

# workers' ACTION

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## A BETTER CLASS OF MURDER SUSPECT

# I was a strikebreaker for NATO

We were strike-breakers for NATO! That's the record Jim Callaghan wants Labour to take to the electorate this Autumn or next year.

Industrial civil servants have been blacking work on Polaris nuclear submarines as part of their campaign for wage increases. On 25th July the government ordered that the workers at the Faslane naval base should be locked out and the Navy sent in to get HMS Revenge ready to go out to sea.

As we go to press, management at Faslane, Arrochar and Coulport is threatening to lock the workers out once again. And if the industrial action is still going on when HMS Revenge's tour of duty ends, then scabs are likely to be sent in on one of the other two Polaris submarines, at the Rosyth base.

For this scab-herding there are none of the excuses about people's safety which were used to justify Army fire-fighting during the firemen's strike. The Government said it plainly: it is a matter of "commitments to the NATO alliance".

If the scabs weren't sent in, Britain would fall down on its commitment to the US masters of war, the slaughterers of the Vietnamese people, to keep the threat of nuclear annihilation of humanity constantly alive.

That was the issue.

The industrial civil servants have chosen the best possible form of action to press their claim. And their claim is an urgent one. The Government wants to keep them within the 10% limit. But 80% of Ministry of Defence craftsmen earn less than £75 a week, when comparable workers in civilian industry are getting rates more like £100 a week. The 23,000 workers in the lowest-paid grade get about £43 a week.

Despite an appeal from their union, the T&GWU, to call off the Polaris blacking, the workers have kept up their action. There was also an unofficial one-day strike, called by a national shop stewards meeting, on 2nd August. On that occasion, too, the armed forces were used as scabs.

In Parliament, while the Government was justifying its strikebreaking and the Tories were bursting with class hatred against the Faslane workers, there was not one Labour Left MP's voice raised to condemn the scab-herding or to support the workers.

Not one of the old heroes of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament spoke up to condemn the Government's concern to keep Polaris on the seas. Not one of the MPs who have made so much demagogic noise about the EEC had a word to say about the Government's servility toward NATO.

The Labour Left's silence said: election time is coming, and we're rallying behind Jim Callaghan!

The trade union leaders have the same message. They are organising no support for the industrial civil servants. While on paper they oppose the new 5% pay limit, they are making it quite clear that they have no intention of doing anything to break it.

The industrial civil servants have shown that there is a mood in the working class which has had enough of Toryism in Labour and trade union clothing. In the coming months, it will be the job of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory to organise and speak up for workers who say: we must keep the Tories out, but at the same time we must start organising inside the labour movement against Callaghan and the right wing leadership.

## for NATO



JEREMY Thorpe's mistake, it seems, was to get charged with conspiracy to murder only one person. If he was guilty of conspiring to get thousands of people killed, he would be a national hero, like Winston Churchill or the Prime Ministers and generals of the heyday of British imperialism.

In fact, however, he is getting off lightly anyway. The press has adopted a mild, almost uninterested tone, explained only in small part by the effect of sub judice rules. Partly it is a matter of press attitudes. The suspicion that he had had a homosexual affair with Norman Scott was much more shocking to them than that he is suspected of plotting to murder Scott.

Thorpe and his party are respected and respectable members of the ruling class establishment. The press of that establishment instinctively knows when to protect one of its own. The Liberal Party, though it has few MPs, has enough influence to stop the scandal being blown up.

The whole episode is an illustration of the sordid hypocrisy of the bourgeois press and bourgeois politics. Remember it next time they start virtuously sounding off against striking workers or Republican fighters in Ireland.

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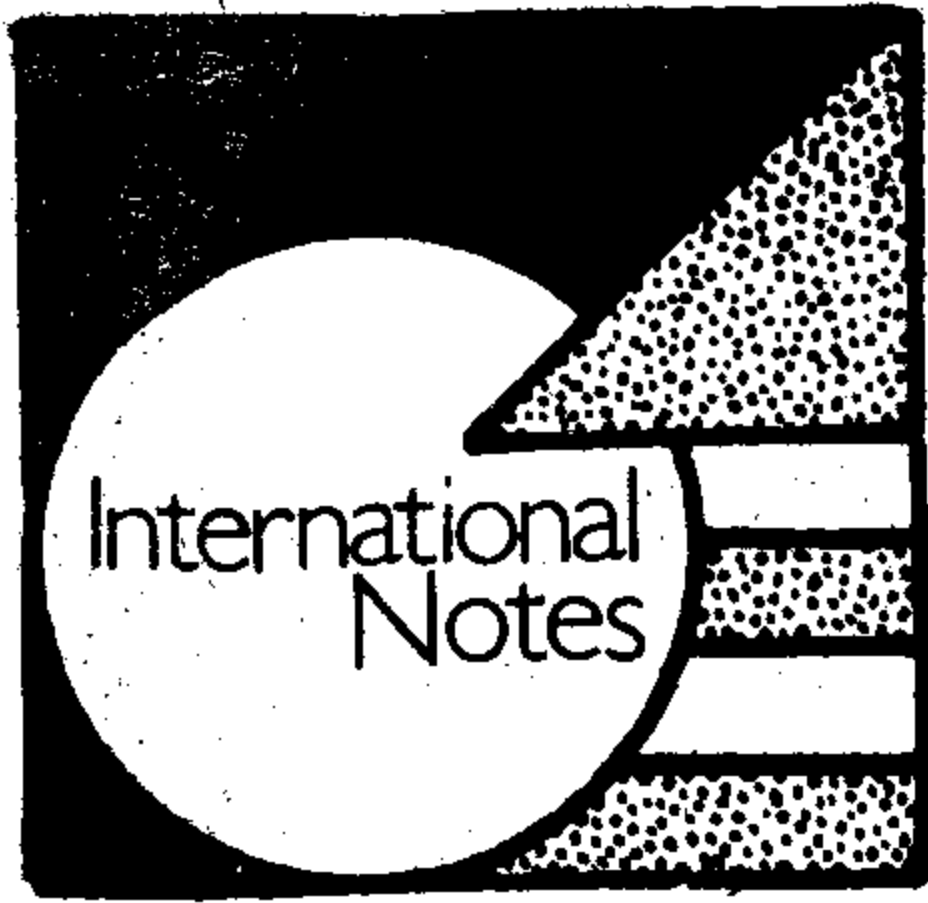
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**DEFEND BRICK LANE! Be there every Sunday 9am or earlier**



## CPs fall out on EEC

The 'Eurocommunist' family has had a nasty falling out. The Spanish Communist Party has launched a sharp attack on the French CP, accusing it of base chauvinism and opportunism in its campaign against Spanish entry into the Common Market.

The accusations are quite true. But the Spanish CP's line is equally base and opportunist: slavish support for the Spanish bourgeoisie's efforts to get into the EEC.

'Eurocommunism', as this episode shows, is nothing to do with subtle interpretations of the theories of Antonio Gramsci; its essence is the CP's drive to get their snouts into the troughs of their respective bourgeois nation states. And the essence of the Common Market issue is inter-imperialist manoeuvring, a complete diversion from the point of view of the working class.

## Shoot-out in the PLO

In the refugee camps in Lebanon there is fierce fighting between the main Palestinian resistance movement — Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat — and dissident Palestinians with the backing of Iraq.

The feud is also being fought out across the world. In London, Paris, Kuwait, Damascus and Amman, PLO officials or premises have been attacked, apparently by pro-Iraqis; Iraqi officials and premises have been attacked in London, Paris, Tripoli, Karachi, Beirut, Sidon... The killing of an Egyptian official in Nicosia this February, apparently by pro-Iraqis, also seems to be part of the feud.

On the one side, Arafat is fighting to impose his policy of alliance with the major bourgeois Arab states: a policy which today means settling for recognition of the Zionist state in return for the prospect of a Palestinian 'bantustan'.

On the other side, Iraq is making a show of anti-Zionist militancy.

A breakaway Palestinian group, 'Fatah-Revolutionary Council', has the backing of the Iraq government. For the Iraqi government, this backing [and other gestures like their current mock trial of Egyptian president Sadat for treason to the anti-Zionist cause] cost little. Iraq has no common frontier with the Israeli state. Its connections with imperialism, particularly with France, rest undisturbed.

Iraq seems to be using the dispute within the Palestinian movement to further Iraq's own bitter quarrel with neighbouring Syria. On the other side Arafat's movement, having faced the firepower of the Syrian army in Lebanon during 1976 and 1977, is now trying to mend its connections with the Arab states.

The feud is one of the most striking proofs so far that the road of alliance with the Arab states is the road to annihilation for the Palestinian movement. It is the other side of the coin to the Leeds Castle talks and the current American diplomatic efforts in the Middle East.

The Arab states — especially Egypt, but also Syria and Jordan — want to reach agreement with Israel. The Israeli government is refusing to make even the most token concessions, but on their side the Arab states are willing to make the biggest concessions for the sake of an agreement enforced by the power of US imperialism. And that agreement has to mean the betrayal of the Palestinians; it has to mean giving up, once and for all, the programme of a democratic, secular Palestine in which Jews and Arabs can live as equals.

## Strikes in Peru

WITH the miners going on strike at the beginning of August, an ongoing hunger strike by miners sacked after a previous strike movement, and the secondary school teachers on strike since May 8th, PERU's new Constituent Assembly has opened its proceedings in a stormy situation.

The Assembly was elected in June, with the brief to draft a constitution for the return to civilian rule promised by the military regime for 1980. Despite severe repression against left wing candidates and the denial of voting rights to illiterates [that is, 40% of Peru's peasants], the left secured a very high score. The majority in the assembly is held by the nationalist movement APRA.

At the Assembly's first meeting, deputies from the Trotskyist-influenced electoral bloc FOCEP put down motions in support of the strike movements, for a general amnesty for political prisoners and for reinstatement of workers sacked for striking. The reinstatement demand is a major issue in the current strikes, alongside wage increases and union recognition for teachers.

FOCEP deputies also moved that the Assembly should declare itself sovereign, refusing to recognise the authority of the military regime. The Assembly president, the old APRA demagogue Haya de la Torre, evaded the question by closing the Assembly session.

## Chile

The bloodstained military regime in CHILE is facing problems. A large section of the leading officers in the air force have resigned following a squabble within the junta, and the USA has temporarily cut off arms shipments to Chile.

As the condition for resuming arms shipments, the USA is demanding the extradition of three former officers of the Chilean political police, including its former commander General Contreras.

The three have been indicted in the US for helping to organise the murder of Orlando Letelier. Letelier, a former minister in the Allende government, was assassinated in September 1976 in Washington.

Contreras and his colleagues have been put under arrest in Chile. He also faces charges brought by 69 Chilean citizens about the disappearance of their friends and relatives.

## Coup in Bolivia

The coup d'etat in BOLIVIA on 21st July did not resolve any of the problems of that country's military rulers.

With a highly combative working class, within which Trotskyist influence has often been strong, and a peasantry which is more oppressed and poverty-stricken than almost anywhere else in the world, Bolivia has a record of political instability. General Hugo Banzer, who fell from power on 21st July, had had an exceptionally long period in power: seven years.

That comparative stability was a measure of the defeat which the Bolivian people suffered when Banzer came to power in 1971. There had been a near-revolutionary ferment, with a Popular Assembly being formed. Banzer crushed it. Political organisations and trade union activity were banned; strict military rule was imposed.

But two one-day general strikes took place earlier this year without Banzer being able to repress them. Realising that the forces of revolt were building up again, he called a presidential election on 9th July.

Banzer's chosen candidate, General Juan Pereda, "won" — but the balloting was so crude that Pereda himself was forced to ask for the result to be annulled. Then Pereda rallied his support in the armed forces and on 21st July forced Banzer to hand over power directly.

Pereda has promised he will free all political prisoners and call new elections. But not a single section of the Bolivian opposition has any confidence in Pereda's promised elections. And he miners showed what they thought of Pereda by a 48-hour unofficial strike after the coup.

# RHODESIA'S RACISTS LASH OUT AS THEY FACE DEFEAT

On 30th July Ian Smith's army launched another major attack on Mozambique. Last time, they claimed to have killed 1200 people; this time, they gave no casualty figures but claimed to have wiped out 10 guerilla bases.

If the results of the last attack are anything to go by, the vast bulk of the victims will have been women and children refugees from the ravages of Smith's army in Rhodesia.

Like last time, the black stooges in the interim government, Sithole and Muzorewa, could only produce embarrassed apologies for the invasion after the event, not having been consulted beforehand.

The attack was certainly a lashing-out based on weakness, not on strength. According to official Rhodesian figures, 29% of all casualties in the guerilla war have taken place since the beginning of this year. The Economist, by no means a journal that has any bias in favour of the Patriotic Front nationalist fighters, reckons that the guerillas control about half the country.

As the net closes tighter on the white supremacist regime, Smith's army [with many blacks in its ranks] will become less and less reliable.

Meanwhile the economy is foundering. In the last four years, real income per head has declined by nearly 25%. More and more whites are rushing to book flights out of the country rather than live on equal terms with the black majority.

To shore up its position, the

interim government is now discussing plans to end race discrimination. But almost certainly it is too late for that; and too late, also, for the wild talk about British or UN intervention to save the white settlers' property and privileges. But if British or UN troops are sent in, it will be exclusively for the purpose of protecting imperialist interests, and boosting those sections of the Patriotic Front most in the pockets of international big business.



# NO CLEAR WAY OUT FOR PORTUGAL'S RULERS

PORTUGAL'S President Ramalho Eanes faces a difficult job this week in his efforts to assemble a new government to replace the Socialist/Democratic Centre [CDS] ministry which fell at the end of July.

The difficulty is a reflection on the political level of Portugal's severe economic crisis.

There is 13% unemployment and 30% inflation, and Portugal's foreign debt amounts to over £200 for every man, woman and child in the country.

The Portuguese bosses' main aim is to revive the capitalist economy by destroying the gains made by the workers and peasants in 1974-75. But they cannot do that by frontal assault: the workers' organisations are still too strong.

Since 1976 the Socialist Party government of Mario Soares (which took in 3 CDS ministers this January) has pursued a policy of chipping away at the workers' conquests gradually. Now some of the Portuguese bosses are beginning to lose patience.

On 23rd July the three ministers from the CDS — the party which most closely represents Portugal's big bourgeoisie — resigned from the government. They were demanding the sacking of agricult-

ure minister Luis Saias, whom they accused of being too slow in returning land seized by peasant cooperatives in 1975 to the landowners.

The CDS had also clashed with the Socialists over the SP's plans for a public health service and over the government's slowness in de-nationalising or paying compensation to the former owners of factories.

Soares stood firm, even after Eanes asked him to resign. The Military Council of the Revolution declared that Soares was within his rights, but on the 27th Eanes sacked Soares.

There are four likely formulas for a new government. All present problems.

The SP says it is willing to continue with a Socialist minority government. But such a government, deprived of support from the right wing parties, could hold its own only with the backing of the Communist Party: and a SP-CP alliance could provoke a powerful right-wing backlash.

The CDS, the PSD (the other right wing party) and the bosses' organisations favour a 'presidential' government, chosen by Eanes and including personalities

from the various parties alongside non-party figures but not openly based on any of the parties. The Communist Party, after initially supporting Soares' stand against the right, has also come round to this solution — with the proviso, of course, that the CP gets some of the ministries.

A new alliance between the SP, the CDS, and maybe also the PSD is conceivably possible, but not favoured by any of the parties.

In the case of a breakdown, new elections can be called. But this option offers the ruling class only a period of political unrest, probably followed by a new Assembly which would be no more manageable than the present one. The Communist Party would probably make gains in new elections, by winning over formerly SP-voting workers; and the extreme right-wing would come out stronger, too.

Whatever option the Portuguese ruling class eventually chooses, its difficulties can only increase the opportunities for the Portuguese workers to regain strength and once more enter decisively on the political arena.

# Brick Lane: All out for August 20th

THE leaders of every major Asian organisation in the country have called for a national day of solidarity with the Bengali community in Brick Lane, East London, on Sunday 20th August.

Brick Lane, with its clothing sweatshops, its Bengali and Jewish small businesses, and its Sunday market, has become the focus of a major effort to confront fascism in its stronghold.



Within a few minutes walk of Brick Lane, three Bengalis have been done to death this summer — one of them a boy of ten. In the streets of Spitalfields around the Lane, Bengalis have lived in fear of racist attacks on their homes, or of vicious muggings as they make their way to and from work. And on Sunday mornings, the fascists would swagger into the Brick Lane market, selling their racist trash and asserting their local power. And, increasingly over recent months, they would go on a binge of vandalism and intimidation after getting tanked up at midday.

Over the past two years, anti-fascists have tried to dislodge them. There have been regular punch-ups, but still the Front managed to return to 'their' pitch.

After this summer's spate of killings and wrecking rampages, the Bengali community threw itself into the fray. On Sunday 16th they joined with anti-fascists in a 2,000 strong

occupation of Brick Lane; and the next day 8,000 struck in protest at racist violence.

In those two days of meetings, marches and sit-down protests, the Front didn't dare to show their faces in the East End. But they haven't been smashed yet in this 'stronghold' of theirs where they nourish themselves off the despair of homelessness, unemployment and declining industries and services.

The next Sunday, July 23rd, the Front did their best to mount a comeback. They got together nearly 200 people, arrived very early in the morning, and with a heavy police escort were able to put a few paper sellers at the top of the Lane. But the police had to virtually seal off Brick Lane to keep the fascists safe, turning back or searching demonstrators and even shoppers.

Though Anti-Nazi League organisers called for demonstrators to disperse in the early afternoon, some 200 socialists and Asian youths stayed on, helping to patrol Brick Lane against a drunken fascist rampage.



The next Sunday, our turnout was bigger — and earlier. Anti-fascists had stayed all night in the Lane, and as the NF turned up to claim 'their' pitch they were met by a seventy-strong opposition, which swelled to 600 by mid-morning. The fascists had withdrawn to the back streets; one group of thugs vented their hatred on street trader

Graham Turner, whom they pounded with stones and left on the ground, seriously hurt.

ANL supporters painting out wall slogans were attacked too.

So last Sunday, August 6th, attention shifted to patrolling the back streets, while 50 fascists were cordoned around by police at one end of the Lane.

Demonstrations at Brick Lane have become a test of strength between the NF and anti-fascists. The way to win is to combine the large turnouts that the Bengali community and anti-fascist groups can organise with steps to run defence groups on a regular organised basis.

The call for a national day of solidarity on August 20th should be taken up by every labour movement body, ANL branch and anti-fascist group. But support over a longer period has to be built too.

Defence groups must be organised with labour movement bodies and socialist organisations, committing themselves to sending a regular number of supporters each week to join forces with local community patrols to keep the fascist gangs off the streets not just for one day but for good, not just off the main streets but off the back streets too.

## National Demonstration at BRICK LANE

Assemble 9am, corner of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road



## Rees weasels out

The 1974 Labour Manifesto promised a Freedom of Information Act to replace the existing Official Secrets Act.

Under a Freedom of Information Act — such as exists in the USA or Sweden — the government has to show good reason why citizens should be denied access to any particular piece of official information. Under the Official Secrets Act, however, the principle is that any passing on of official information is a crime unless proved otherwise.

The changes in the Act proposed in a Government White Paper published on 19th July would do no more than remove some of the absurdities in Section 2 of the present law, under which

thousands of state employees must break the law every day when they 'tell friends or relatives trivial details about their work'.

Prosecutions like the present one against John Berry, Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey would however still be possible.

A ruling by a government Minister, backed up by the Attorney General, that particular information was secret would be unchallengeable. On this point, the government's proposals stand to the right of Tory policy: the Conservatives have said that secrecy classifications should be arbitrated on by an independent committee.

Apart from the Government's general wish to play

sare in the run-up to an election, the main motive for its caution is probably a current case in the USA. There, the Socialist Workers' Party (of the USA) has been able to pursue a major prosecution against the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act.

The SWP forced the disclosure of some FBI documents on police infiltration into the SWP, and got the Attorney General charged with contempt of court when he refused to release further files. The Party is suing the FBI for \$40 million damages.

For our 'socialist' government, however, such extensive bourgeois democracy is far too advanced...

## The policeman's idea of law



ACCORDING to the official Judges' Rules, "Every person at any stage of any investigation should be able to consult privately with a solicitor".

In 1972 there was a survey. 130 prisoners were asked whether they'd seen a solicitor. 108 had not seen a solicitor and 74% of them said that police had refused them permission to do so.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner David McNeen wants to make this sort of police practice permanent and legal. "It is not right," he told a Royal Commission, "to expect the police to obtain the necessary powers by stealth and force..."

So "utopian measures introduced to ensure excessive protection to the individual citizen" should be formally abolished by law, instead of just being ignored and flouted by the police.

McNeen wants police to have the power to:

- hold suspects for 72 hours without bringing charges;

- replace the present warning — "Anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you" — with a warning to suspects that if they don't answer police questions it will count against them in court;

- search and fingerprint people more or less at will.

Home Secretary Merlyn Rees described these proposals as "interesting". That does not mean that he is likely to grant McNeen's requests. But in a pre-election period he does not want to give the Tories a chance to accuse him of being soft on 'law and order'.

Under a new Tory government, however, McNeen might well get his way. His proposals deserve closer examination.

Most interesting is the reason he gives for demanding additional powers now: "The general public is becoming far more conscious of its rights..."

A wide range of citizens' rights is acceptable to our present day society on one condition: that effective knowledge of those rights and the ability to make sure they are respected is largely confined to the privileged classes. Even today, of course, millions of people would be unsure how they could contact a solicitor, or what a solicitor could do for them, or how they could afford to pay a solicitor's fees — even if the police were not obstructive.

But, to McNeen's sorrow, more and more people are becoming aware of their rights, and self-confident enough to demand them.

McNeen's ideas faithfully reflect the police concept of the law. The police are "the law" and the "rule of law" is a matter of enabling the police to control the population. The laws should be adapted to that purpose; a law which harms or restricts the authority of the police is an absurdity, a bogus law, and should be flouted or abolished.

The justification is always that wide police powers are necessary in order to be able to hunt down criminals effectively.



Yet the police don't object when the rich, the racists, and the police themselves benefit from citizens' rights — or gain immunity from prosecution by plain corruption, pulling of influence, or the class bias of the law. What annoys them is when the exercise of those citizens' rights spreads to working people, to black people, or to victims of police ill-treatment.

Obviously the police play some role in controlling the violence and brutality which this rat-race society breeds. But they don't touch the violence which expresses itself in exploitation, in working conditions which lead to injuries, industrial diseases and deaths, and in poverty. And they add their own violence — against picket lines, against demonstrations, against black youth, and against ordinary people, unsure of their rights, who fall into the cops' clutches: people like Little Towers, bludgeoned to death in Gateshead police station.

Added powers for the police mean, in the last analysis, added powers for the class violence of the bourgeoisie. They don't touch the problems of everyday criminal violence against individuals, which results from poverty, frustration, degradation, demoralisation, and the horrors which frequently arise from bourgeois 'family life'.

The 'law and order' talk from the Tories, which will certainly become louder and louder as the election approaches, is an effort to blame society's ills on the most wretched victims of those ills. But for socialists, the way to create a society without crime — or with the minimum of crime — is through abolishing poverty, dissolving the existing police force, and replacing it with community patrols.

Any 'justice' short of that is the class justice of the employing class.

# WHAT THE SCLV CONFERENCE DECIDED

## EXCERPTS FROM THE RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE SCLV CONFERENCE

The conference of the SCLV endorses the general aims and policies contained in the original appeal statement and platform...

The SCLV will fight to commit CLPs, candidates and the Manifesto to pledging active support for all working class and oppressed people taking action — strikes, pickets, demonstrations — against attacks by the Labour Government and employers...

We particularly oppose the idea, common to both militants and trade union leaders, that working class struggles should be abandoned to prevent possible 'electoral damage' to Labour.

The SCLV believes individual candidates and MPs must be directly accountable to their CLPs and submit themselves to automatic reselection. The Labour Government should be accountable to Labour Party conference and the labour movement as a whole...

The SCLV recognises that the increase in racist attacks, the Tory immigration policy, and the large number of NF candidates standing, all make the twin issues of racialism and fascism key election issues. The failure of the Labour Government to act on the 1976 conference policy of repealing the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts and the shameful support for the Select Committee report by Labour MPs indicates that we cannot expect a serious lead in this fight from the Party leadership and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The SCLV therefore commits itself, and will try to commit other labour movement bodies, to a policy of full support for the organisation of self-defence by organised people under attack from the fascists or the police. We will be involved and seek to involve local CLPs actively in the work of the Anti-Nazi League and local anti-fascist and anti-racist bodies...

We are for organising through the labour movement to build workers' defence groups which can come to the aid of minority communities in their self-defence against the fascists or the police...

The Government bears the responsibility for cuts in NHS abortion facilities and attacks on women's rights to employment — attacks which threaten to shackle women even more firmly to the home and family.

Callaghan has tried to justify these attacks by talking of protecting 'the sanctity of the family'. Against such squalid excuses the SCLV will demand the necessary expansion of social services and jobs to allow women the freedom to break out of the restrictions of the family, which the Government's policies have helped reinforce: domestic drudgery, unwanted pregnancy, individual and isolated child care, and enforced unemployment or low paid work. Against that, we support the fight for women to have the right to control their own lives, bodies and fertility...

The SCLV calls for the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland...

We will aim to counter the propaganda which present those fighting to overthrow the sectarian Six County statelet as mindless terrorists; and to show, on the contrary, the systematic torture and brutality used by the army in its maintenance of that state. We will give support to Republican prisoners of war fighting for the restoration of their political status.

### THE NEW SCLV STEERING COMMITTEE

Nik Barstow (Tottenham CLP), Geoff Bender (Vauxhall CLP), Tony Brockman (Islington N. CLP), Stephen Corbishley (Barking CLP), Mike Davis (Hackney South CLP), Jon Duveen (Hackney North CLP), Bernie Grant (Wood Green CLP), Frank Hansen (Brent East CLP), Ron Helsler (Hackney Central LP), Ted Knight (Norwood CLP), Patrick Kodikara (Hackney N. LP), Ken Livingstone (Hampstead LP), Pat Longman (Islington N. CLP), John O'Mahony (Bethnal Green and Bow CLP), Pete Rowlands (ealing Acton CLP), Keith Veness (Islington N. CLP, expelled).

CONTACT: John O'Mahony [SCLV convener], Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

JIM CALLAGHAN looked a little surprised as he walked into the July meeting of Labour's National Executive Committee past a 30-strong lobby organised by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory with placards saying: 'The Party, not the Cabinet, must decide the Manifesto'. The look on his face betrayed the thought: 'But I am the party!'

The lobby demanded that Labour's National Executive should base its manifesto on Labour conference calls to nationalise the banks and insurance companies, oppose cuts, repeal the 1968 and '71 Immigration Acts, support black self-defence groups, ensure free abortion on demand and support the liberation movements in Southern Africa.

It also called on the NEC to repudiate the government's 5% wages limit and its use of the armed forces to strike-break against the workers in the Clyde-side Polaris bases.



# NOW BUILD THE SOCIAL CAMPAIGN!

WITH 200 people from 76 Constituency Labour Parties attending, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory conference on July 15th in London was probably the biggest unofficial Labour conference since the one called by Clay Cross Labour Party over their rents fight in June 1974.

And it shows an even bigger potential. Clay Cross had become well known in the labour movement over two years of struggle before 1974. The SCLV had been organising in earnest for only a month before the conference, and has got a complete black-out from the Fleet Street press, despite the fact that their columns are currently crammed with election news.

## Aims

The conference adopted a resolution which approved the aims set out in the initial Campaign broadsheet: "For a Labour vote — Yes! For the policies and record of the Party leaders and the TUC — No!"

"Our purpose in the elections is to ensure a massive class vote for the Labour Party and the defeat of the Tories — but to do this without support-

ing or lending credence to the dominant right wing policies of the Labour and TUC leadership, who will try in the election to gain labour movement support for their politics by contrasting themselves favourably with the Thatcher Tories."

Despite the summer lull in the labour movement, since the conference two more CLPs have voted to sponsor the SCLV: Norwood (South London) and Hornsey (North London). Hackney North CLP had already sponsored the Campaign before the conference.

The success of the conference means that a parallel election campaign can be organised not only in those three sponsoring constituencies, but also — to one degree or another — in over 70 others. Local SCLV groups have been set up in Islington, South London, Hull, Manchester,

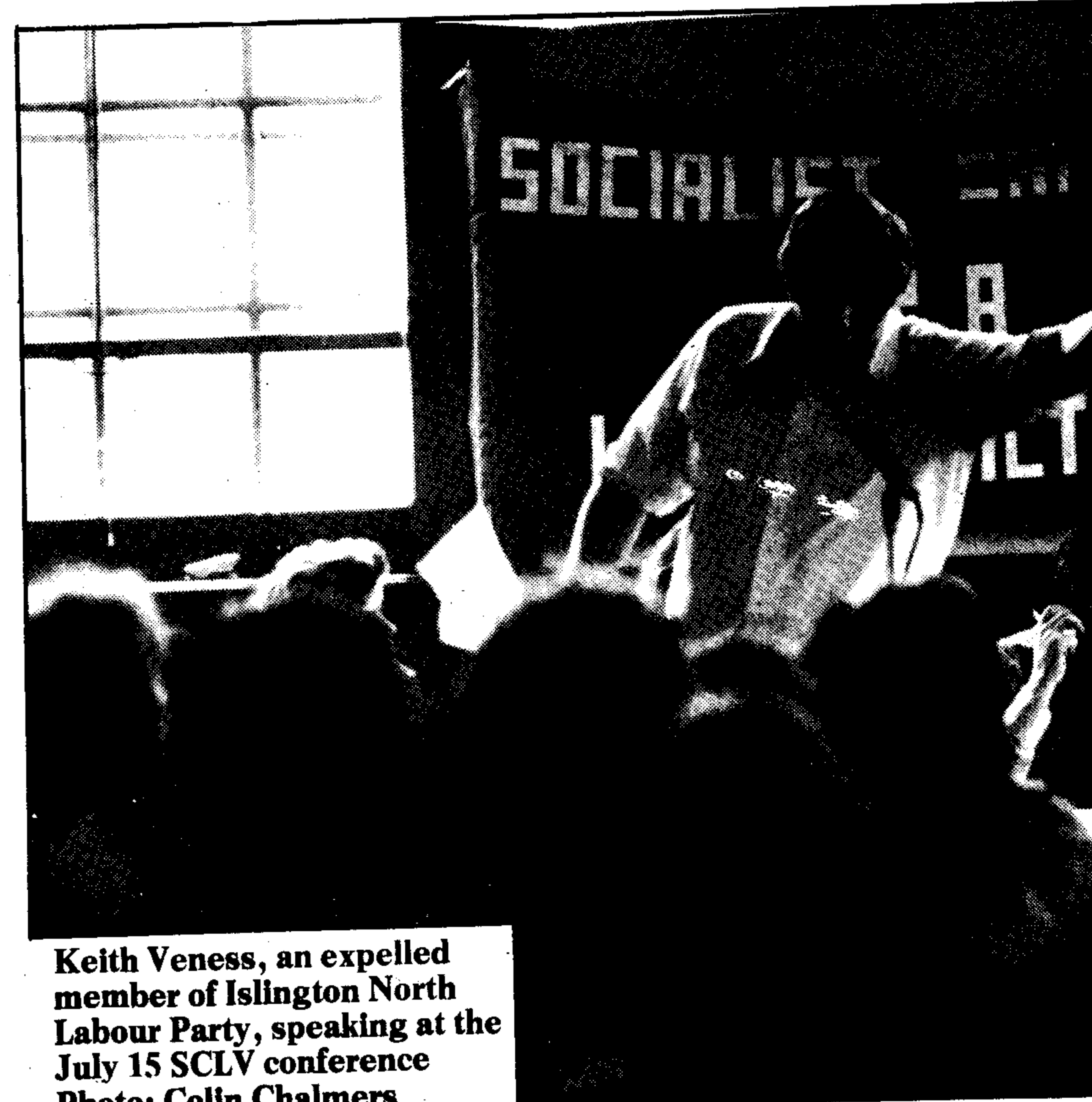
Nottingham, Leeds, Hornsey, Coventry, Edinburgh and Leicester.

The organisation and activity of these local groups is now the key to tapping the potential that exists for the SCLV. The conference passed a resolution on organisation which also called for:

## Groups

- factory SCLV groups;
- a regular SCLV newsletter;
- SCLV leaflets on major issues such as racism, Ireland, wages, jobs...
- pressure inside CLPs for them to form special committees, answerable to the GMC, for the preparation of election material.

A central SCLV steering committee was elected. The idea of SCLV women's groups is being discussed and there are plans for a drive to



Keith Veness, an expelled member of Islington North Labour Party, speaking at the July 15 SCLV conference  
Photo: Colin Chalmers

## Labour secretary arrested

Tottenham Labour Party secretary Sheila Peacock was arrested and knocked about by police on an anti-fascist demonstration in Tottenham on July 22nd.

Labour Party and Anti-Nazi League members had been leafletting in the High Road. About 20 National Front leafletters turned up. A police cordon gathered round the fascists, and the anti-fascists were moved across to the other side of the High Road.

Sheila Peacock started an anti-NF chant — and was immediately arrested. She told Workers' Action: "They frogmarched me across Tottenham High Road and back again, then laid me on the pavement after dragging me the last few yards, before pulling me into the Panda car."

Three other Labour Party members were arrested when they protested, and an Anti-Nazi League activist was arrested on his way home when he told police that two NF members were following him.

At the police station, the anti-fascists were abused and shouted at. The police changed their tone only when Ernie Large appeared. Large, apart from being the chairman of Tottenham Labour Party, is also a JP.

Sheila Peacock was charged with obstructing the highway, as was another of the arrested Labour Party members. The others were charged with insulting behaviour, insulting language, and threatening behaviour.

A defence campaign has been set up, supported by the Labour Party, the ANL and the Haringey Labour Movement Campaign against Racism and Fascism. It is holding Saturday morning pickets on the High Road. As Sheila Peacock told WA: "Many people have come forward as witnesses and to support the picket. We are now broadening the campaign to take up the question of 'sus'."

A meeting is planned for August 20th at 7.30pm, at the Tottenham Trades Hall.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

## LABOUR CLUB BARS GAYS

MANCHESTER GAY Activists Alliance recently came to an agreement with Hulme Labour Club to hold their weekly discos at the club while the Polytechnic students' union, their normal venue, was shut for the summer.

An example of enlightened thinking? After one disco, on Friday July 14th, the club committee cancelled the GAA's booking, ostensibly because of licence problems.

Chorlton Ward then tried to hire the premises on behalf of the GAA. They were told the room was not available on Fridays any

more. Later, two members of the ward found no problems in hiring the room for a fictitious wedding on a Friday night.

The GAA have set up pickets on the club, which have got sympathy from members and staff. There was a motion from Hulme ward and a letter from recently elected MP George Morton, both supporting the GAA. But the club committee is still refusing to allow the gay discos.

During a constituency GMC debate which decided to back the GAA, GMC secretary Mike Harrison was handed a note inform-

ing him that he had been suspended from club membership on a technicality related to his sponsoring a gay for club membership. (This technicality could probably get 90% of the club members suspended, if it were applied strictly.)

Despite the votes to back the GAA, little has been done by the Labour Party to shift the club committee from its bigoted stand. We will be taking up the issue through the wards and the YS, attempting to get them to sponsor discos jointly with the GAA.

LOUISE O'CONNOR



Photo: Collin Chalmers

# NORWOOD LABOUR PARTY REJECTS RED-BAITING: SPONSORS SCLV

Norwood Constituency Labour Party (South London) voted on 27th July to affiliate to the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

The debate was opened by Cllr Matthew Warburton reporting back from the SCLV conference. The GMC, he said, might not agree with every detailed point in the SCLV platform, but it should affiliate. The basic aim of the Campaign — building a socialist, class-struggle oriented opposition to the right wing leadership of the Party — corresponds to what Norwood CLP has been trying to do for some years.

Clare Doyle, a leading supporter of the *Militant*, led the opposi-

tion — basing her argument on red-baiting! We should have nothing to do with the SCLV, she said, because it includes supporters of *Socialist Challenge*, and that paper has supported left-wing anti-Labour candidates. Also in the SCLV, she said, are "people who advocated abstention in the 1970 election."

Some day someone might whisper in Cde. Doyle's ear that her own "Marxist tendency" supported left-wing anti-Labour candidates as recently as the 1940s... though we would admit that they have since then quite repented of their revolutionary follies!

Clare Doyle's other argument

against the SCLV was that there was no need for it because the *Militant* has "for many years" campaigned for the Labour Government to carry out socialist policies, whereas the SCLV does not call for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy. (In fact, it does).

For her, the issue was posed in terms of length of service and loyalty to the Party. Drawing in new left-wing forces was apparently unnecessary, if not positively undesirable.

The Norwood election agent, Cllr Ken Phipp, also opposed the SCLV — as meddlers who are trying to dictate to Norwood what should go into its manifesto. His

argument was spoiled by the fact that earlier in the meeting he had suggested that the election manifesto be drawn up between himself and the sitting MP, Prices Minister John Fraser!

The GMC instead voted to have a special meeting to discuss the election, and nominated a committee to draft a manifesto for it.

Cllr Phipp also voted and spoke against a motion calling on councillors to declare to the GMC what way they had voted at Labour group and Council meetings. He said that the secret ballot was the only guarantee against witch-hunts.

He went on to say that Norwood should follow Party and NEC policy, rather than the SCLV, in drawing up its election literature. But it was pointed out that the SCLV itself had been campaigning for the NEC — rather than the Prime Minister and the Government — to decide (the Labour Party election manifesto, and had organised a lobby of the July NEC meeting over this issue.

With the government riding roughshod over every modestly progressive Labour Party conference decision, Cllr Phipp's argument rang hollow. The meeting voted 23-12 in favour of supporting the SCLV.

CHEUNG SIU MING

## 'Forest Four' — purged for fighting to make councillors accountable

FOUR members of West Gloucestershire Labour Party (the only Labour-held rural constituency in England) were barred from holding office in the party for period of up to two years, when a report on the party was passed on the nod at the June 28th meeting of Labour's National Executive.

The "Forest Four" are Gill Ireland, secretary of Drybrook ward; her husband John, President of the Forest of Dean Trades Council; Michael McLaughlin, the secretary of Whitecroft ward; and George Hardy, a GMC delegate.

They were given no reasons for their suspension, there was no disciplinary hearing, and no charges were made against them.

The report came out of an NEC inquiry into the affairs of the West Gloucester Party, to which party officials and representatives of the wards made recommendations.

The inquiry backed all the main proposals made by the Four, on making local Labour councillors answerable to the Party and improving local Party organisation: but at the same time it also recommended they be barred from holding office, apparently on the grounds of having disrupted the Party.



The affair is not just a bureaucratic slip-up or a personality dispute in a small rural Labour Party being solved in a high-handed and undemocratic way.

Only 13 out of 47 Forest of Dean district councillors are Labour, but thanks to agreements with other parties and independents, they hold the position of council chairman and dominate the housing committee.

Control of the housing committee has a particular significance. The Forest of Dean District Council has no points system for allocating council housing on the basis of need. Allocations are at the discretion of the committee. As a result families in need of council housing are reduced to lobbying and pleading with individual councillors for a house.

The Labour councillors have acted to maintain this system which gives them great individual power and helps to maintain their electoral base through "grace and favour". Furthermore, they have refused over a period of years to be answerable to the Labour Party over this, or any other, issue.

Most councillors tried after the local government reorganisation of 1974 to avoid forming a Labour Group on the council

which would be answerable to the District Labour Party. They have never submitted a group report since the district party was formed; in fact they tried to insist that the district party members be sworn to secrecy before they would make any statements to it!

Over the last few years the 'Four' have led local Labour Party members in challenging this corrupt set-up. A Tenants Association was formed, with Gill Ireland as secretary. In 1976 it had a membership of over 1,000, and published a printed newsheet *Tenants Voice* — which exposed five Labour councillors who had voted for rent rises.

As a result of this, and pressure inside the Labour Party, a

number of Labour councillors resigned from the party and stood as independents in the 1976 local elections.

The Tenants Association also exposed the housing allocation system, taking five cases to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman agreed that the Council had a responsibility to house all five — some of them had been living in caravans for as long as 15 years.

Other issues where tenants and councillors have clashed include housing repairs, and the Housing Committee's dubious practice of scrapping bonds on building tenders so that there was no way of recovering money paid out to private contractors when they went broke, as happened on a number of

occasions.

At the National Executive's July meeting a lobby by supporters of the 'Forest Four' did succeed in getting the issue re-raised, but still in an unsatisfactory way.

The NEC has withdrawn its suspension of the four — only to reimpose it pending an inquiry at which they will be able to defend themselves.

CLPs and LPYS branches must put pressure on the NEC to drop the suspensions altogether — both with resolutions, and by tackling individual NEC members on this question.

Send messages of support and copies of resolutions to "Justice for the Forest Four" Committee, Tudor Cottage, Redmarley Road, Newent, Glos.

## Equality laws are waste paper — official

THE LAWS on race relations and discrimination have taken a battering over the last couple of weeks in the courts and been shown up as a completely ineffective way of dealing with the problems of fascist violence and racialism.

In the first case taken to jury trial under the amended, and supposedly "tougher", Race Relations Act, two members of the British Movement were found not guilty of "uttering words likely to cause racial hatred".

The fascists, M. Cole and G. Jones, had been charged after the British Movement (a more openly Nazi grouping than the NF) had tried to hold an open air meeting in Warwick market place last September.

A police inspector took verbatim notes of their speeches and, giving evidence for the prosecution, said Cole "referred to wogs and coons bringing disease into the country" while Jones referred to "a nurse who wiped froth from a coon's mouth and she died of rabies", and said "that's what the black bastards are doing to us".

They made no attempt to deny, in court, that they had in fact said these things.

Not only did the fascists clearly incite hatred against black people, they also made it very clear that they were deliberately aiming to break the law. The inspector gave evidence that Cole had lit a bundle of papers at the meeting and holding it above his head shouted "This is what we do with the Race Relations Act".

The fact that the fascists were found not guilty despite the

police being prepared, unusually, to give evidence against them, sets the seal of uselessness on this Act that was never meant to be other than a piece of window-dressing.

A ruling in the Appeal Court two days later, on July 26th, showed that the law on race discrimination is also there just for decoration.

British Leyland and the Science Research Council both successfully appealed against decisions of the Employment Appeals Tribunal, which had ordered them to release files on job and promotions applications in connection with race discrimination complaints.

The appeal by British Leyland concerned a case brought by Mr. Nat Vyas of Abingdon, formerly of East Africa, who argued that he had been refused a job as a methods analyst because of his colour and that to prove his case he needed the files on other applicants for the post. British Leyland wanted to maintain 'business confidentiality'.

After Lord Denning has upheld Leyland's appeal, a spokesman for the Council for Racial Equality said that the judgment would make it almost impossible to prove racial discrimination in such cases, and since two thirds of the 700 cases brought to the CRE in the last year had concerned employment a majority of those people trying to get a remedy for discrimination through the courts would be affected by the judgment.

Denning justified the ruling by arguing that 'fairness' should be accorded to employ-

ers and that public services and industrial concerns which had to deal with the problems of discrimination should be trusted!

So, Lord Denning is convinced that employers can be trusted not to discriminate, and the Warwick jury can't see that any racial hatred was involved in the foul mouthings of two sickeningly abusive fascists. Racism, it seems, just doesn't exist...

Meanwhile, a report circulating in Whitehall at the start of this month shows that black people are substantially less successful than whites in applications for the civil service.

Between June and November 1976, 105 blacks and 212 whites applied for jobs with the North London DHSS.

18% of the blacks got to the interview stage, whereas 54% of the whites were interviewed. In the end, 10 blacks and 78 whites got jobs.

Perhaps the whites were better qualified? 51 blacks with all the right qualifications never got to be interviewed; but only 29 qualified whites failed to get an interview.

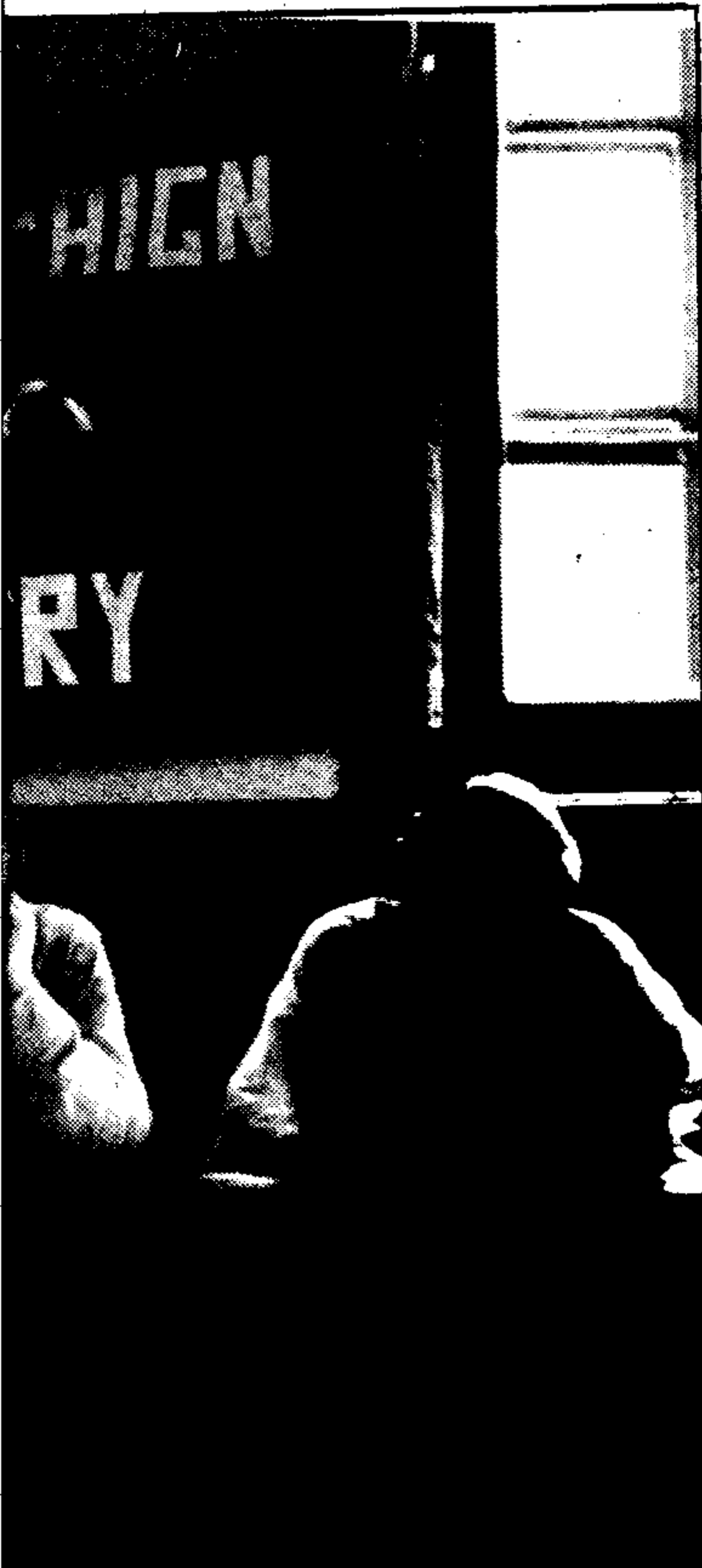
Even the best area covered by the report [produced by the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations for the government] — the West Midlands region, where black and white candidates appeared to get roughly equal treatment in job applications — had a skeleton in the cupboard: only 70 of its 1,155 employees in eight offices were black, despite a high black population in the area.

IST

rganise among East London Asians. (Patrick Kodikara, one of the members of the newly elected steering committee, is a prominent figure in the East London Asian community).

The SCLV has already organised a lobby of the NEC over the preparation of the party manifesto (see this page) and a contingent of SCLV supporters which attended the recent Labour Party Young Socialists summer camp, trying to win support for the campaign.

During August contacts must be made and the groundwork laid. By early September, when the holiday period ends and the life of the labour movement revives, the election campaign may already be in full swing. Indeed, as far as the Tories are concerned, the campaign is already in full swing. We have no time to lose. Build the SCLV now!



# Czechoslovakia 1968: The Russian invasion and the workers' councils

EVERY MOVE by the reformers to make political life in Czechoslovakia more open and democratic was supported by the workers. But from the beginning many workers were cautious and distrustful of the plans and programmes of the new bureaucratic leadership.

Some Communist Party workers were bewildered. "Today", said one "it seems as if everything we have done has been of no use. As if I ought to be blamed in front of my own children for what I have brought them up into. We have worked our guts out here for twenty years: why didn't the people at the top do the same? ... Was the censorship really so bad that it's only now that we're getting to know about the sort of fascist methods that were being used?"



Although the Czechoslovak working class, before World War Two, had been stronger and better organised than any other in Eastern Europe, with a large Communist Party, for 20 years the situation had been as described by the dissident writer Karel Kosik: "While the ideology of the leading role of a class was promoted to the level of a state religion, any genuine public activity of the workers was reduced to a minimum."

Despite their twenty years' atomisation and demoralisation, the workers showed a sure class instinct in their distrust of the economic planks of the reform programme. "The renaissance of the market" was the guiding principle of the reformers; for the workers that meant the re-emergence of unemployment. Already in 1964-5, limited 'market socialist' reforms pushed through by Ota Sik had led to the loss of 33,000 jobs.

"The elimination of the principle of egalitarianism" and "a genuine differentiation in favour of skilled and complicated work" were also part of the reform plans. For technicians and managers, chafing at the fact that their salaries were only 25 to 30% above the average industrial wage, that was welcome news; but not for the majority of workers.

Some workers had a broader understanding. One old work-

In two previous articles (WA 109 and 111) James Davies described the development of the reform movement in Czechoslovakia during the spring and summer of 1968. This week GERRY BYRNE takes up the story, with an account of the workers' councils which sprang up particularly after the Russian invasion of August 20th

er told the writer Ludvik Vaculik that "from the moment Novotny got into power, we've just been robbed. We were robbed of our output, our wages, but we put up with it, because socialism should have made up for it.

"And today? The intellectuals are swines because it was they who contributed towards the losses. The so-called 'new economic system' is a swindle, which is based on the assumption that the same people will stay at the top, because after all dogs don't eat dogs.

"When a worker messes something up, it's him who pays for it, who pays for the losses in foreign trade and the losses which are caused by the fact that the whole of production is moving in completely the wrong direction? How can I believe that in five years' time it won't be even worse?"

The old Stalinist leader Novotny tried to base himself on this distrust to combat the reformers. "If to be a conservative means to oppose the lowering of the standard of living of the working class ... then I am proud to be a conservative!"



But the results were just the opposite of what Novotny hoped. He forced the reformers to turn to the factories with promises of more democracy and freedom. Very quickly the workers saw that this meant that strikes could not be suppressed in the old way. Despite official warnings against strike action, a wave of stoppages developed in the factories throughout the summer.

Many demanded higher wages. At Zilina railway station, strike action forced the suspension of three managers, charged by the workers with "anti-social behaviour and incompetence". At the Prague-Dejvice bus depot,

200 drivers put a ban on working more than 30 hours' overtime a month. Previously they had been doing an average of 80 hours.

At the Elektropri stroj plant at Pisek, a 75-minute strike — with an elected strike committee — prevented the transfer of production to another factory and led to two managers being brought before an inquiry.

And at the Optimist rubber and plastics plant, there was a strike against production bonuses which favoured technicians and office staff to the disadvantage of shop floor workers.



Bureaucratic control over the trade union movement was severely shaken. Under the Novotny regime, the trade unions had been very strong on paper — with five million members, they organised 95% of the wage-earning population — but in practice they were little more than state agencies.

During the summer of 1968, 50,000 trade union officials were replaced. The unions were broken up into smaller units, with relative autonomy, and the central leadership responded to the rank and file pressure by demanding improved conditions from the government. Wage rises, better social security and pensions, and the return of the five-day week, were promised.

The workers' councils movement, however, was at first not very far-reaching. It was initiated from above. The councils were supposed to be organs of workers' participation in management — not of workers' control — with the aim of committing the workers to the cause of the efficiency and competitiveness of the newly autonomous enterprises. Elected workers' representatives were to form a minority on the councils, alongside managers and state officials.

Relatively few workers' councils were formed before the Russian invasion — only 20, according to one estimate, although preparatory committees existed in many other factories. And although there was an 82% turn-out in the voting for the councils, 62% of the council members were engineers or technicians and only 20% were classified as 'workers'.

More radical ideas about the workers' councils began to get a hearing: that they should have a majority of workers, that they should have the right to dismiss managers and to veto major decisions about the running of the plant. A few people — though only a few — thought that the workers' councils could link up and become democratic decision-

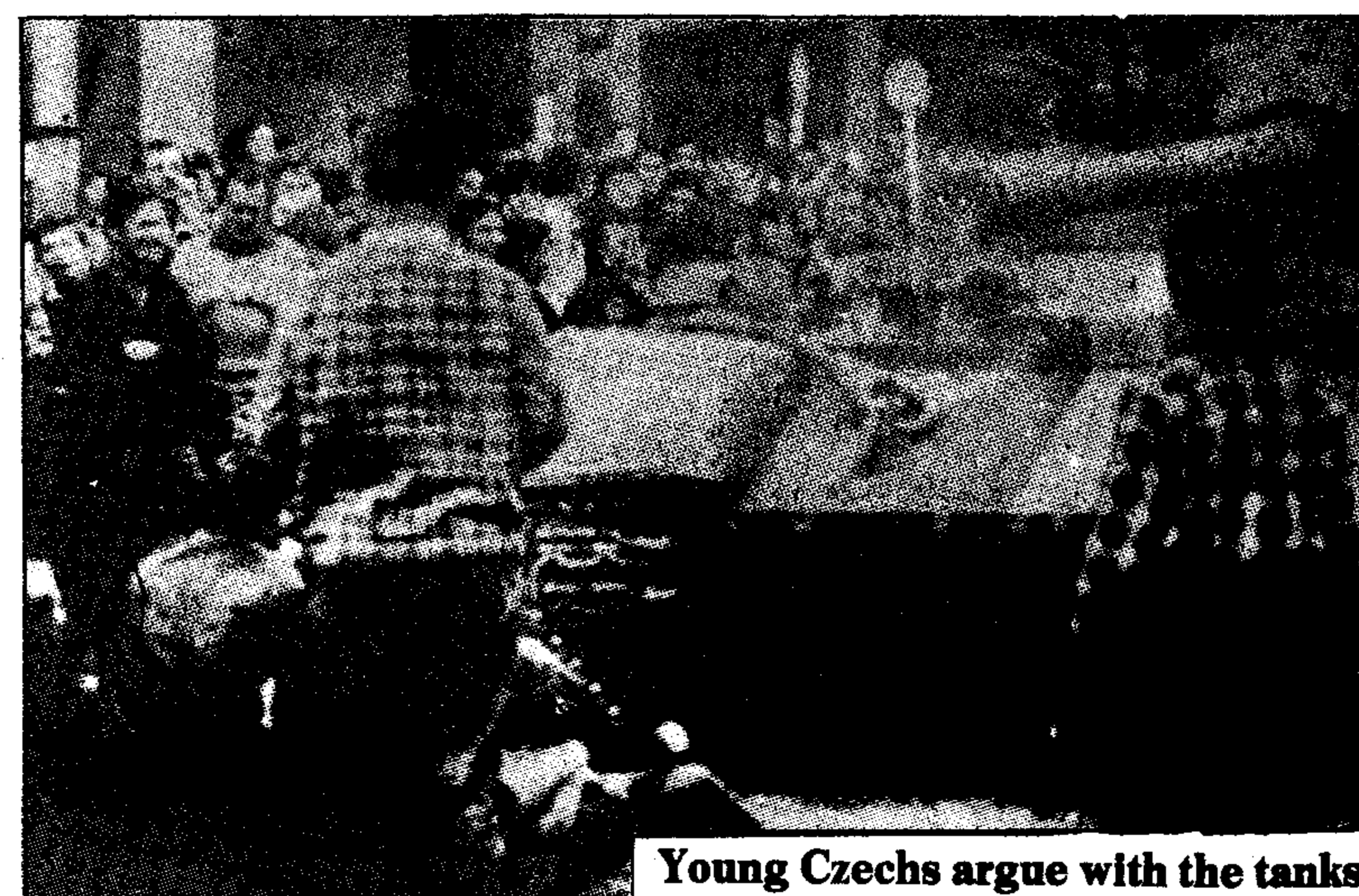
and that the reforms would continue. But what followed in reality was a gradual process of winding back the reforms and purging the reformers.

There was massive peaceful resistance and non-cooperation with the occupation troops. On 22nd August, the Czechoslovak CP was able to hold a Congress, with over 1,000 delegates, in a factory in Vysocany, without the Russian army knowing.

The CP Congress condemned the invasion. But its call for a general strike was later toned down by CP leaders to a call for a one-hour strike, which took place on 23rd August.

The union leaders likewise opposed the invasion, but organised little action.

The workers' councils grew



Young Czechs argue with the tanks

making bodies for the whole of society, not just for internal factory affairs.

The most radical concept of the workers' councils was put forward by a historian, Karel Bartosek. "When in our society we have five thousand workers' councils" he wrote, "they will not only be an economic but also a political force, in which the collective opinion of the factories is expressed."



To the workers he declared: "The act which can begin to change your condition is the election and activity of organs of workers' self-management". He spoke of an "anti-bureaucratic revolution" as a "continuation (a component part) of the anti-capitalist revolution". This "destruction of the system (bureaucratic-statist socialism)" would necessarily be violent, and would have to spread on an international scale.

Few thought like Brtosek. Nevertheless, after the Russian invasion the workers' councils became major organising centres of the popular resistance, testifying to the fact that it was the workers' mobilisation which represented the real threat for the Russian bureaucracy.

Having decided that Dubcek and his team were losing control of the situation, Russia invaded Czechoslovakia on August 20th. Dubcek, Smrkovsky, and other Czechoslovak leaders were arrested and taken to Moscow. Dubcek soon returned, announcing that he had reached an agreement with the Russian leaders

in number — there were between 120 and 300 in 1969, according to different estimates — and put out resolutions and appeals about the invasion. There was even industrial action. The Metalworkers' Union threatened to strike if the reformer Josef Smrkovsky was removed from his leading position; but it was dissuaded by appeals from Smrkovsky himself. Printworkers refused to print the first issue of a new pro-invasion paper.

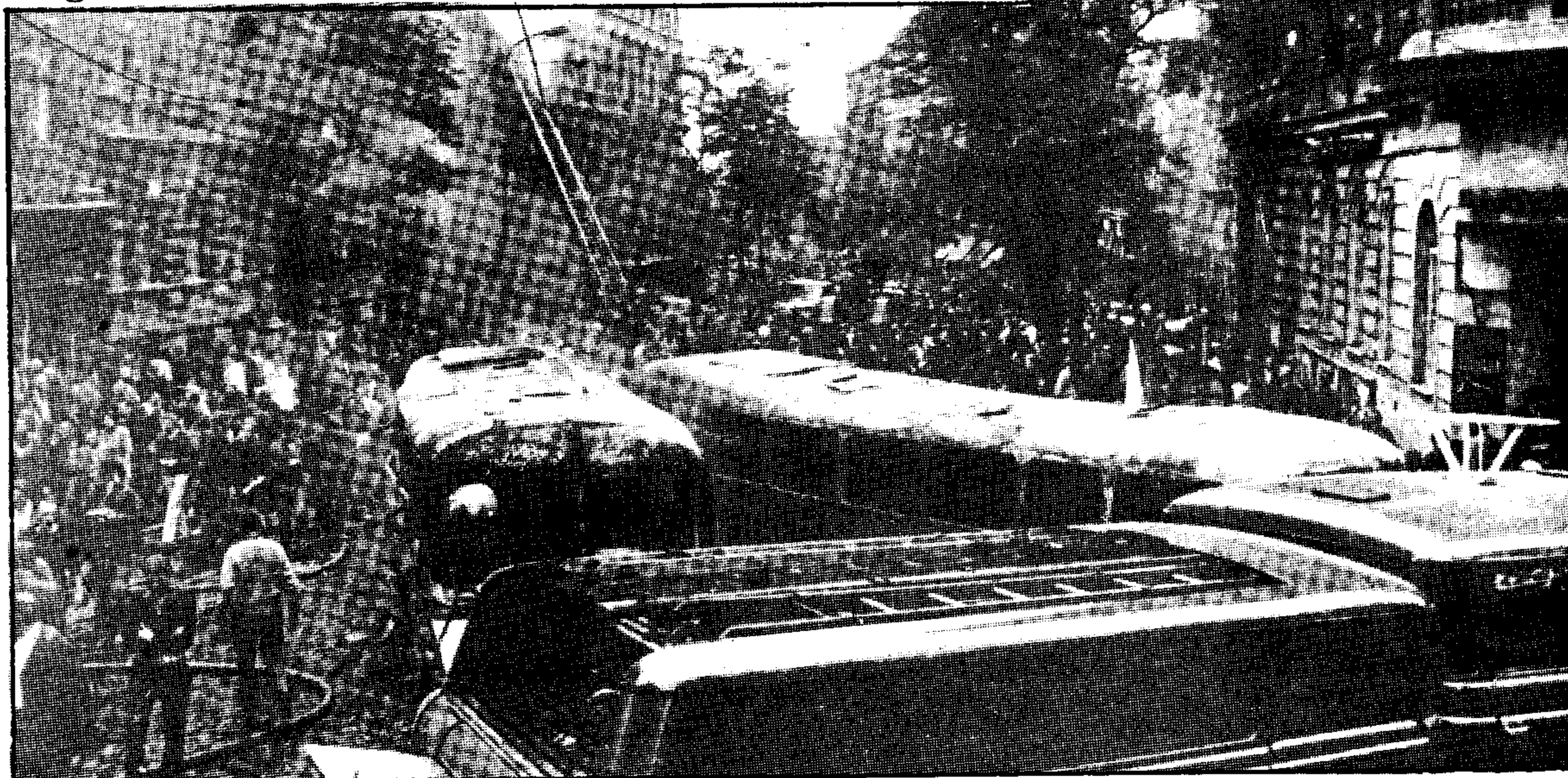
When students staged a three-day sit-in in protest at the invasion, they got messages of support from several factories, and there were scattered sympathy strikes. The Metalworkers' Union made a formal alliance with the students' union. As late as June 1969, there were taken 15-minute strikes when a students' union was dissolved.



As Russian control was consolidated, the workers' resistance gradually petered out. In late 1969 the councils were dissolved, and many of their members were expelled from the Communist Party or sacked from their jobs.

Unable to find any central political leadership apart from the reforming bureaucrats, and unable to make themselves real organs of workers' power, the workers' councils were doomed. Yet the only way that working class democracy could have triumphed in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was through real workers' councils.

August 20th: buses were overturned to block the Russian tanks



# How Nikolai Bukharin fell prey to Stalin's purges



British Communist Party's opportunist support for the left-talking trade union bureaucrats who helped sell out the 1926 General Strike.

The bureaucrats, represented by Stalin, used Bukharin as a bludgeon against the communist Left Opposition, led by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev while keeping their hands as free as possible from any definite theoretical commitment. As the ruthless purges against the Left Opposition went ahead in 1927 and 1928, Bukharin began to get worried about the bureaucratic danger. But too late.

With the grain crisis of 1928, when millions of peasants refused to supply the cities with essential food supplies, Stalin launched a massive forced-march drive for collectivisation and crash industrialisation. There was also an ultra-left swing in international policies.

Bukharin was pushed out of the central leadership in the USSR and his closest co-thinkers were expelled from the Communist Parties all across the world.

He was allowed out of the Soviet Union for the last time in 1934. Very shortly after his return the great purges began.

In 1938 he was tried and shot. According to Bukharin's son, his father left a letter appealing 'to the future generation of leaders of the Party' 'to unravel the monstrous tangle of crimes'. By 1938 Bukharin was a broken man — indeed, fundamentally he had been a broken man since the mid-1920s. But before then he had been, as Lenin called him, 'the favourite of the whole Party'.

THE Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation is circulating an appeal for Nikolai Bukharin to be declared officially innocent of the charges for which he was condemned and executed in 1938 during the infamous Moscow Trials of Old Bolsheviks.

The appeal was launched by Bukharin's surviving son, Yuri Larin. He wrote to the General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party Enrico Berlinguer, and on 18th June the party paper L'Unita printed a call for immediate justice for Bukharin and other victims of the 1936-8 trials.

It did not, however, mention the chief target of the absurd

Stalinist charges of sabotage and aid to fascism: Leon Trotsky.

In Britain, MPs Joan Maynard, Stan Newens, Eric Heffer, Audrey Vaise and others have signed the appeal for Bukharin's innocence.

Who was Bukharin? He was the youngest of the Old Guard of the Bolshevik Party and its foremost economist. Before the revolution he published several works on economics, the best known being "Imperialism and World Economy" (1915).

Generally he was considered to represent an ultra-left tendency in the party, opposing, for example, the right of nations

to self-determination.

His theories on the trend to 'state capitalism' in the imperialist countries were at first regarded with suspicion by Lenin, but after writing *State and Revolution* in 1917 Lenin wrote to Bukharin that he had become convinced of the essential correctness of Bukharin's ideas.

In 1917 Bukharin led the seizure of power in Moscow.

After the revolution, during the period of "War Communism", Bukharin led a left wing faction in the Bolshevik Party which called for 'revolutionary war' and opposed signing any treaty with the German militarists.

## FUND DRIVE for WORKERS' ACTION

It seems that all our readers are either away on holiday, saving up for their holidays, or penniless after their holidays... we need an effort to get fund contributions flowing in again. The total so far is £1343.60. Send contributions to: Fund, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, Box 1960, 182 Upper Street, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

**SUNDAY 13 AUGUST:** Defend Brick Lane! Assemble 9am: outside the Naz Cinema, Brick Lane.

**SUNDAY 13 AUGUST:** Support the H-Block Political Status Protest. Demonstration called by Sinn Fein. 2pm, Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.

**WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST:** South London Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. Meeting at 7.45pm at Lambeth Town Hall.

**SUNDAY 20 AUGUST:** Defend Brick Lane! Assemble 9am, corner of Bethnal Green Road and Brick Lane.

**WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST:** Islington Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. Public meeting on "Labour and Ireland". 7.30pm, Caxton House, St. John's Way, N.19.

**FRIDAY 1st SEPTEMBER:** SCLV Social. From 8pm at Caxton House, St. John's Way, London N.19.

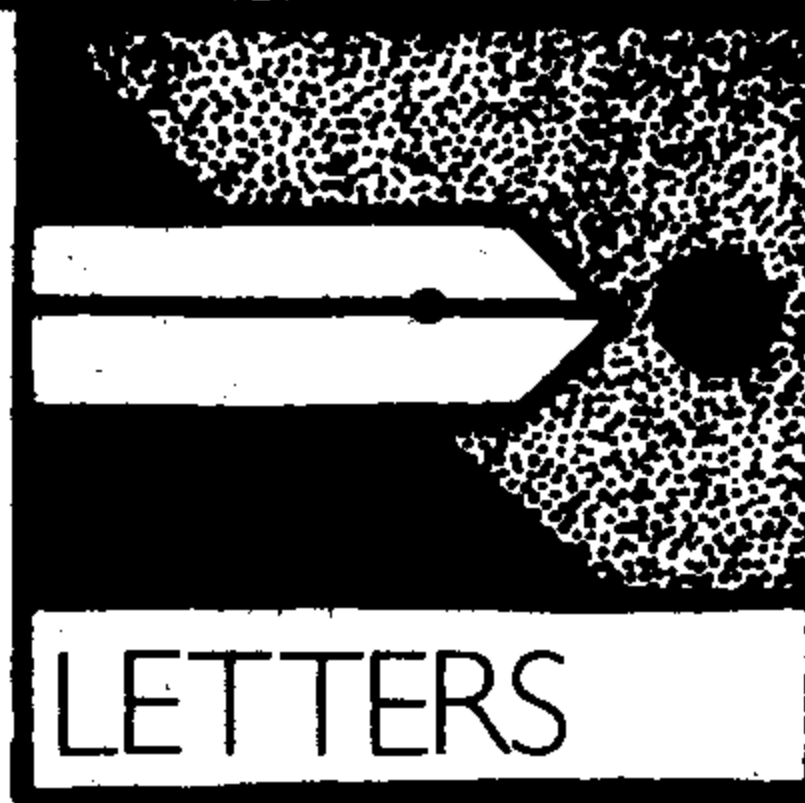
**THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER:** Harigey SCLV public meeting on Racism. 7.30pm, Tottenham Community Project.

**RACE & CLASS PAMPHLET No.5: From Immigration Control to 'Induced Repatriation'**, by A. Sivanandan. 20p from bookshops, or from IRR, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1 (Add 10p to cover p&p).

**PICKET GARNERS:** Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St, 243 Oxford St, 40-41 Haymarket, and 56 Whitcombe St. Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, room 84, 12-13 Henrietta St, WC2.

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## CPSA: our tactics are all right!



Comrades, Colin Foster's letter (WA111) about the CPSA strikes on fortnightly payment of unemployment and social security benefits seems to give the wrong impression about certain aspects of the strikes.

Firstly, the CPSA is not demanding that claimants sign on weekly; it would be happy with fortnightly attendance and weekly payments. What CPSA has done as part of their campaign is to liaise with organisations such as the Claimants Union and the Legal and Incomes Rights Service and has found that these bodies which protect the rights of the unemployed are solidly against fortnightly signings.

Comrade Foster also seems to think that claimants have not been consulted with regard to fortnightly payment, and he states "many claimants, I'm sure, will prefer fortnightly signing-on". This is not correct; claimants were consulted in pilot experiments to evaluate the proposed system and a substantial number of them stated that they would not prefer fortnightly payments. Many unemployed people have difficulty budgeting their money week by week and will have even more difficulty managing fortnightly.

Comrade Foster's letter also attacks the CPSA for a "narrow minded

attitude and criticises the strike action because it hits the unemployed. However, CPSA has tried every method of negotiation without success and only as a last resort have they used the workers' fundamental weapon of withdrawing labour.

Fraternal greetings, CHRIS BOOTE, Coventry CPSA

IN REPLY, the facts are:

1. The CPSA action has focused entirely on defending the status quo. There has been no call for a shorter working week to go together with a change to fortnightly signing.

2. It is true that some organisations of the unemployed have said they want to keep weekly payments. But I am not aware that any have said that weekly signing is desirable too. And these unemployed organisations generally are not very representative. Why didn't the CPSA organise meetings of claimants to ask their opinion?

3. There are other forms of industrial action which the CPSA could have taken — refusal to make statistical returns, refusal to investigate alleged cases of social security over-payment, etc. — which would have hit the government rather than at the unemployed.

COLIN FOSTER

## Britain has its political exiles too

Comrades, On July 15th 1973 Charles Hoban was arrested by British forces. After a spell of hospital treatment for the beating he got from the soldiers when he was arrested, he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

As is the norm, he was released after five years, on July 17th.

Charlie is not the first man from the 26-Counties [the 'Republic of Ireland'] to serve time in Long Kesh for political offences. The outstanding feature of his case is that he has been served with an Exclusion Order, forbidding him to enter the North Eastern part of Ireland.

This Order is made under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976. It states that "The Secretary of State is satisfied that you, Charles Hoban, are concerned in the commission, prepar-

ation or instigation of acts of terrorism".

Charles Hoban has been in prison for five years. How is it possible for him to be "concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism"?

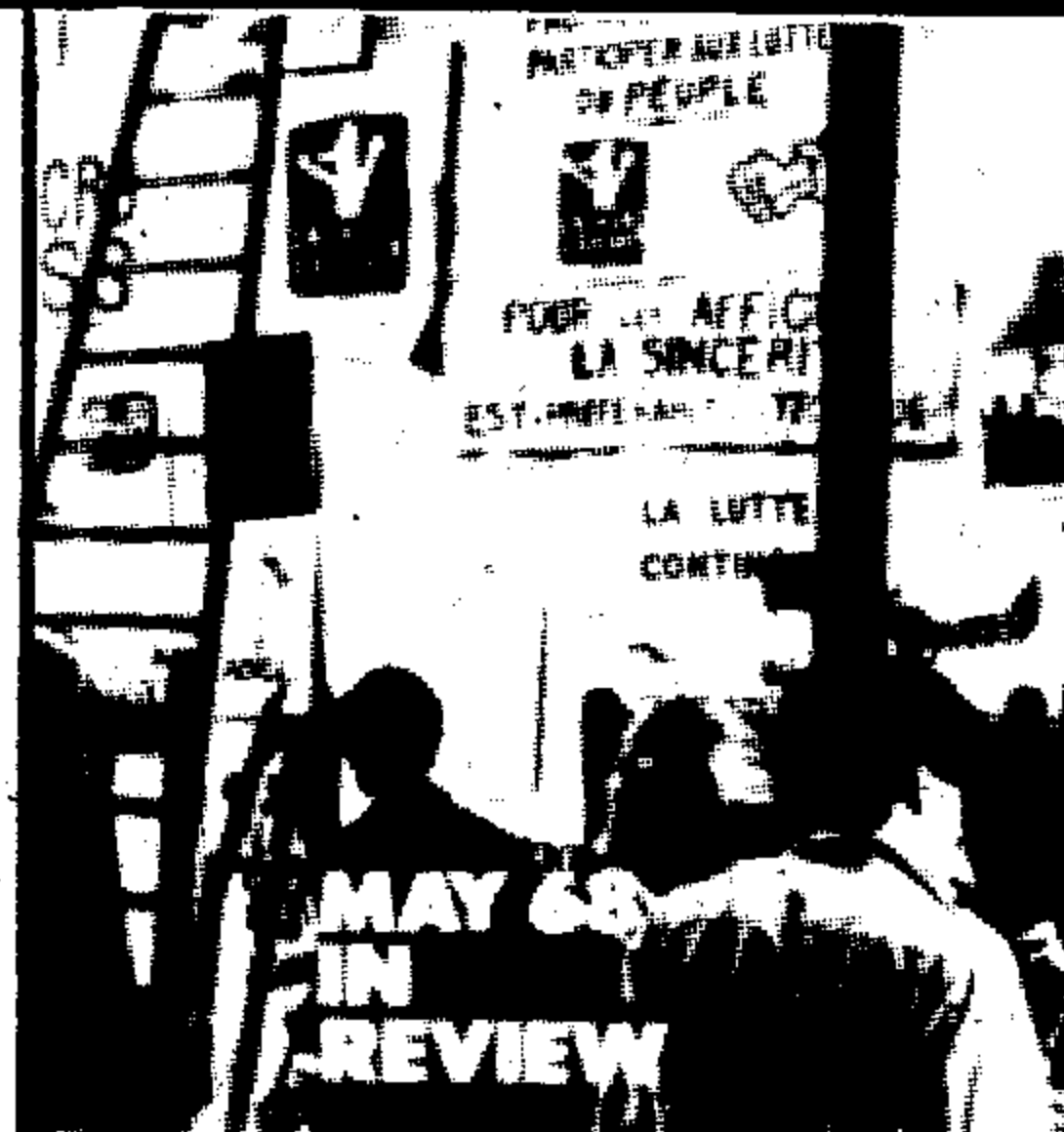
The Exclusion Order states that it can only be made against a person who is not "a citizen of the UK and Colonies". Yet dozens of such Orders have been served on people from the North of Ireland — which the British government has gone to great lengths to maintain is part of the United Kingdom, including armed intervention.

Britain, like Russia, metes out 'internal exile' to its political dissidents!

A Republican POW, Long Kesh



Josef Stalin



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SEND TO WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

# WORKERS IN ACTION

## POEU: NO SELL OUT!

THE POST OFFICE has 'accepted' Lord Macarthy's report recommending a shorter working week for Post Office engineers. Such acceptance, however, is hardly surprising: the report, produced at the initiative of Eric Varley, would give the engineers virtually nothing and the Post Office management the opportunities they are looking for to cut jobs.

Post Office chairman William Barlow has demanded that a precondition to discussions with the POEU is acceptance of the report's conclusions and an end to the national work-to-rule and the overtime bans being operated by a large number of branches. Bryan Stanley, general secretary of the POEU, has rejected negotiations on this basis. But he merely objects to calling off the action until a deal has been reached — rather than objecting to the deal itself.

The Macarthy report goes nowhere near conceding the demand for a 35-hour week. It offers a gradual reduction in working hours to 37½, to be carried out in two stages, first introducing more flexible starting and finishing times, and then through 'self-financing' productivity deals.

In plain language it means redundancies in the future in a section of the Post Office that has seen 85,000 job losses since 1963.

Bryan Stanley described the report as "not a full formula for a settlement. It leaves very large areas to be negotiated". But, he said "We are keen to get into these negotiations".

The keenness of the POEU leadership to get into negotiations around this wretched report has hardly come as a surprise.

On August 2nd they dropped the national overtime ban (which began on June 30th) in favour of a national work to rule. The membership was not consulted.

This move, seen by the press as an 'escalation' of the action, was not necessarily that at all — many branches had been working to rule, thoroughly checking equipment and vehicles, in addition to banning overtime.

Many branches have voted to continue the overtime ban and bring the two actions together. In Bradford, the POEU branch voted to continue the overtime ban, and condemned the NEC's action in withdrawing instructions for it to be operated nationally.

Local actions going beyond the minimum laid down by the NEC have had a considerable effect on the Post Office.

2,000 engineers walked out in north west London after a shop steward from the Mill Hill exchange was suspended; there was major disruption to international calls going

through the Stag Lane international switching centre in Cricklewood.

Actions like that have resulted in a permanent reduction in the number of international STD calls and an estimated loss of revenue to the Post Office of £60,000 from this source alone.

Such effective actions are coming from the branches, not from the NEC. A national recall conference is now an urgent necessity — both to oversee any negotiations and to decide democratically what actions are needed and apply them on a national level.



A picket on POEU headquarters demands more effective action

## T&G committee reject Cowley purge

THE 'COWLEY 9' have won a partial victory. Meeting on July 19th, the Transport and General Workers' Union Region 5 Committee voted to refer back the charges against the nine to the Oxford District Committee of the union.

The charges are a collection of trumped-up accusations of disrupting the union, revealing internal union information, 'criticising officials of the union' and so on. A sub-committee of the Oxford District Committee had recommended that the nine — who are all leading militants at the Cowley car plant of British Leyland — should face penalties going as far as life-time banning from union office, or expulsion from the union.

In a bulletin, the Cowley 9 Def-

ence Campaign has said: "There is no doubt that this is a significant decision and represents a recognition by the Region of the weakness of the charges levelled."

"The campaign however cannot drop its guard. We must remain fully mobilised until all the charges are finally and officially withdrawn..."

It also calls for support for "those stewards who remain victimised. Alan Thornett [one of the nine] must now be recognised by BL as deputy convenor of the Cowley Assembly Plant. (Leyland bosses have refused to recognise him since his election last December.)"

"The four Cowley stewards victimised since August 1976 must have their credentials restored."

## LONGBRIDGE WORKS COMMITTEE GOES FOR SPEED-UP

The Works Committee at British Leyland's Longbridge works is offering its services to Michael Edwardes — and at a low price, too.

It has opened negotiations for 'changed work methods', including new shift patterns, increased labour mobility, and a 'team working' system where each team of workers has to 'cover' for any absences within the team.

In return it is demanding wage increases of £13 or £14.

But those increases are due anyway, as part of Leyland's agreement to introduce pay parity within the cars division! The Works Committee's demand is simply for the increase to be paid from November 1978 rather than November 1979.

If the wage increase is a swindle, the changes in working conditions which are being discussed are very real. 'Industrial engineers' — work study men — would have the final say on manning levels, which means the end of any trace of 'mutuality' (the trade union veto on manning). The way would be open for tremendous speed-ups, and probably also for a third shift.

The scheme was put to Longbridge stewards last Thursday, 3rd August. It got through with only minority opposition — the Works Committee having presented the issues so unclearly that most stewards did not really understand what was involved.

Meanwhile it looks as if this

pay increase which will be counted twice — once for parity and once in return for speed-up — could even be counted a third time: as part of an incentive scheme.

In April a previous incentive scheme proposal was rejected by a Leyland workers' ballot. A new scheme has now been put forward by the Leyland bosses, differing only in that it offers more money — 'up to £15' is promised, though there are no details.

All the basic problems of the old scheme are still in the new one: destruction of 'mutuality'; 'serious manpower implications' as Leyland boss Pat Lowry put it; and plant-based calculation, so that a hold-up anywhere in a plant can mean bonuses are lost throughout the plant.

Underneath all these schemes there is the question of the next Leyland carworkers' wage agreement, which the Leyland bosses hope to negotiate on a national basis to run from this November. The talk of big pay rises in return for increased productivity is obviously intended to head off any serious fight for a straight wage increase.

For the defence of Leyland workers' conditions, therefore, two things are essential: a fight to preserve 'mutuality', and a fight for a serious straight wage increase in November, together with a cost-of-living clause to guarantee against future inflation.

JIM DENHAM

## DOCKS: THE END OF A COMPROMISE

ON JULY 24th, the House of Commons threw out an Order to bring the Dock Work Regulation Act, passed in 1976, into operation. With the Liberals, Scottish Nationalists and Ulster Unionists supporting the Tories, Labour was in a clear minority.

The vote closed, for now, a story going back to 1972.

In 1972 dockers launched a big struggle to protect their jobs, threatened by the transfer of packing and unpacking work to inland container depots.

They defied the Industrial Relations Act to picket the container depots.

After months of fierce struggle, in which the government was twice forced to its knees over challenges to the Industrial Relations Act, a compromise was engineered

by transport union chief Jack Jones.

Lavish severance pay was offered to dockers who left their jobs, and a law was promised to make the jobs in container depots dockers' work, subject to the job security protection of the 1947 National Dock Labour Scheme.

The severance pay led to a tremendous decline in employment on the docks. And when the Dock Work Regulation Act was brought to Parliament, it was gutted by a House of Lords amendment which made the Act apply only to container depots within half a mile of docks. (Even the original text only included container depots within five miles of docks, thus leaving out many of the biggest depots.)

Late in 1976 the Labour Government lost an attempt to reverse the Lords amendment because two right wing Labour MPs, Brian Walden and John Mackintosh, voted with the Tories.

Now, with the 24th July vote, even the chopped-down Act has been put on the shelf.

There is a simple lesson: never trust the promises of trade union bureaucrats and parliamentary politicians.

If in 1972 the dockers had gone out to build fighting unity between container depot workers, transport workers, and themselves, then they could have won real benefits for all. Instead they find themselves with their ranks decimated and having won nothing at all as regards the extension of the Dock Labour Scheme.

The same lesson applies to the current major issue facing dockers, the threatened closure of London's Royal Group of docks. There has been talk of a national docks strike to stop this closure. On 28th July the Government agreed to put the closure off — probably not so much because of the strike threat as because of the prospect of a general election soon.

But the closure prospect still remains in reserve, as a lever to force increased work rates and reduced manning levels. Unless dockers continue to mobilise for militant action, they could find themselves after the general election with their resistance whittled down and facing a closure decision from a vigorous newly elected government.

## If you're a POW, choose Vietnam

An official US investigation has shown that for American pilots during the Vietnam war it was better for their health to be taken prisoner by the Vietnamese than to continue living in US Air Force quarters.

When a group of POWs was compared with a group of pilots who had avoided injury or capture it was found that the POWs had had a more healthy diet and were at least no worse off psychologically.

The results from a survey of Irish Republican fighters taken prisoner by British troops in Ireland would unfortunately be quite different...

After a recent visit to the H-Block at Long Kesh, a bishop

declared that conditions there were intolerable 'even for animals'.

Since March 1976 the British government has abolished political status (or special category) in their POW camps. Protesting Republican prisoners refused to comply with this. Insisting that their struggle was a political one and they weren't just self-motivated criminals, they refused to wear prison uniforms or do prison work.

The prison authorities replied by leaving the prisoners with no clothing, no books or newspapers, no cell furniture, no visits, no exercise, no fresh air. These, they said, were 'privileges' which had

been suspended for insubordination.

The prisoners of H-Block are now taking their case to the European Commission of Human Rights, accusing the British government of contravening the European Human Rights Convention, especially by depriving them of 'privileges' which should be theirs.

In the latest stage of their protest, the prisoners have refused to wash or sleep out. Conditions in H-Block have got worse and worse.

Sinn Fein has called a demonstration in solidarity with the H-Block prisoners, for Sunday 13th August. Assemble at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, at 2pm.

## More chaos at airports

There was chaos at the airports on the weekend of 29-30 July as French air controllers imposed a work to rule for the third weekend running. French airports were more clogged up than ever, because millions of French people start their holidays at the end of July, and the hold-ups spread to British airports.

Negotiations are now proceeding between the French government and the air controllers' unions, but it is still possible that the work to rule may be re-imposed.

The air controllers had little option in starting their work to rule. Their demands — for improved equipment and safety provisions, as well as wage increases — go back to 1973, and have been consistently ignored.

They are forbidden by law to strike; another one of their demands is the restoration of the right to strike.