programme, policies, and perspectives.

More details

Please send me more information about the WSL.

Name

Address

Send to Workers Socialist League, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NWS 1HR

JOBS FOR SALE AT CAV

Jobs have been under threat at the CAV plant in Acton for some time.

Now management have come up with some new tactics in their fight to cut manning levels.

Initially the employers were content to rely on wastage and non-replacement to shed jobs.

Now the workforce are being treated to redundancies and early retirement.

The redundancies passed quietly by with hardly anyone noticing because they were among part-time women on the evening shift.

Last week, meetings were held across the site to explain the management's offer of voluntary early retirement: a lump sum payment and a pension will depend on the length of service.

Overmanned

The reason put forward for this scheme is that the plant is overmanned as orders have fallen off sharply.

The management at CAV are not, as readers of *Socialist Press* will realise, unique in using the viability of the firm as the basis for attacks upon the living standards of workers.

The problem at CAV, as elsewhere, is that the union leadership accept the viability arguments of the employers.

As soon as this is accepted the only thing that can flow from them is cuts in jobs and wages.

The present offers of early retirement could rapidly lead on to be voluntary redundancies.

The end of the process may be the complete closure of the plant as at AEC.

The only way to combat the possible closure of the plant is to fight now for the work available to be shared among the existing work force with no loss

of pay.

The unions must defend every job in the plant—there must be no rundown of the workforce, and no redundancies.

The management's attempts to buy off individual workers must be resisted by uniting the workers in the plant on a campaign to keep every job in the plant, and replace all those who leave.

Open Lucas books

The workers must also demand the opening of the books, not only of CAV but also of Lucas, the parent company.

Only in this way can they get an idea of the real situation of the company and of their future plans for the plant.

With this information the workers can work out the best way to defend jobs.

Another factory in West London, EMI, has similar problems.

Fifty part-time workers have been made redundant and the management want another 130 redundancies among the 2,500 workforce—again blaming falling sales.

The TGWU convenor John Murray is quoted as saying "We have drawn the line at 50 redundancies until the management are prepared to talk about our 14% wage claim."

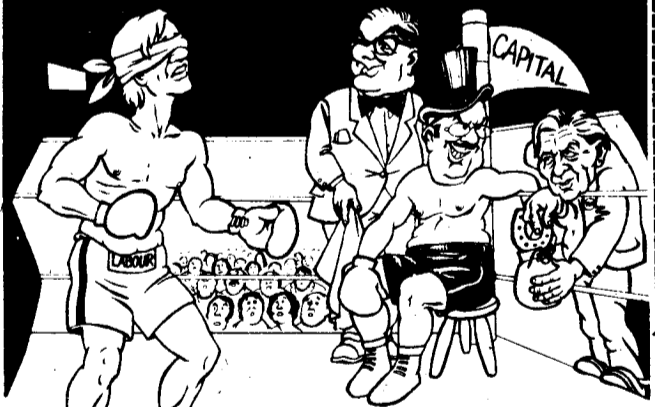
This clearly means that the jobs are for sale as long as the management are prepared to make a "reasonable" offer.

This year's wage claim at CAV is also 14%.

Although he does it in an incorrect way Murray is correct to link the question of jobs and wages.

The truth is that as long as viability is accepted by convenors like Murray, workers can make no gains on either front.

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!



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NO VICTORY YET AT EGA! **Garners: sell-out danger grows**

Despite supporters' claims last week of a victory for the campaign to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, it still remains under serious threat of closure in the near future.

The May 14 closure date was postponed following the actions of campaign supporters last Wednesday.

During a mass lobby of the AHA meeting, a group of supporters occupied the building where the meeting was to take place for over two hours, preventing it from going ahead.

But the outcome remains one of confusion and uncertainty over the hospital's future.

No guarantees

The occupation achieved no guarantees that the hospital would not be closed down in the immediate future, and failed to offer any answer to the problem of staff shortages which, though inflated out of all proportion by management, are caused at least in part by growing doubts among workers as to how long the EGA will remain open.

While deferring the May 14 closure plan, therefore, the occupiers could well have provided a pretext for the AHA officers to rush the closure decision through an unannounced meeting at very short notice—leaving little or no time to mobilise working class resistance.

There is no doubt that workers would respond to a call to action to defend the EGA. The response to this latest AHA plan had been immediate.

Mass lobby

The EGA action committee's call for a mass lobby of the AHA meeting and for a 24-hour picket of the hospital was at once taken up by the shop stewards committee of the Camden General branch of NUPE.

They voted to send a mass picket to the hospital on May 14, to organise regular delegations to the picket line, and to hold section meetings with invited speakers from the EGA in order to prepare the ground for further action in defence of the hospital.

Similar resolutions of support came from union branches throughout London, including a London NUPE nurses' shop stewards meeting.

But NUPE officials have, as usual, been anything but positive—giving no lead whatever to the moves to defend the EGA.



An earlier EGA picket

The task ahead remains one of preparing for widespread strike action and other solidarity action to prevent the closure of the EGA.

An all-London health service shop stewards' meeting must be called to give a central thrust to

this fight.

And the struggle must be taken up to expose and confront the treacherous NUPE bureaucracy which is plainly incapable of defending the health service against Thatcher's Tory axemen.

Despite an extremely effective lobby of the TGWU's London Regional Committee by Garners strikers and TGWU members last week, the 16-month strike faces the continuing danger of an official sell-out.

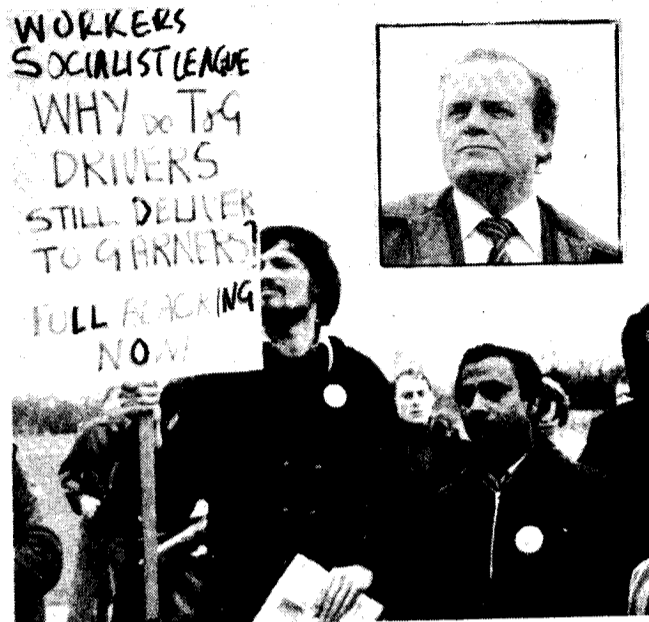
This could not be because Regional bureaucrats and full time officials are in any doubt as to the determination of the strikers to press ahead with their struggle for union recognition.

Both outside and inside the meeting this was forcibly impressed upon them by lobbyists, who demanded official support for the TGWU delegate conference called by the Strike Committee for June 9.

After the meeting there were emphatic denials by Regional officials that any decision had been taken to end the strike.

But it was clear that at least some of the Committee had dragged out the pitiful argument that the strike was now impossible to win "because there is now a Tory government in power".

There had been no evidence that Regional officials had any intention of winning the fight under the Labour government either!



WSL expose TGWU betrayal on Garners. Inset: Todd

In fact, of course, it is more than ever necessary at this point of time that the Garners strikers courageous stand in defence of union rights and the right to picket be stepped up like never before.

GEC knife job?

There is every prospect that the next TGWU General Executive Council meeting will make a move to knife the Garners strike, along with another marathon unionisation struggle at Sandersons Fork-

lifts, Skegness, where management last year made a laughing stock out of new TGWU national organiser Ron Todd.

Garners strikers are continuing to picket and campaign despite the sell-out moves—with a leading striker going to the CPSA conference in Hove this weekend.

Pickets, supporting resolutions and finance are urgently required and should be sent to the Strike Committee, 12-13 Henrietta Street, London WC2.

Throw out UPW traitors!

Tom Jackson has gained plenty of experience over the years in fighting with his back against the wall.

He will need to use all the tricks he's picked up in that time when he comes face to face with a hostile annual delegate conference of the UPW in Bournemouth next week.

Jackson's handling of the 1979 pay negotiations has aroused the contempt and fury of postal workers all over the country.

It was the general-secre-

tary and his fellow full-time officials who secured a vote on the executive to recommend acceptance of the 'efficiency agreement', which represented a wholesale attack on jobs and conditions throughout the industry.

Hypocrisy

After UPW members had rejected the settlement overwhelmingly, Jackson had the hypocrisy to claim 'As it has since turned out it is a good thing that this rejection took place'.

Since then talks with Post Office management have produced a confusing series of reports in the press, rumours and official UPW circulars.

But it now seems certain that the offer before the conference will be: 8% increase in the basic rate, 8% increase on supplements, reduction in incremental scales, and consolidation of the 7% rise dating from 1975.

Along with this (some to be backdated, some paid out on June 1) will go compensation of 4½%, or

possibly more, for a shift in review date from January 1 to July 1, and an 'opener' clause.

Abandoned

In fact this deal barely keeps postal workers' wages in pace with inflation, and abandons half the demands of the original 'wider claim'.

There will be no shortage of no confidence and censure motions against the executive and general-secretary conference.

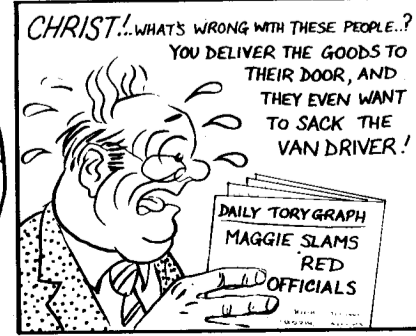
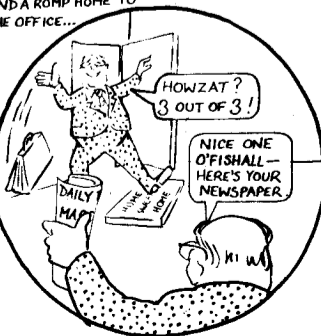
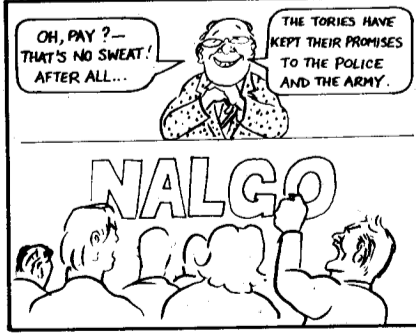
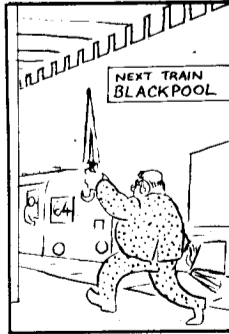
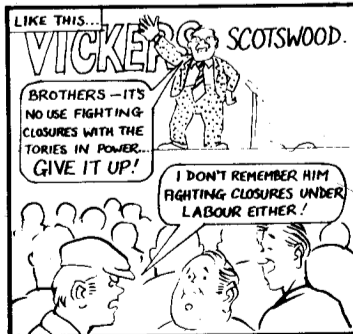
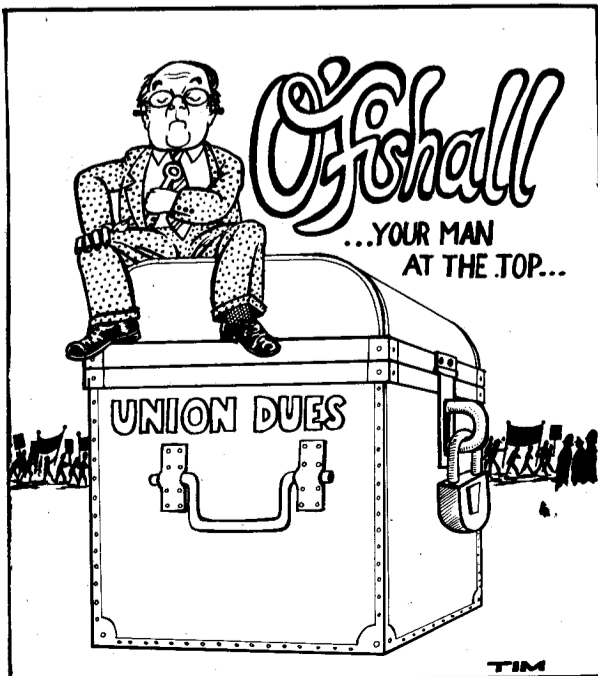
But these will all be just so much confetti unless

delegates mount a real challenge to the UPW bureaucracy.

The rules revision conference later this year will give an opportunity to strip the full-time officials of their voting power on the executive.

Back stabbing

But at Bournemouth next week, delegates can begin that battle by voting against the seven elected executive members who supported the back-stabbing 'efficiency agreement'



SOCIALIST PRESS



Whitelaw with British troops during Heath government

Witch-hunts and repression as Ireland war stepped up

As the British Tory press launched a full scale witch-hunt following the leak of a secret army document to IRA intelligence units, the imperialist army in the occupied North of Ireland was firing plastic bullets at a large demonstration called by Belfast Sinn Fein.

The march, supported by thousands of anti-imperialists, marked the release from the Long Kesh concentration camp of Ciaran Nugent, the first republican prisoner to embark on the heroic three year 'blanket' protest demanding a restoration of political status.

Neave's stand-in

It marked a sharp warning to Thatcher's man Humphrey Atkins—stand-in for the unlamented Airey Neave—that even the intensified repression in Ireland since the Tories under Heath last attempted to beat down the Irish people has failed to stem support for the war of liberation.

This is also confirmed by the contents of the leaked army document. Flying in the face of Labour butcher Mason's repeated claims that the IRA was a discredited handful of mindless criminals and social outcasts, the secret report, drawn up by a Brigadier Glover points out that:

"The Provisional IRA has the dedication and the sinews of war to raise violence intermittently to at least the level of 1978, certainly for the foreseeable future.

"Even if 'peace' is restored the motivation for politically inspired violence will remain. "Arms will be readily available and there will be many who are able and willing to use them.

Superficial

"Any peace will be superficial and brittle. A new campaign may well erupt in the years ahead."

This army report, unlike Mason, makes no attempt to deny the political character of the IRA's campaign. In this sense the release of this secret dossier adds further weight to the struggle for political POW status for those republican prisoners in jails in the six



Mason—lies exposed

counties and in Britain.

So too, does the ruling last week by US Federal Judge Frederick Woelfen, who last week refused a request by the British government for the extradition of IRA militant Peter McMullen.

Woelfen's refusal was based on the fact that the 1974

extradition treaty between Britain and the US excludes cases where the accused's crime is political.

Pointing to admissions by the British Government that an insurrection was occurring in Northern Ireland in 1970 and 1974, Woelfen concluded:

"The court is led to the

inescapable conclusion that an insurrection and a disruptive uprising of a political nature did in fact exist when Mr. McMullen is charged with the crimes against Claro Barracks".

More embarrassingly still, Woelfen went on to slam into Mason's basic argument by demolishing the government claim that McMullen's alleged bombing of the Claro barracks was "personally motivated".

Yet not only Labour butcher Mason, but Tory Deputy Premier Whitelaw have gone on record as totally opposed to restoration of political status for the republican prisoners of Long Kesh—who have been caught and tortured by political police; framed and convicted in political no-jury courts; and incarcerated in Long Kesh with other political prisoners.

Challenge

The British labour movement, and in particular the



Atkins

Labour Party must be challenged and mobilised on this question in support of the legitimate struggles of the oppressed nationalist minority in Ireland.

Troops out of Ireland now! Restore POW status to republican prisoners!

For a united Irish socialist republic!

Paper seller held under PTA

Dave Simpson, an Oxford student, was arrested and held for four hours under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on Saturday for selling *An Phoblacht/Republican News* in Oxford city centre.

After being grilled by the local Special Branch, Simpson was released without charge following a series of phone calls from protestors and an impromptu demonstration outside the police station.

'Licence'

Simpson, a member of the Provisional Sinn Fein, was selling alongside left paper sellers in Cornmarket Street, Oxford, when he was approached by a man claiming to be an off duty policeman, who asked to see his 'licence'. He then claimed the material was 'seditious' and contravened the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

When Simpson refused to move the policeman returned with a uniformed sergeant who arrested him.

Simpson began to announce to a gathering crowd what was happening. When police tried to cover his mouth with a hand there were shouts of protest from onlookers.

At the police station he refused to answer questions on what he thought of Airey Neave's death and what his mother's political opinions were.

Threats

The Special Branch detective made threats about his exam and job prospects before turning him loose without charge.

He also questioned him about a leaflet advertising a labour movement conference on Ireland on Saturday in Oxford sponsored by the local NUJ branch, Oxford Trades Council and other union branches.

More slaughter in El Salvador

The long struggle of opposition groups against the dictatorial regime of President Romero in the Central American republic of El Salvador has reached a new and gruesome turning point.

In response to the arrest of five of its members the Popular Revolutionary Bloc—a left-wing party with considerable influence in the working class and peasantry—on May 4 occupied the Costa Rican and the French embassies, holding the ambassadors and other officials prisoner.

Two of those arrested were released and the regime denied all knowledge of the others. Protest strikes took place in

several major factories and an anti-government demonstration in support of the Bloc assembled on May 8 in front of the Cathedral.

The dictator's police (probably using weapons sold to it by the Callaghan government) opened fire on the mostly young demonstrators, very few of whom were armed.

At least ten were killed and many more injured.

Romero's claims that his police were provoked by heavily armed guerrillas could hardly ring more hollow, since the whole bloody event was clearly filmed by a news cameraman, and has been seen on every TV screen in the world, except those of El Salvador.

This is not the first cold-blooded massacre carried out by

Romero's police in recent months.

Murderous raids on groups of peasants protesting against lack of land and employment in the countryside are commonplace events.

In one recent raid in Cinquera 8 peasants were murdered.

The events in El Salvador, however, are evidence of the growth of mass struggles against dictatorship which are taking place throughout the Latin American continent.

Upsurge

Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil Bolivia and Nicaragua have all experienced a significant upsurge of workers' struggles against the dictators in the last month.

Under a clear and principled leadership, this upsurge can topple the dictators and open



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Callaghan—sold arms a revolutionary epoch in Latin America.

The Popular Revolutionary Bloc of El Salvador, despite its ability to mobilise sections of the masses and carry out spectacular actions seems incapable of offering such leadership.

After the massacre it has reportedly accepted the offer of the Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador to mediate between it and Romero's regime.

But it seems doubtful that the masses will accept such a compromise.

FUND

We're beginning to edge towards the first £1,000 of our £2,500 Special Fund. A total of £185.50 this week, including a collection of £120 at a WSL National Aggregate last weekend brings our total to date to £617.85.

We need to raise about £200 a week from now to the end of July if we are to reach our target, so we must fight to keep up this momentum over the coming weeks.

And the Monthly Fund must of course be raised in full as usual, as this finance is essential to the day to day work of our movement.

All donations should be sent to Socialist Press Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

Garners

TGWU DELEGATE CONFERENCE

The Garners Strike Committee is calling a TGWU Delegate Conference on Saturday 9 June. For more information write or phone Garners Strike Committee, TGWU Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, London WC2. Tel: 01-240 1056.

WAR, WHAT WAR?

OXFORD LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON IRELAND

Saturday May 19 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Buxton Hall, Ruskin College, Walton Street

speakers include:

Brendan Gallagher, father of 'H' Block Prisoner
Tom Litterick, former Labour MP
Editor of 'Republican News'

Open to all students and trade unionists
Credentials 50p

Sponsored by Oxford NUJ and Oxford Trades Council

SERTUC CONFERENCE "Care of the Under Fives"

Saturday 30 June 1979 Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1

Credentials (50p) from Jim Watson, 106 Mount View Road, London N4

Speakers:

Arthur Latham, Chairman, London Labour Party
Reg Race, NUPE
Margaret Cohen, National Campaign for Nursery Education
Chair: Tess Gill, NCCL