

# workers' ACTION

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## SOUTH AFRICA

# DON'T ARM THE MURDERERS ARM THE BLACK REVOLT



ARMED WITH STICKS, knives and stones, groping towards a freedom they have never known, thousands of black South Africans have risen up in rebellion against the white capitalist overlord. Against troops armed with guns, gas and armoured cars defending the privilege and profit of the last secure white bastion in Africa, they sustained the revolt for a number of days, as the dead piled up and the wounded were struck down.

South Africa today is an armed camp. Following the victories of African guerilla armies in Mozambique and Angola, and with the Smith regime in Rhodesia at bay, South Africa has upped its military budget by 42% to 1.6 billion dollars. It possesses every kind of sophisticated weaponry, electronic, computerised, calculated for one main purpose: to suppress any revolt by the black slave-class that creates its vast wealth.

Incredible that people should have the nerve to stand up to that!

Yet what choice faces the masses of a town like Soweto, where the revolt started? Quite literally, they have nothing to lose but chains. Soweto is a vast slave compound housing the black workers for the all-white gleaming city of Johannesburg. Each day, two hundred thousand black workers get up at about 5 in the morning, and travel on ramshackle buses to the white city 18 miles away, returning only after dark.

Johannesburg is a prosperous city, modern and with every amenity. In Soweto, 86% of the houses have no electricity; 97% no hot water. There is one cinema showing censored films. Unpaved streets, no parks or gardens. Nothing to make life pleasant.

54% of adults in Soweto are unemployed. Those who work earn an average of £10 a month, where it is estimated that it takes four times that much to keep a family of five. Houses are overcrowded, about 3 out of ten babies die before they reach the end of their first year.

On top of these harsh and brutal living conditions is the apartheid system itself, which denies blacks any political power and subjects them to stringent controls covering every aspect of their lives: where they may live and work and move, who they can marry, what they may learn.

The spark that detonated the explosive revolt last week was a demonstration of 5,000 school children against the teaching of certain subjects

in Afrikaans — the language of their most open and brutal oppressors. Police fired into the crowd of children, killing a young boy. As news of the murder spread, more children came onto the streets. Unemployed workers joined the demonstration too.

A black photographer on the scene described "small bodies writhing in pools of blood in the dust. Police bullets tearing holes in the mob and the screams of anger and pain. ... The police were blasting into the crowd."

By evening the demonstrations had spread to the whole of Soweto. Black workers coming back from Johannesburg joined in the fighting. Troops were called in — and were met with resistance. And the revolt began to spread to other towns like Soweto. In place after place, workers and children were gunned down by troops in an orgy of killing. More than 100 died. More than 1000 wounded.

Many of the guns came direct from Britain — built and transported by the labour of British workers. Over the years (despite an 'arms ban' full of loopholes) everything from rifles to tanks, ships and aircraft has found its way into the armoury of the South African butchers. All will be turned against the oppressed black masses fighting for their freedom.

Despite a commitment in the Labour Party Manifesto to stop the arms trade, military equipment still flows into South Africa from Britain. Only last week, while black workers were fighting desperately in Soweto, a British firm was found to be sending parts for armoured cars and tanks to South Africa through Jersey. Marconi has a contract for a sophisticated military communications system. Rolls Royce engines find their way there via Italy; Martin Baker rocket motors go via France.

Penalties are nothing but small fines that can be written off against millions in profits.

The British labour movement must act to stop this grizzly trade. Workers can and must black these arms — a more effective way to stop them than fines or protests.

But even this will be little more than a gesture. South Africa's brutal racist rulers will still have an armoury sufficient to suppress any number of courageous revolts by unarmed workers.

The labour movement should act to ensure that South Africa's oppressed majority does not remain unarmed, and give it a chance to mount a more successful fight. We have the resources to contribute to a more serious fight, one that can actually put these mad dogs out of business.

Anti-apartheid Demonstration

JUNE 26th 2.30pm Embankment



# Fighting racialism

## Demo in Rotherham

ON SATURDAY 19th June, black and white workers stood shoulder to shoulder on the streets of Rotherham to guard immigrant areas of that town against National Front marchers.

George Caborn, AUEW district secretary and a Communist Party member, had called for a counter-demonstration. This move was welcomed by the newly-formed Sheffield Anti-Fascist Committee. However, the CP-dominated AUEW district committee planned the counter-demonstration so as not to pass through the centre of town and not to have even the most minimal confrontation with the NF.

After the march was over, the great majority of the 2000 anti-fascists (including many Asians) left the CP and the clergy to listen to tape recordings of Martin Luther King speeches, and went to defend the immigrant areas.

Contingents from the anti-fascist committee also provided escorts for many Asian marchers making their way home.

In the meantime the National Front had marched through the town and held a meeting in a school on the fringe of the immigrant area. Initially the NF had 900 or 1000 people, but they picked up at least another 200 young working class lads on the way. These lads — many of them only 14 or 15 years old — mostly had no idea of the Front's politics. They were attracted by the Front seeming to be "for the English" or by the prospect of a punch-up.

As usual, IS went off on a binge of their own instead of collaborating with the Anti-Fascist Committee. They attempted to stop the National Front as they fringed the immigrant area, but the police broke up their cordon.

When the NF left their meeting, they found the immigrant area sealed off by groups of anti-fascists.

One of the most important gains from the mobilisation has been the establishment of good links between the Anti-Fascist Committee and the immigrant community.

## Harrow NF threat

LAST THURSDAY, 17th June, the National Front turned their attention from attacking those they make the scapegoats for unemployment and the cuts — black people — to attacking trade unionists organising for a real fight on those issues, at a Harrow Trades Council public meeting.

The Front had mobilised 25 or 30 of their cranks, and were clearly intent on breaking up the meeting by way of an intensive barrage of racist abuse and heckling. They failed in their objective, in face of the unusual spectacle of a 'left' Labour MP, Neil Kinnock, refusing to be outshouted and suggesting that these fascists ought not to be reasoned with, but violently opposed. The Front were finally ejected from the meeting by the police.

The trade union movement will ignore at its peril the threat posed by the extreme right, which today focuses its attacks on black workers, but tomorrow may threaten the whole workers' movement. And it is both spineless and foolish to rely on the police for protection. The task of building defence squads for the protection of both immigrants and labour movement meetings must be taken seriously.

## Blacks' anger

IN LONDON last Sunday (20th June) over 300 delegates from Labour Party, trade union, and black organisations attended a conference called by 'Liberation' London Area Council to discuss the issue of racialism.

Most of the delegates recognised the urgency of responding to the recent wave of racist attacks on the black communities, yet the speakers from the platform, who included Ernie Roberts and Sidney Bidwell, put forward no policies which could effectively defend them. The most they suggested was support for Liberation's call for the prosecution of National Party chairman Kingsley Read under the Race Relations Act, for his remark in Newham the Saturday before. Referring to the killing of an Asian youth, Read said: "One down, one million to go".

Speaking from the floor, Waltham Forest Trades Council delegate Steve

Cushion said that resolutions and 'education' were not enough to combat the racials' attacks. Defence groups must be built to protect black areas.

A delegate from Stoke on Trent representing the Association of Mauritian Workers also made a resounding call for anti-fascist committees to be set up in every locality.

Unfortunately these calls were not taken up by the conference.

What did come out clearly was the anger of the black delegates at the scandalous record of the British labour movement on the issue of racialism. Three black delegates from different Constituency Labour Parties gave detailed accounts of the racialism they had encountered in their respective CLPs, including the refusal of one membership secretary to sign up black workers as members.

A black delegate from Croydon CLP, denouncing Bob Mellish's recent outburst on immigration, demanded that "he retract his statement. If he doesn't, he should be kicked out of the labour movement".

The fighting spirit of these black delegates contrasted sadly with the passivity of the Stalinist and Tribunit conference organisers.

## Leeds' NUJ boycott NF

THE LEEDS BRANCH of the National Union of Journalists has instructed its 350 members not to report National Front meetings. This follows the forcible ejection of a black NUJ journalist from a NF meeting he was sent to cover for the *Horsforth News*.

A NF official spokesman stated that the Front did not have a policy of banning black people from its meetings; but he then went on to describe the newspaper's action in sending "such a reporter" as "provocative".

Brian Spink, chairman of the Leeds NF branch, said, "It was my decision to refuse entry to the reporter — and I stand by it... I regard the sending of a coloured reporter as deliberate intimidation. There are plenty of white reporters who could have covered the story just as well".

Leeds NUJ has called on other branches to instigate similar bans. NUJ members on the *Camden Journal* have said they will stop work if the paper publishes a National Front advertisement. The management took the issue to the Press Council, which deplored the NUJ action but did not enforce the inclusion of the fascist ad.

Central London NUJ branch (covering Fleet Street) and London Freelance branch have both passed motions condemning the racist stories against Malawi Asian refugees and asking the NUJ NEC to take disciplinary action against any NUJ member involved in their production. Magazine Branch has passed a similar resolution, and is supporting moves to organise a conference on racism and the media in liaison with black organisations.

But NUJ general secretary Ken Morgan has refused to stand by the Leeds action. He claims he understands "the intense feeling of our members against organisations which try to pick and choose between black and white members of the union" — but he says that he thinks journalists should not boycott any meetings.

## Cardiff defeat for fascists

THE ATTEMPTS of an assorted rag-bag of fascists and racials to hold an anti-immigration meeting in Cardiff last Friday met with ignominious defeat.

The owners of the meeting hall cancelled the booking, and 200 people assembled at 3 days' notice on a march and picket called by the local Trades Council. The ten or so fascists who did turn up — they had boasted of being able to attract 300! — were forced to slink away to hold their meeting in someone's front room.

Officially represented on the picket were the Welsh Area NUM, Cardiff Trades Council, Plasnewydd Labour Party, Cardiff LPYS, and several student unions, plus many other trade unionists and a large black contingent. Real possibilities exist for building a local anti-racistist committee with a strong base in the labour movement, that will enable the consistent work needed on this issue to be done. Supporters of Workers Action will be pushing for this in the coming weeks as a matter of urgency.

# Immigrants' welcome is a police cell

WHEN the annual White Paper on immigration was published last week, the press hovered with pens and pads poised to hear what Enoch Powell had to say. "Rivers of Blood"? "Guns in the suburbs"? "Black muggers"? But he had nothing to say. The facts of the White Paper simply did not interest him.

It was left to the chicken-feed Tories on the back benches to try and make a meal out of the statistics. And in a Parliament where, to quote Brian Sedgmore MP, "everyone is a racist now" their backwardness went almost unnoticed, and certainly unrefuted.

The White Paper showed that 30,954 Commonwealth immigrants were admitted for settlement in Britain (7,835 more than last year), the majority being families of people already settled in Britain. 19,974 Commonwealth citizens already living in Britain were permitted to settle permanently (1,015 more than last year); for the most part they had been living here for more than five years on January 1st 1973. 2,500 of these were from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, though the biggest single group was from India (3,658).

Suddenly on Friday Powell sprang to life: he would table questions in Parliament; he would reveal the as yet undisclosed truth; he would be the voice for mindless reaction. "Powell's New Shock" headlined the *Daily Express*... "Immigration officers, appalled at being ordered to ease entry into Britain, have given Mr. Enoch Powell confidential information to act on."

These were to be the "real" facts. "So many immigrants came in from Malawi one weekend last month that the London Airport detention centre was filled; so was the overflow centre at Harmondsworth and all available local police cells..." reported the *Express*.

No newspapers ran a "Scandal of the prison-cell Asians" story, of course. Think of the outrage and sympathy if passengers even get held up by delays or (better still) strikes! Not a word of it came in response to this inhuman treatment.

There followed the usual stories about wives, students and dependents, all outrage and horror, all assuming some dreadful consequences. They might have been talking about the plague, not about people.

Writing recently in the *New Statesman*, Alex Lyon — the Home Office minister sacked by Callaghan — shed some light on the real situation.

## Laws

Lyon's message is not a socialist one. He agrees with immigration laws. But he wants to reduce the queues and speed up the procedures — and then slam the door hard. He can't see the point in dragging it out: that is pointless, cruel and damaging.

Nevertheless, his genuine concern for the situation of would-be immigrants and recently settled immigrants whose families have been divided, has made the red, white and blue show up in the mean little eyes of the Immigration Officers and the officers of the British High Commission. Powell now amplifies their voices.

Reading the *Daily Express*, you get the impression of harassed officials doing their duty and being sabotaged by Whitehall. Reading Lyon, it's clear that the opposite is the true picture. Despite instructions from the Home Office, he says, they continued certain methods and practices that were slowing things down.

Lyon recalls that despite instructions to the contrary, High Commission officials who hand out entry certificates in places like India and Bangladesh to dependents of people

settled in Britain still insist on using a "criminal standard of proof" (i.e., proof beyond all reasonable doubt) when testing applications. They were told to apply a standard of judgment based on probabilities. But they ignored the instruction.

In 1970 26,000 people were being interviewed. By 1974 the number had fallen to 13,000, not because there were fewer applications but because the procedure was twice as long as three years before.

Despite a drop in applications shortly after, the queues lengthened with the increased delays. "When Labour came back into office" he says "wives were waiting up to seven years before getting their certificates." Why? The real barrier, says Lyon is "the concern of officials to keep down the number of entrants."

The *Express* is shocked that the airport detention cells were full up — sympathetic no doubt for the overworked jailors... But who are the unfortunate travellers who, after a ten-hour flight, step off a plane into a police cell?

Here's the case of one of them: a young girl who was coming in to get married. But the sharp-eyed officials reckon she is pregnant and charge her with being, secretly, not a fiancée (who can come in straight away) but... a wife — who should have waited in the years-long queue! So they cry 'cheat' with one voice, and lock up the poor woman in one their detention cells, to await deportation back to India.

That is what it is all about. Despite the stringent standards of proof (difficult to obtain in a country where complete records are not kept) and despite the length and exhaustiveness of the interviews and investigation by racist officials at both ends of the world, only 15% of applicants are rejected as "frauds". And, says Lyon, a very large number of these are almost certainly real dependents of settled immigrants, but even if all of them were not, admitting them would only mean admitting 15,000 people.

## Room

Lyon's case is useful for deflating the hysteria of the gutter press. But it doesn't actually counter that hysteria because it still assumes, by supporting laws designed to keep black people out, that immigration by black people is something wrong in itself.

We say it isn't wrong. Ordinary working people are not the cause of any problems in a society, just because they are a different colour. They build houses as well as living in them; they help to run the social services they use; they have organised to fight for better wages and job conditions. A white worker would never imagine that he was a cause of unemployment — why on earth should a black worker cause it?

Immigration controls should be ended. Without them, people simply come and go as they wish. There's plenty of room for people. There should be no room for racialism.



# FOR A UNITED CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIALISM

WORKERS ACTION has proposed the following basic campaign within the labour movement and in unity with black workers and immigrant organisations. We call on all socialists and revolutionary organisations to join with our supporters in this campaign:

▶ **RACISTS OUT OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT!** There is no room for the apostles of racial hatred in the ranks of the working class movement!

NO trade union membership for open racists and fascists  
NO open racists or fascists to hold places on any trade union, shop steward or trades council body.

WITHDRAW Labour Party membership and sponsorship from all councillors and MPs openly advocating and propagating racist policies. REMOVAL of all trade union officials espousing racist policies.

FOR clear anti-racist platforms in all rank and file, Trade Union and Labour publications.

FOR workplace, trade union, Labour Party and LPYS contingents to anti-fascist demonstrations and delegations to active anti-fascist committees.

FOR coordinated propaganda throughout the labour movement to nail the racist lies.

▶ **NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS!**

Coordinated mobilisation of all labour movement, anti-fascist and black organisations to prevent all fascist marches, meetings and mobilisations.

NO public halls or meeting places for fascist or racist meetings.

DEMONSTRATIONS and action against all openly racist newspapers and publications — including both national and

local press. For a campaign in the MEDIA UNIONS to prevent racist publications.

▶ **OPPOSITION TO THE IMMIGRATION ACTS AND TO ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS!**

REPEAL all existing legislation. FOR a labour movement campaign to wipe racialism off the statute books.

▶ **LOCAL ANTI-RACIST / ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEES** based on a united front of all workers' organisations including political parties and groups, drawing in the organisations of the black communities and all forces committed to 'no platform for fascists'. To campaign against racist ideas and 'arguments' and prevent all racist and fascist activity in their areas. For the NATIONAL COORDINATION of all anti-racist and anti-fascist committees.

▶ **DEFENCE OF THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AGAINST RACIST ATTACK!**

FOR the right of black caucuses in the trade unions. AID to the self-defence of the immigrant areas against racist and fascist attack.

FOR active support by the white labour movement for the defence of the black communities — for joint committees of defence that unite in action the labour movement with black community organisations.

# BUILD BLACK DEFENCE GROUPS

"ONE DOWN, one million to go." That was what Kingsley Read, the leader of the fascist National Party, had to say about the murder of a young immigrant from Asia in Southall.

The National Front spokesman was only a little less explicit. Asked about the murder, he said: "We are out to stop a multi-racial society in this country. We will use any means to achieve this."

Read made his murderous speech in the East End of London, where only a couple of weeks before, two Asian students were murdered by racist youths following a month of anti-immigrant crusading in the press. A week before Read's speech more than 100 racists attacked about 12 Asians outside a mosque in Barking.

In Blackburn, where Read himself has been elected to the council, racist violence has become a daily event. So too in the East Midlands. In Rochdale, soon after a National Party full time organiser installed himself in the town, a mosque was seriously damaged and shop windows in the Asian communities have been smashed.

In town after town, previously peaceful and secure communities have come under attack. A fascist election candidate, a 'Paki-bashing' spree by the local or national press, can be enough to set off scenes reminiscent of the early years of Nazi Germany.

And like those years, the weight of public disapproval is reserved for the victims, while the gangs of thugs and killers stand confident in the certainty that they are the shock troops matching their actions to the words of the press, the politicians and the bigot-in-the-street.

This was confirmed when Home Secretary Roy Jenkins — a very 'civilised' man, they say... — described the killings and the bully-boy violence as "just a hiccup", while the press went hysterical about the 'race violence' of... an angry demonstration of youngsters in Southall protesting the killings. Each time the fascist violence

is played down or ignored — as it is in case after case by the police themselves — they get stronger, fortified by this quiet seal of approval to their actions. All the escalation of violence — such as the fact that now gangs can put bricks through Asians' windows in broad daylight — has come not from counter-violence but as a result of there being no resistance, no outcry, no comeback.

What new terror will the next escalation bring to men, women and children with brown skins? Whether it will be bullets spraying from a passing car or full scale pogroms, we can be sure such escalation will come not from resistance but from passivity. We are, after all, dealing with the bully-boy mentality, which is basically cowardly, encouraged by its own strength and easily discouraged by opposition.

As New Society, a liberal weekly that sells well to the better class of probation officer, observed "Paradoxically, it might be less worrying for the future if members of Asian communities looked less vulnerable than they generally do. Neither vigilante groups nor gang warfare are pleasant, but the pressures that build up when all the violence is on one side are more greatly to be feared. Ask any Jew."



And the Institute of Race Relations warned "The 'voices of reason' in and out of the black community who counsel us to 'keep calm' are mistaken in their hope that by maintaining respectability, fascism will be appeased."

Revolutionary socialists have been calling for some years now for defence squads to protect immigrants from racist violence (and to protect the labour movement from fascist violence, too: the Front now has a policy of turning over socialist meetings and there have been a number of meetings attacked, most notably an NCCL teach-in on Ireland in Manchester at which two people at least were seriously hurt)

The spontaneous formation in many immigrant areas of defence groups is to be welcomed. And we must vigorously insist on their right to exist. Meanwhile, white anti-racists must organise particularly among white workers a force which can put itself at the disposal of the black communities which are under the most direct attack.

The racism within the working class is so deep-rooted that it will be uphill work. Those who are determined to fight racism and fascism will have to go ahead, dragging with us what sections we can out of the racist mire. But if we wait for the majority of the working class movement before doing anything, the swamp will have risen even higher, and the chances will be less.

A start must be made. In each town or city area, anti-racist committees should be established to fight racism, to support black community defence organisations, to drive the fascists off the streets, and to defend labour movement meetings.

# TUC sign on the dotted line

Editorial

NOTHING unexpected happened at the recall TUC conference. By a massive majority, and after only a morning's debate, the delegates voted to accept the 4.5% pay limit.

The vote took place at a time when it is becoming clearer than ever just what it will mean for workers' living standards. The Financial Times is expecting the retail price index to rise by at least 13% this year. The 'Grocer', a retailers journal, produced its figures last week to show that "average" grocery prices have increased by 22% over the last 12 months and that there are no immediate signs of a slackening in the rate of increase.

By all accounts, the TUC have voted for another cut in real wages. And there was so little opposition to this that the vote was taken early so that delegates could go home after lunch.

The arguments in favour were all too familiar. It was necessary to sacrifice to bring 'our country' back from the brink of collapse. As TUC Chairman Cyril Plant put it, "It is vital that everyone should join in the battle so that our country can regain its greatness." Hugh Scanlon won a solid round of applause for attacking the media for "selling this country short". And Jack Jones tried to persuade those mandated to vote 'No' to change their vote, so as to give a unanimous message to "the world".

In a festival of patriotic speechmaking the trade union leaders wanted to send a 'message' that would satisfy the employers, the creditors and the bankers. No-one, however, even tried to explain how it would benefit workers around the world if British workers give up their wages without a fight. But then, 'workers of the world' is phrase and an idea only for banners, for songs and perhaps for May Day. For everyday and for real, the 'message' must go to the bankers of the world.

The CBI expressed itself as very pleased, and pledged itself to do all it could to help 'the country' too!

Hugh Scanlon recounted how the TUC leaders had agreed to accept Healey's deal. "We didn't achieve much" he said "there's still going to be a lowering still further of the living standards of the people of this country". But he could see no argument against accepting the deal. In fact, a simple device by Harold Wilson had done the trick. He had summoned the trade union leaders to Downing Street at 2.30 in the morning, confronted them with the fact of a run on the pound, and told them that if they did not accept, a general election would be called and the Government's future would be in doubt.

## DISUNITY AND SPLITS

There was no visible left and right at the recall TUC. Sharing the idea that 'our' country, both employers and workers, have a common interest against workers elsewhere; sharing the idea that the Labour government must be preserved, at any cost to the working class; sharing a deep fear of action from rank and file workers to fight unemployment and hold up living standards — sharing these ideas, the trade union leaders found no alternative but to toe the Healey line, and to toe it all together.

The arguments against acceptance did not challenge this logic. While Jack Jones argued "Let us say frankly that it is in our interests to keep the Labour Government in office", John Lyons of the Electrical Power Engineers Association said, while 'opposing' the deal, that his union would do nothing to stop the deal succeeding. Together with Clive Jenkins of ASTMS — the 'star' speaker against the deal — his opposition hinged on the disproportionate sacrifice that skilled and 'qualified' workers were being asked to bear.

Their argument against the deal was not calculated to unite the working class behind them. It was primarily based on a defence of differentials (that is, on continued disunity and splits in the workforce) and the special privileges of skilled workers.

Clive Jenkins, whose union conference voted against wage restraint but made no plans to initiate claims outside Healey's pay norm, added the dressing of an alternative nationalistic economic programme. Inflation and import controls, he argued, forcing redundancies among workers in other countries rather than here (though he didn't say it quite so baldly as that) should be adopted by the government while the trade union leaders were left to bargain 'freely and responsibly' for... cuts in workers' living standards.

It all seemed so simple. It all passed so easily. But the trade union leaders know that a 17 to 1 majority for a deal with Healey at their recall conference is no guarantee of success. The UCATT conference voted against the deal but their leadership refused to register that vote. One third of the delegates at the Nalگو conference voted to reject the deal. And nearly a thousand trade unionists came to London to lobby the conference with banners demanding a 'no' vote and 'No deal'.

## JONES, THE ARCHITECT

Jack Jones, the 'architect' of the deal, knows this. He knows that one third of his executive opposed the deal. He knows that the miners supported the deal by only the narrowest of majorities, despite a barrage of press propaganda. In this knowledge, he and the other union leaders have been arguing that this is the last pull on the belt until an "orderly return to free collective bargaining".

The motion went through the TUC easily. But as the delegates went home nice and early, they knew one thing. That it was easier for the Labour Government to persuade them to accept than it will be for them to persuade workers faced with a 10% drop in income and other cuts in standards to 'sacrifice' for the employers and the 'country'.

Socialists and militants must take up NOW the arguments against toeing the line of the recall TUC. And we must argue for claims that AT LEAST compensate for last year's rise in the cost of living (at £1 for 1% that's about £15 to bring us level with before) and which guarantee continued FULL compensation for all increases in the workers' cost of living in the next year.

The trade union leaders will not defend living standards. Only a rank and file leadership committed to fighting wage cuts can lead that fight. And the TUC recall showed it to be more vital than ever that we fight to build the leadership and the movement that WILL defend our living standards.

## Not in front of the children, Not in front of the public

THE Government's U-turn on its commitment to introduce its promised Child Benefit scheme has spotlighted the thoroughgoing cynicism of both the Labour and trade union leaders.

The leakage of information about the Cabinet discussions reveals that when TUC leaders said last week that they were in no way responsible for the scrapping of the Child Benefit scheme they were lying. It shows that when the new Chief Whip gave Denis Healey an "excellent report" on the attitude of backbenchers to scrapping the scheme he was lying; and that when Healey delivered this report to the Cabinet meeting on May 6th he knew it was a lie.

The Child Benefit Bill was introduced into Parliament after years of debate as to how to stop penalising one-parent families, how to help the poorest families to avoid the poverty trap, and how to make the child allowance and taxation system relating to child allowance more rational.

When the Bill was read in Parliament in August 1975, the Government rejected attempts by backbenchers to write into the Bill a date by which it should start, as the Government had "already made binding commitments". These "binding commitments" didn't stop a whole series of delays. Then the Government made a "categorical statement" that the scheme would start in April 1977.

In April of this year, the Government started paying out a Child Interim Benefit of £1.50 for first children of one-parent families, but there was still no agreement on what the full rate would be.

So on April 8th David Ennals, the Secretary of State for

Social Services, sent a memo to the newly reshuffled cabinet pointing out that "If we continue to let Child Support be eroded by inflation the whole scheme would be condemned as a trick to give children less, not more". The memo also pointed out that the allowance would have to be at least £2.90 to restore the value of the benefit to the 1971 level in the case of three-child families.

The stigma of offering child benefits which would leave families worse off than under the Tories didn't seem to bother the cabinet. So another memo was drafted for the cabinet meeting on April 29th.

But Ennals' argument that the low amount Healey and the Treasury were proposing for the benefit would provoke harder resistance from the TUC was seized on by Healey: then we'll scrap the scheme altogether, he proposed.

After a bit of behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing by Callaghan himself and buttressed by the lying report from the Whips' Office, the cabinet meeting of May 6th decided to scrap the scheme and pay nothing at all. The Prime Minister emphasised shamelessly "the need for careful public presentation" of this cynical piece of promise-breaking.

According to the leaked cabinet minutes, the TUC representatives on the NEDC who met Denis Healey on May 25th "reacted immediately and violently against the scheme" when they grasped that by altering the tax system take-home pay would be reduced and the increased benefits would be paid direct in most cases to the mothers.

And that was only one day after the TUC representatives on the TUC-LP Liaison Committee had agreed the statement "It is of the utmost importance that the new child benefit scheme, to be introduced next year, provides benefit generous enough to represent a determined and concerted attack on the problem [of poverty]". So much for bluster. And so much for cynicism!

But the publication of the leaked minutes and the barrage of attack on the ditching of the Child Benefit scheme has forced the TUC leaders into backtracking. Now, after lyingly denying their role in the scrapping of the scheme, they have insisted on adding to their draft 'social contract' document the idea that: "Despite the Government decision recently announced to rephase the Child Benefit scheme, we believe that the full introduction of this reform should proceed as quickly as possible..." Hypocrisy, as someone once said, shows the first glimmerings of morality.

The retreat on the Child Benefit scheme is deplorable. But the scheme itself was hardly generous. In a recent article in *New Statesman*, Barbara Castle (who introduced the idea) wrote: "The father of two children stood to lose £3.16 from his pay packet (by not being able to claim tax allowance). The mother's income would have

risen to £5.28 (£3.78 more than at present). The overall rise in the family income would have been 62p."

Earlier in the article she reveals the tight-fistedness of even the more 'liberal' Labour MPs with the line "Obviously a higher rate than the break-even one was desirable in order to make the whole process palatable."



# The prophet of 'Popular Power'

ON 12th June, the official opening day of the Portuguese presidential elections, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho was speaking in Grandola and Cova da Piedade.

In Cova da Piedade, an industrial centre near Lisbon and a Communist Party stronghold, 25,000 people - often whole families together - assembled from 10pm to 1am to hear "Otelo". "Popular Unity", they chanted: "Otelo, the people are with you" - to which Carvalho replied, "People, I am always with you"; "it's only with you I can do it".

As well as Carvalho, there were some 15 other speakers, from Lisnave shipyards, from other workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions, and a women's support group for "Otelo".

In Grandola - another CP stronghold in the Alentejo, chosen as the starting point of the campaign because of the song of the same name, used as the signal for the 25th April 1974 coup - there were "Otelo" posters and flags not only on the walls, not only on the tractors and trailers coming in from local cooperatives, but even on the local Socialist Party headquarters. 2500 agricultural workers and peasants, at least half the local population, were there, chanting, "Agrarian Reform, Otelo will do it", "Popular Unity", and "Soldiers are sons of the people".

On the face of it, Carvalho's presidential campaign is what the bigger Portuguese far-left groups - UDP, PRP and MES - claim it is: the way to revitalise workers' struggles and workers' organisations depressed since 25th November.

## Must seize power

It seems to be the answer to the plans of the bourgeoisie and top generals, centred around General Ramalho Eanes' candidature for president. Carvalho preaches "people's power", and has the support of many militant workers, including CP militants in strongholds like Lisnave and the Alentejo, and even SP rank and file members.

At Cova da Piedade he said: "The workers know that they must seize power to solve the crisis. But the only way the bosses can do it is at the expense of the workers. The workers must unite to resist this attack". After the speech of a workers' committee representative saying that with Otelo the workers could take control, Carvalho corrected him. "It is only the workers themselves who can take power. I can help by opening some doorways".

Yet in reality Carvalho's campaign is part of the problem, not part of the solution. The slogans on his posters - "From 25th April to the Presidency" (which refers to Carvalho's leading role in organising the 25th April 1974 coup), and "A Friend in the Presidency" - express only a personality campaign, and certainly no clear policies different from the general promises of liberty, democracy, security, and socialism which all the candidates make.

Carvalho's election programme starts by affirming: "I pledge myself to ensure the defence of the Constitution... (to) appoint the Prime Minister according to the Constitution... I won't accept a government which may permit infringement of the Constitution's principles..." The programme does not mention inflation (currently running at 50%), and about unemployment (now around 30%) it says only that it is bad and should be ended. Its economic policy is "national independence".

## Anti-party propaganda

Carvalho's programme declares against "interference of... political parties" in the trade unions, and this anti-party propaganda is also reflected in his speeches. "It's the parties which have divided the workers", he says. "We must unite together to create popular power".

Carvalho does not argue for working-class action against the bourgeois State apparatus, but pledges "to put the Armed Forces and the Police Forces at the service of the people and of the national interests, by never letting repression crush the workers".

In his Press Conference, Carvalho said, "I do not intend to attack discuss any army comrade chosen by the political forces as their candidate. The responsibility attached to the Presidency and the devotion it requires call for dignity and total respect". While criticising 25th November, he has also described Eanes as his "comrade", and declared that he would not stand if Costa Gomes (an old friend of Spínola's) stood instead.

## Long-term interests

In the Press Conference he also declared his allegiance to the MFA and the "MFA-People Alliance", and advocated "Armed Forces where order and discipline prevail" - albeit "not an order and discipline which are used as excuses to repress workers".

Most strikingly, he said, "socialism... will only be achieved by our children", and that in the meantime workers should make "sacrifices... for national reconstruction" - though on condition that "they feel that these sacrifices are made in their long term interests".

The effective driving forces behind the Carvalho campaign are three avowedly revolutionary groups, PRP, MES, and UDP. They have set up "Dynamising Groups of Popular Unity" (GDUPs) to organise it.

PRP argues that the campaign gives it a chance to get across to the thousands of workers attracted by Carvalho's candidature. But sales of PRP or other party literature are strictly forbidden at the Carvalho campaign meetings, by agreement in the campaign committees.

For the Maoist UDP, which is the largest and fastest-growing of Portugal's far-left groups, the campaign is a chance to advance their two main slogans - "Unite the People against Poverty, Fascism and Imperialism", and "Struggle for an Anti-Fascist and Patriotic Government". In line with their ideas of a "two stage" revolution in Portugal - "democratic" revolution now, socialist revolution later - the UDP opposed even the vague references to socialism which are included in Carvalho's propaganda.

## Two-stage revolution

So the Carvalho candidature represents a personality campaign, with a bourgeois programme, into which groups like the PRP have sunk any trace of political independence. And it is the campaign of a very unreliable personality, at that.

True enough, Copcon was a very ineffective agency of the bourgeois state during much of the time Carvalho commanded it, and it sometimes sided with workers' struggles. But Carvalho's record also includes acquiescence in the sending of Copcon troops against Radio Renascença, his alliance with the "Group of Nine" officers in September 1975, and his failure to call for resistance on 25th November. He was always remained essentially a maverick element within the bourgeois military hierarchy.

In his speech at Cova da Piedade, Carvalho admitted his inconsistencies - but said "the people have pushed me the right way". It sounds good, but its logic, of course, is to blame "the people" also for Carvalho's right-wing lurches.

It epitomises the way in which Carvalho's campaign blocks working class political independence. Don't mobilise for workers' power, it says: pressure Carvalho to set him right. Don't demand the workers' organisations form a government:



The presidential candidates, from left to right.

DESPITE THE STRENGTHENING of the right since November 25th, and the severe economic crisis, the basic organisations of the Portuguese working class are intact.

The Popular Assemblies have disappeared long ago, and so have many of the neighbourhood commissions. But the workers' commissions still operate, and generally can still deny the bosses the right to manage things as they wish in the factories. It is difficult to find even one case where the bosses have reasserted effective control - though a number of them have tried.

Indeed, a new struggle for workers' control has been wages, in the welfare services. A few days ago 240 textile

workers, mostly women, reopened their factory under workers' control. They had previously been jobless for 10 months after the multi-national owners, Latrique de Portugal, shut down and left the country. The workers have demanded nationalisation.

Rural cooperatives have generally maintained themselves; the first one in the North was recently formed by 43 small peasants in Barcoucos, near Coimbra, who joined their plots of land together and have brought in a number of landless peasants with equal rights. Lisnave shipyard workers have contributed from their wages to buy a tractor for this cooperative, and have also sent work brigades to help.

Struggles against unemployment and sackings have often been effective. A strike against the sacking of 16 textile workers in the Manuel Goncalves factory in Pooça da Carzim (in the North-West) ended in victory on 15th June.

One the major current disputes is that at the INE (National Institute of Statistics), which is in its fourth week. It started off as a wages struggle, but has rallied the support of all civil servants after the government responded with threats of disciplinary measures against the strikers and a decree-law creating a special category for civil servants of semi-redundant workers paid only 60% wages. So far, despite the severe economic situation, not a single state employee has been

# THE CANDIDATE APRIL 25 VERSUS THE CANDIDATE NOVEMBER 25 BY KATE DOHERTY AND COLIN FOSTER



try to get "a friend in the presidency". Don't recognise that the Armed Forces must be broken up and replaced by workers' power and a workers' militia: push for a President who will put them "at the service of the people".

For Carvalho, who was removed from his command, demoted, taken off active service, and imprisoned after 25th November, the presidential campaign is a way to regain some of his glories of last year. For many militant workers, it seems to be a way to bring back the times when "the Revolution" seemed to be happening. But what the Portuguese working class needs is not a warmed-up version of the illusions of last year - and this time without the mass ferment in the army that buoyed them up - but action to secure its political independence from all capitalists and generals.

## CP's third choice candidate

THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST Party is putting up the only civilian candidate in the presidential elections - Octavio Pato, a member of its Central Committee.

But this candidature is not a real stand for working class political independence. At first the CP leadership wanted to support Eanes. Rank and file reaction prevented that. Then they tried to get Costa Gomes to stand. He refused. Pato was nominated only as their third choice. And Pato states ("Jornal Novo", May 25th) - "While we are not supporting the candidacy of Ramalho Eanes... we are not hostile to it either. No do we present our own candidacy in direct opposition to his or a plan for counterposing the workers' and people's movement to the armed forces". Some Portuguese revolutionaries

suspect the CP may yet withdraw Pato in favour of Eanes.

Pato's election propaganda - though more extensive, so far at least, than Eanes de Azevedo's, or even Carvalho's - never attacks Eanes or De Azevedo in any clear way. It does attack Carvalho's campaign, as being divisive and demagogic. The CP know that Carvalho is seducing some of their working class base, and also that they can attack him without risking hostility from the bourgeoisie or the Armed Forces top hierarchy.

## Identical

Pato's programme, however, is almost identical to Carvalho's. It differs mainly by having less leftist rhetoric and includ-



Phot: Carvalho, Eanes, Pato, de Azevedo.

acked. However, in Timex a three-day lock has been imposed.

Most struggles have been about wages, response to the escalating inflation. Shopworkers in Oporto have been on strike for 5 days to equalise working conditions and wages in all shops. 150,000 foodworkers were largely successful in their wages strikes at the end of May.

The fires of the Portuguese revolution are burning low, and the bourgeoisie hope to snuff them out altogether in the coming months. But with the workers still combative, and still well-organised, any sharp shift in the political situation could set the flames leaping higher again.

# THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

ER



# candidate

ing a list of concrete reform measures to which the candidate pledges himself. The essential elements — Armed Forces/People's Alliance, defence of the Constitution, national independence — are the same. The Portuguese bourgeoisie and generals, having used the CP as a major prop of their rule since 25th April 1974, are now preparing to dispense with it. Eanes has pledged that he will never allow the CP to enter the government. The CP's support for Pato is a sign that they realise that they may, after the elections, make a certain further turn to the left. But it will still be within the framework of Stalinist bureaucratic and class-collaborationist politics.

P. E. MONOT

## Eanes: the candidate of capitalist order

GENERAL RAMALHO EANES is almost certain to win Portugal's presidential elections, perhaps at the first round of voting on June 27th. He has the support of the whole bourgeoisie, of the PPD and CDS, of the Army and the Air Force, and also of the Socialist Party (and of some Maoists).

Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo has a programme similar to Eanes', but is supported only by the Navy and some sections of the middle class.

Eanes aims to complete the work of 25th November. After 25th November, the radicalisation in the armed forces was decisively quelled, with left-wing regiments dissolved and militants imprisoned. The working class, though by no means crushed, was subdued and chastened. Betrayed by the Communist Party and disoriented by the demagoguery of groups like the FUR ("Revolutionary United Front", including PRP, MES, LCI, LUAR, FSP and MDP), it found no effective policy of resistance.

### Soldiers

The swing to the right is easy to see. Seven new extreme-right papers have appeared, while left wing papers are now difficult to obtain in some bookstalls. Openly right-wing opinions are expressed more loudly on the streets and in cafes.

On the streets, the police have reappeared, and one no longer sees groups of soldiers smoking and chatting to people. Returned Angolan settlers recently organised them-

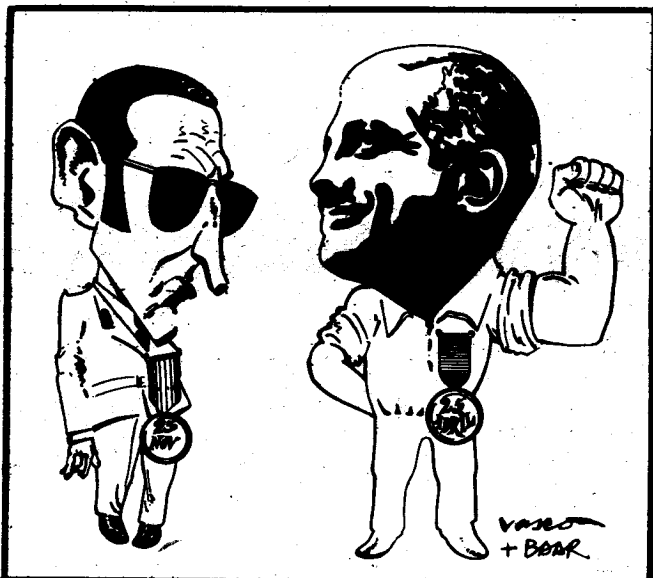
selves to rip down "Otelos" posters throughout Lisbon, and the Communist Party headquarters in Póvoa da Carizim (in the north west) was bombed a few days ago.

With Eanes' victory, a Socialist Party minority government could be constituted, with informal PPD and CDS support on most issues, and the possibility of a "presidential coup" in reserve in case of trouble. A strong presidential regime — something like De Gaulle's Fifth Republic in France — will set about whittling down the workers' commissions and displacing the CP's hold in the municipalities and the trade unions.

### Emergency

The Portuguese Constitution gives very large powers to the President. He is also head of the Revolutionary Council and Army Chief of Staff (though Eanes is the latter already). He can summon and dismiss governments, and exercise emergency powers.

The Portuguese working class urgently needs a campaign against the presidential system; for the defence of its gains won since 25th April 1974; for the defence of democratic rights; for the CP and SP to use their majority in the Legislative Assembly to form a government without capitalists or generals, rejecting presidential authority; for the sovereignty of the Legislative Assembly; for organised workers' self-defence; and for the CP and SP to break with the bourgeoisie.



## A SMALL AND CONFUSED VOICE OF INDEPENDENCE

ONE REVOLUTIONARY CANDIDATE was nominated for the elections — Arlete Vieira da Silva, nominee of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) and Partido Revolucionaria dos Trabalhadores (PRT), the Portuguese sympathising groups of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

On 26th May, however, they withdrew their support from her, in the face of apparently well-founded CP allegations that Vieira da Silva's claims to have a long record as an anti-fascist militant were false, and that her prison sentences under the Castano/Salazar regime had in fact been for petty crime.

This was a serious setback, despite the inadequacies of the LCI/PRT manifesto. This manifesto declared against the Pact between the parties and the Armed Forces hierarchy, and for a workers' united front in struggle. But it pledged Vieira da Silva, "if elected, to call upon Socialist Party general secretary Mario Soares ... to form a government...". The revolutionary candidacy was put forward essentially as a means of ensuring the proper functioning of bourgeois democracy, as expressed in the Legislative Assembly elections, through the formation of a CP-SP, or SP, government.

### Projects

Certainly revolutionary Marxists must fight to defend bourgeois-democratic rights against Bonapartist projects, and call on the reformist parties to join that fight. But revolutionaries "march separately, while striking together" — conducting any defence of bourgeois democracy with our own propaganda and our own methods, so as to make it a means for mobilising workers against capitalism. We do not proceed by making ourselves the

guarantors for the bourgeois-democratic good behaviour of Stalinism and the Social Democracy!

The LCI/PRT manifesto blandly describes the SP and CP as "workers' parties", without any mention of their bourgeois programmes. Indeed, it states that "the bourgeoisie [is] in the minority" in the Legislative Assembly. It does mention that "the presence of CP ministers in the cabinet, no more than that of SP ministers, is not a guarantee [!] in itself [!] of the anti-capitalist character of the government" — but draws no conclusions, says nothing about the question of the State, and makes no clear proposals for a fight to enforce a concrete programme of demands on a CP-SP government.

Consistent with the method of presenting the revolutionary candidate as the vehicle of a non-existent "united front", the LCI and PRT pledged themselves to withdraw Vieira da Silva if the CP or SP — or better, both together — proposed a candidate. Logically they should have withdrawn Vieira da Silva as soon as the CP put forward Pato!

The LCI, recoiling from its romantic-revolutionary escapades in the FUR last year, is evidently accommodating to the PRT's chronic adaptation to social democracy. The PRT denounced the 25th November paratroopers' uprising as an anti-working class adventure, and today incongruously couples critical support for the CP presidential candidate with calls for a Socialist Party (not SP-CP) government.

However, both LCI and PRT have stood against the pro-Carvalho tide on the Portuguese left, and are proposing critical support for Octavio Pato, as the only candidate of a workers' organisation. This represents an important — though small and confused — voice for working class political independence.

## LETTER FROM

# CFDT keeps its hands free

## PARIS

see strikes as its aids "not (as had Leon Blum) as its enemies."

Meanwhile the CFDT continues to be a pole of attraction in the factories. The recent elections for shopfloor representatives at Renault came as a shock to the CGT. The CGT leadership had just carried out a purge, excluding from the lists a number of names proposed by CGT sections in the factory. The purged CGT leftists called for a boycott.

In the event the CGT vote fell by a quarter — half of these abstaining, the other half voting for the CFDT, which is now about on a par with the CGT there.

The CGT has been worried by this and by its experiences on May Day — when the CFDT contingents on the joint march harboured women liberationists and masked soldiers. In the last week the CGT has broken off its cooperative relationships and has announced various campaigns without consulting the CFDT first for joint action.

The CFDT remains, then, ambiguous and diverse, but with considerable independence both as a whole vis a vis the major parties and internally for militant sections. If the Union of the Left did come to power (inevitably binding the hands of the CGT to an extent that would make the British TUC look like a wayward child of the Labour Government) it is to the CFDT that we will have to look for initiatives and support for continuing class struggle.

THE CFDT, the second major French trade union federation, whose conference ended a couple of weeks ago, has come a long way since the days in the 1940s when it used to start its proceedings with a paternoster (Our Father.)

Its current policy statement opposes on the one hand pure trade unionism for immediate aims only and on the other the twin evils of social democracy ('which has abandoned the objective of changing the system') and the Russian system ('which can't get beyond the capitalist model in its organisation of work and its authority structure'). It proclaims itself willing to fight beside the rest of the working class movements against the common enemies "capitalism, bureaucracy and technocracy," and says that it seeks "socialisme autogestionaire" ('workers control socialism').

More significant than the change in verbiage has been the central role of CFDT members and sections in leading or supporting exemplary struggles since 1968.

The LIP strike in 1974 was a high point, but the support of CFDT sections for current occupations and for the Sonacotra immigrant rent strikers and the soldiers' committees shows that this continues.

Before 1968 the CFDT, breaking from its Catholic origins, had been moving in a leftward direction, though it wasn't linked to any political party. It was this state of openness and movement (rather than its actual positions) that made it attractive after '68, drawing in many young workers and sections of the previously unorganised working class as they moved into action. These in turn reinforced its trends and its growth.

Yet while most of its members are firmly attached to the political independence which they see as the precondition of the union's success, the original reasons for it (anti-communism and a corporatist hostility to class politics) remain an influence on only a small minority.

### Offensive

The leadership has felt a strong pressure to take its place within the Union of the Left whose coming electoral victory seems so probable. Talks with the Socialist Party have been started and broken off — faced with the widespread suspicion of the membership (the old right, the new left and the ordinary rank and file are united on this). And the leadership themselves displayed a basic ambiguity on their relations to the Union of the Left (critical support but independence) which left most members with their uneasiness.

In relation to struggles the leadership has long been ambiguous: happy to gain a competitive advantage over the CGT on account of its militant reputation, but unhappy to lack control over its members. It brought considerable pressure to bear on the LIP workers to settle, and has opposed general assemblies and strike committees which involve all the workers (not only the unionised minority).

The main advantage of the CFDT over the CGT has been the freedom it has had to leave to its members and local sections. But it hasn't been any more willing than the CGT to coordinate struggles nationally and to centralise a class offensive — without which many long and heroic struggles are running into the sand.

The left in the CFDT has shown a substantial strength at this conference. An amendment in support of the formation of strike committees elected by all workers obtained the votes of 32% of the 2000 delegates, and another declaring that the working class must hold hegemony in the period of transition to socialism obtained more than 40% of the votes.

### Exclude

The left won a majority on a demand to exclude from the conference an observer from the American Embassy.

Most important, there was a widespread desire expressed that the Union should keep its hands free to speak out and to strike in the event of a Union of the Left electoral victory. Even general secretary Maire had to express his hope that such a government would

# Strike of the junior judges



Etienne Ceccaldi

WHERE Britain leads, the rest of the world will eventually follow. A projected new law in France threatens to enlarge the crime of conspiracy and, as in Britain, make it possible to convict people of it even if the action conspired for did not occur.

This is at the moment provoking an outcry among lawyers, judges and the 'League for the Rights of Man'.

The legal profession is already seething over the Government's disciplinary proceedings against Marseilles assistant public prosecutor Etienne Ceccaldi. On June 10th there was a strike of junior judges in protest against the attempted removal of Ceccaldi from Marseilles to the tiny town of Hazebrouck in northern France after his refusal to drop proceedings against petrol price fixers. The Government admits that 190 judges took part in the strike — and the junior judges' organisation the Syndicat de la Magistrature claimed 500.

One of the striking members explained "Every time there is a judge who is too curious, they move him. This is serious repression."

LOUISE MICHEL



# BUS FARES UP

## Where has all the money gone

ALL OVER the country, bus fares are going up, and bus services are being cut. The rule seems to be: pay more, wait longer.

The Eastern National faces the loss of 2½ million passenger miles. Liverpool MPTC is threatened with the withdrawal of 23 routes. In London the fares are going up by 25%, and London Transport has been found making preparations to turn the whole fleet over to one man operation (OMO) by 1985.

For years, the bus industry has had a staff shortage. Now that there are 1½ million unemployed — 1½ million men and women who would be only too pleased to build and operate buses — they cut the service even more.

If we want a good service, bus workers and their passengers must get together to fight for them. No-one else will. Waltham Forest Trades Council, just north of London, has started a campaign against the new fares, and is calling for a boycott of the increase. They point out that whenever fares go up, less people use the buses, and this is used as an excuse to cut back even further. A fare rise is, in effect, a pay cut you have to queue for. If other areas take up this lead, we can stop these fare increases like they did in Italy last year.

Recently, Willesden depot in London held a strike against a new con-trick of London Transport's known as primary and secondary schedules. Basically this scheme would have institutionalised the staff shortage and introduced 'greater flexibility'.

Now, whenever the boss starts talking about 'greater flexibility' you can bet the workers are going to catch it in the neck. So Willesden came out against it — and they won. And this has given a real lead for the fight back in London.

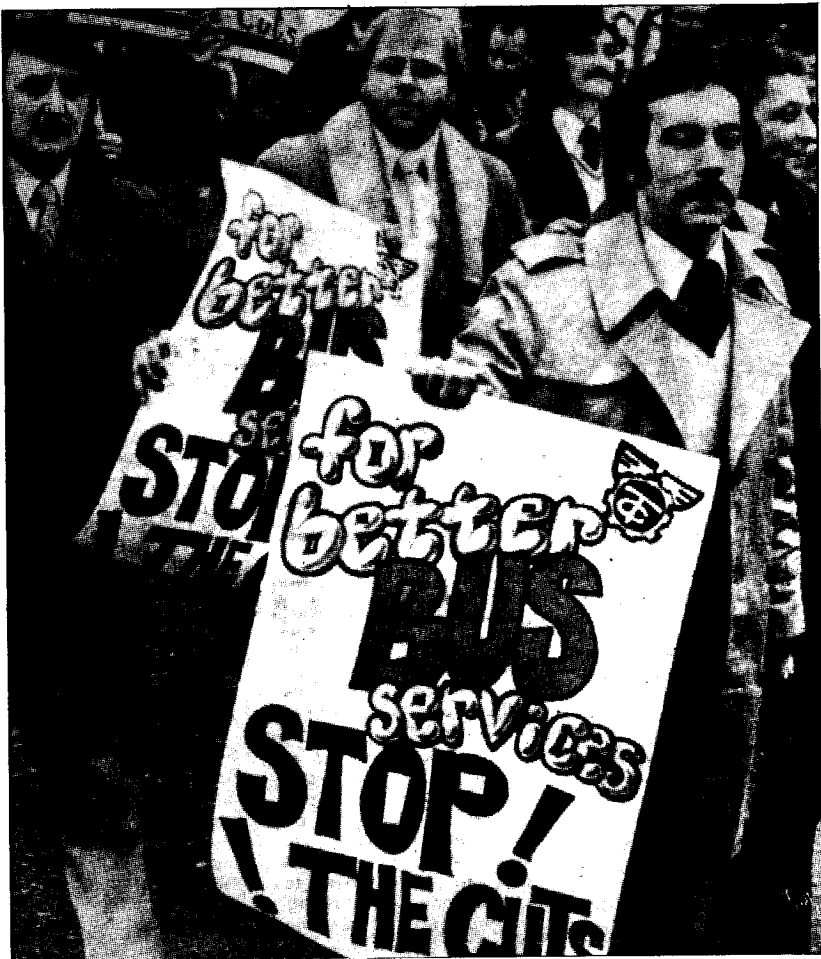
One of the factors which helped to produce this victory was the action of a local factory. They immediately demanded: no penalty for lateness, early finishing, and compensation payments for using other means of transport.

This is the kind of pressure that bus companies dread.

When actions of this sort happen, we always get bleatings from the bosses and their friends in the capitalist press about "we're broke, where's the money coming from if we don't cut services and put up the fares". We might well ask: where has the money all gone?

For instance, £97.6 million was paid out to nationalise the National Bus Co. in 1968. This had to be paid back, starting from 1975, and meanwhile the new nationalised NBC had interest of 4.92% around its neck to pay off from the start.

The NBC therefore had to try to provide an adequate public service, pay interest on money they never had — and collect all this from fares. To do this



they had to cut services, push up fares, step up OMO and reduce staff by 30,000. Even so, by 1971 they still had to borrow £2 million at 9% to meet the interest payments of nearly £5 million a year on the original £97.6 million.

When the first repayment on the original £97.6 million fell due in January '75, they had to borrow £9.9 million at an interest rate of 16.25% to start repaying the original amount. And all this to give money to the previous private bus operators who had milked a good living out of passenger transport for years.

The local authorities have got themselves into a similar state with interest payments to loan sharks at ruinous rates.

What is more important — a merchant banker's profit & loss account, or decent public services?

The real question is: who are the bus authorities more afraid of: the bankers who want their money back, or the passengers and bus crews?

When we have made sure that our pressure and strength is greater than that of the loan sharks, then the real answer will be: "Nationalise without compensation and cancel the local authority debt."

We can't expect Fleet Street to say this. Workers will have to fight for it themselves.

STEVE CUSHION (TGWU Leyton Buses & Waltham Forest Trades Council)

# Haringey going to the dogs?

NEARLY a hundred people lobbied Haringey Council's Labour Group last Sunday (June 20th) as it met to decide whether to implement the Government's latest "cuts" circular.

The circular, sent out by Environment Minister Peter Shore, demanded that councils immediately cut back on any "overspending". In London this means a cutback for Haringey Council of £5.2m, a cutback for Wandsworth of about £2m, for Camden of £2½m, and for Islington of £4m.

So far Haringey has responded by saying it won't make any cuts. The councillors point out that although their proposed expenditure is 20% more than last year (the Government advocates a rise of only 9%) services have not been expanded but only maintained.

The lobbyists, who included representatives from community groups, tenants' associations and trade union and workplace organisations, were determined that the Labour Group should get the message loud and clear that the policy should be simply "No cuts in Services".

At recent trade union and community meetings, workers and residents in Haringey have emphasised that they are not prepared to adopt a "save me but beggar my neighbour" policy, by which they would be invited to suggest where cuts could be made.

The local branch of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) passed a

resolution last week rejecting any cuts at all in services. They themselves are faced with a huge threat: on the basis of the Council's own 2½% "paper exercise" cutback — a plan drawn up when last year's budget was approved — there would be a loss of 22 full-time teaching posts at the local Technical College. As the Government is now demanding a 10% cutback, this would mean the loss of 88 jobs out of 227 full-time-equivalent jobs at present held at the college!

Like further education, nursery provision is also being threatened. The law makes every borough duty-bound to provide education for every person from the ages of 5 to 16. Under or over that is optional under the law, and they are the most vulnerable to cuts.

By hitting working women who will have to stay home or pay a child-minder, such cuts hit hard at the income of thousands of households in a borough.

Haringey's Labour Group leader Colin Ware gave this list of what a £2½m cutback (half of what the Government is demanding) would mean: £1.4m off education; £400,000 off social services; £300,000 off civic amenities; £200,000 off planning; and £200,000 off housing.

But the context in which this list was put forward is very suspicious, for despite repeated statements now that no cuts will be implemented, it looks as if Ware is angling to get these accepted and raise the rest on the rates.

Other suspicious moves have been go-

ing on throughout the affected London boroughs. As the London Evening Standard reported "There were indications today (June 21st) that behind the scenes, officials are planning economies which could save several million pounds... Staff vacancies left unfilled, 'slippage' in building programmes and the elimination of non-essential projects. ... Our attitude is not going to be that we cannot do anything for the Government" said Mr. Ware. "There will be some degree of economy".

All this contrasts with Haringey's deputy Labour Group leader, Vic Garwood. He had this to say: "I think my Group will say 'To hell'. We can't make any more cuts. ... Presumably there will be a confrontation."

Supporters of WA who work for the Borough put out a leaflet urging the Council to "Do a Clay Cross". It said that borough employees in particular, as well as the Council, should organise industrial action in the event of the Government putting in a commissioner to make the cuts. It also pointed out that the thin-end-of-the-wedge argument about the need to "rationalise" should be rejected, as the only "rational" policy was a massive expansion of social services, not a penny- and pound-pinching exercise.

ANDREW HORNUNG

Comrades — Please allow me to air some fraternal criticisms of a recent letter in your columns, on the experiences of Merseyside anti-fascists at the demonstration against the National Party at Blackburn.

My criticisms are based on the Merseyside comrades' inability to see one very important lesson that was staring them in the face.

While the comrades described being stoned by 100 white working class youths, they failed to ask what seems to me the obvious question — why these kids lined up with the fascists and not the anti-fascists?

Something that Wilhelm Reich (author of 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism') wrote that hits the nail right on the head: "The masses have a precious instinct for the correct interpretation of the facts which only remains inoperative when the revolutionary organisations offer them nothing while the quacks offer them everything from levitation to the waters of Lourdes."

(Or, updating Reich to fit the situation of today's working class kids ... while the revolutionary organisations offer them nothing the quacks of the NF offer them Paki-bashing.)

Unless we relish the prospect of facing, in future, 'mobs' of white working class kids then we'd better pull our finger out and recognise the oppression these kids face in a society which divides by age as well as in other ways.

The so-called 'revolutionary left' must develop a theory and practice that meets the needs of youth in general and working class youth in particular. As far as anti-fascist work is concerned our propaganda must mean something (directly) to kids, to their needs and struggles. We will need to give our leaflets out at schools, youth clubs, football matches, etc.

The Liverpool comrades saw at first hand the way the fascists pervert kids' struggles and needs. If white working class kids continue to look towards groups like the Front it will be our own fault. The strength of fascism is the weakness of socialism.

BRIAN JOHNSTONE  
Birmingham

Comrades — In view of the general success of WORKERS ACTION in addressing the problems faced by workers in a readable and lively fashion, it is sad to witness the devotion of 20% of one week's issue to a sterile attack on the politics of another left wing group.

The attack is sterile because most workers who read the paper are unlikely to be interested in such an article which does not deal with problems which concern them, and the only other group of readers likely to be interested, i.e. IS members, are unlikely to give sympathetic consideration to an article consisting largely of bold assertions rather than reasoned argument. On all the points mentioned, IS has its own views, but these are not discussed.

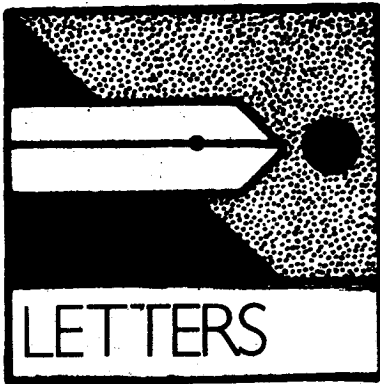
The place for this type of article is in a theoretical journal, preferably in the form of a debate with the opposing group and essentially in the form of discussion rather than rhetoric. In any case, you will not win the working class to your ideas by proving the inadequacy of all the other left groups. Politics must be proved in practice. Consider your audience (or at least your intended audience) and raise your politics in dealing with the problems they face in the capitalist crisis. And leave such sectarian time-wasting as "IS on the Cliff-edge" to the lunatic fringe!

LES HEARN  
Coventry

COMMENT: Doesn't it occur to Comrade Hearn that one of the problems that may be facing quite a number of militants in the capitalist crisis is whether or not to join a group like IS?

It is strange that he doesn't at the same time take us to task for recently devoting 25% of an issue to the subject of the movement for American Independence of 200 years ago. Surely that didn't deal with "the problems workers face in the capitalist crisis". If he had done so, that would have been more blatantly patronising of "most workers who read the paper", but in fact of much the same order as saying that workers don't want to bother their heads about the state of a socialist organisation.

Les Hearn in fact condemns IS and dismisses it far more curtly than did the author of our attack on it, when he implies that the state of IS can be of no interest whatever to workers reading a socialist paper. Editorial Board.



Comrades — I should like to make a few corrections to your article in the last issue analysing the role of the IS and IMG during the present wave of student occupations.

You state that the IMG has "argued against the vital necessity of building local anti-cuts committees". While it is true that for the first two weeks of the occupations this organisation had no clear line on the occupations, to say that they have actively argued against cuts committees is to misrepresent the comrades of the IMG. The inaccuracy in the article was all the more unfortunate because the section on the "class struggle tendency" and the confused pamphlet produced by the "Scottish IMG Student Teachers" correctly located the vacuity behind the heady rhetoric of the IMG. It is of course necessary to combat false programmes on the revolutionary left, but if this is to be the sustained attack necessary to break up the logjam on the left, it must be conducted on a scrupulously accurate basis, or else it will merely add to the confusion.

Finally, there is one other factual error in your coverage of this issue. You state that Jo Thwaites was a delegate to the NUS Manchester Conference from Moray House College of Education. In fact, Comrade Thwaites was a delegate from Edinburgh University Students Association.  
GORDON BREWER  
Edinburgh

## Italy

Dear comrades,

I was interested to read your article in WORKERS ACTION no. 21 on the current Italian elections. But I felt you were too uncritical of the "Democrazia Proletaria" bloc in saying that "the real test" for them "will come after the elections".

The main organisations in "Democrazia Proletaria" — PdUP, Avanguardia Operaia, and Lotta Continua — have already faced several tests, before the elections. They have failed woefully.

The first test was formulating a political platform. They have none. They do have three slogans: out with the Christian Democracy, for a left government, and for people's power.

At large meeting organised for "Democrazia Proletaria" in Paris on 8th June, Massimo Gorla of Avanguardia Operaia and Luigi Bobbio of Lotta Continua were at pains to assert that the "left government" they were calling for would be different from the "Union of the Left" in France (an electoral alliance of the CP, SP and Left Radicals), and also, presumably, different from the Allende government in Chile.

What would be the difference? The Italian "left government" would reflect the pressure of the mass movement. But Allende's government also came under the pressure of mass mobilisations. Gorla and Bobbio gave no explanation of how they thought the mass pressure could transform the hardened class-collaborationists at the top of the CP and SP.

There was not even any clear definition as to what the "left government" means. It could be a CP-SP government or it could also include small bourgeois parties like the Republicans and Social Democrats (or even, presumably, fragments of Christian Democracy). And it might also include "Democrazia Proletaria".

PdUP is certainly willing to participate in a bourgeois government; they envisage a left government impelling a gradual transition from capitalism towards socialism. Lotta Continua, too, has a concept of a left government not overthrowing capitalism, but introducing an intermediate "stage" like the Stalinists' model of "advanced democracy".

What were the key policies Gorla and Bobbio advanced for such a government? They stressed "national independence", "freeing Italy from imperialism" — as if Italy were not itself imperialist! This slogan can only strengthen bourgeois 'national interest' arguments. And they said that the neo-fascists of the MSI should be dealt with by... a law banning them. Such bourgeois state measures banning fascists can only have a fictitious character, and usually — like the Public Order Act in Britain — end up carrying with them far more severe measures against the left.

The unity of "Democrazia Proletaria" — so Gorla and Bobbio stressed — had arisen from the rank and file. In fact Lotta Continua promoted a rank and file mobilisation to force their entry into "Democrazia Proletaria", previously composed of AO and PdUP, against the will of some of the right wing of PdUP who were alarmed by LC's ultra-leftism. The unity is projected as not stopping at the election by going forward to organisation fusion of PdUP, AO and LC.

It will be good if it does. Instead of three centrist blind alleys, the Italian working class will only have one. But the task of winning militants from that blind alley will not be accomplished by the major avowedly Trotskyist group in Italy, the GCR (sister group of the IMG). The GCR is participating in "Democrazia Proletaria"; and though its French comrades of the LCR had a speaker on the platform of the Paris meeting, he offered not a word of concrete criticism of the centrist bloc.  
COLIN FOSTER, London

# ONE YEAR OF 'FIGHTING FROM WITHIN'



## THE UNIONS



ONE year ago, a new age of enlightenment dawned at Longbridge — or so the government, the British Leyland management, the bosses' press and the trade union bureaucracy assured us.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee had accepted the Ryder participation scheme.

The vote was only narrowly carried, with less than half Longbridge's 700 stewards present. The West Works stewards, at their separate 'Unit One' meeting, rejected the scheme.

### One

Small wonder that the Ryder proposals were never presented to a mass meeting of the rank and file (which tells you a lot about participation from the start...)

What balance sheet can Longbridge workers draw up one year on?

3,000 workers have been sent down the road, and 1,500 'green' recruits have been taken on. Speed-ups have increased output from 19,000 to 22,000 vehicles per month (with a loss of 1,500 workers...) — and management want to increase

that to 28,000 with the addition of only 1,000 more recruits. (That's 500 workers gone, and production up by more than a third!)

Meanwhile, stewards increasingly see their main role as negotiators on the participation board, to the inevitable detriment of shop floor unity.

In exchange the shop floor has received... notice boards! Dozens of them, with splendid glass covers, erected at 30-yard intervals round all the walls.

These boards are there to brainwash us into believing that Participation is the best thing since sliced bread. But no-one seems to actually read them.

### Display

Which is as well. Most of the minutes displayed are about the Joint Management Committee — that is, the highest board in the Participation scheme — which always come out for increased production with rationalisation.

The local union leaders fell over themselves in their rush to get in on Participation. No-one wants to

be left out in the cold... Communist Party member Derek "The Red" Robinson (AUEW Convenor) announced that if Participation was rejected, Leylands would close down. His advice to Longbridge workers was to accept rationalisation and take all the overtime going. Robinson and his comrades on the Works Committee have now overruled the Engineering Unions' Plant

### Plant

district agreement to limit overtime to 30 hours per month.

However, it has not only been bureaucrats like Robinson who have capitulated. In the Tractors and Transmission plant, several well respected militants (including former IS members) have stood and been elected to the Participation Board.

Their intentions may have been honourable — to discredit the scheme by disrupting it from within — but the effect of their presence on the Board has been to endorse Participation in the eyes of weaker sections for whom the choice was either to accept or to fight back.

However, there are now signs of opposition developing. Some militants have realised the mistake of their 'fighting from within' tactics, and the East Works shop stewards recently threw out Participation.

Militants who are presently represented on the Board must demand that all decisions are submitted to shop floor mass meetings with the power to veto. They should, of course, continue to agitate for the complete withdrawal of their representatives.

The alternative to Ryder's phony participation must be independent shop floor committees to inspect the books and minutes of the company and the state — not in order to justify the management's bleatings about going broke, but to find out just where the money is going, and to demand funds from the government to protect jobs.

The complete independence of the shop floor organisation must be re-established. We want workers' control, not the management's 'participation'.

PETE LEYDEN  
AUEW, Longbridge

## Left misses chances at POEU conference

THE Post Office Engineers' Union is dominated by a right wing bloc that was formed in the 1950s, expressly to ensure that no leftwingers were elected to the NEC. This bloc to this day holds secret meetings open only to the invited right-wing initiates.

Despite this bloc, a few left wingers have in the past been elected to the NEC. But the right has managed to keep control of the union.

Now in 1976 this bloc has never been so disorganised or divided. But at the recent POEU conference, the Left missed their opportunity to make major gains.

While the right was openly bickering over the spoils, the Broad Left failed utterly to capitalise on its opponents' weaknesses.

The prime reason, of course, can

be found by just a shallow and cursory look at the overall politics of the Broad Left.

Its total strategy is founded on electioneering, and winning positions of 'influence' on the NEC and other bodies of policy making. It fails completely to comprehend the need to mount consistent meeting and campaigns open to the rank and file of the union around fighting demands (such as for a sliding scale of wages and hours) that can mobilise the members in a real fight to maintain living standards.

In fact the left wing in the POEU leaps into frantic activity a few weeks every year just before annual Conference.

The number of votes polled for left wing candidates this year was easily enough to ensure a couple

of places on the NEC, in theory if not in practice. But in practice the grassroots organisation is so feeble that there is no coordination at all, and most contact is still maintained through a system of chats on the conference floor.

It is blatantly obvious that if the left in the POEU is to achieve anything at all it has to organise and plan in a far more effective fashion.

The two largest tendencies in the Broad Left are the CP and Militant. (IS appears to have faded away completely.)

The Conference voted this year on three major issues: this year's wage claim, the next year's wage deal, and the question of hours.

First came the debate on this year's wage claim, with the Executive straining to ensure that the Conference accepted £6 flat rate and 82p special productivity payment. They well understood that the outcome of this would strongly affect the result of the later conference votes.

### Deal

But the magnificent intervention of the Militant group was concentrated on rejecting... the 82p prod deal! Virtually ignoring the £6 limit question, they urged the NEC to go back and get a bit more on top of the 82p, even though last year's conference passed a resolution totally opposing any form of incomes policy.

The 'left' was, it seems, saving itself for a 'massive onslaught' on the 4½% pay policy. In the event, the right walked away with both years' policies.

When it came to the 4½% deal, the Executive wheeled out all the old and hoary arguments about loyalty to the Labour Party at all costs — even, as one delegate put it, "Health cut, education cut, wages cut, throats cut, and you're still asking for support".

Only hours before, though, news had come that the miners' ballot had favoured the Pay Limit; and this was no doubt a more powerful factor influencing the two to one majority for the TUC line than all the fancy words that Gen. Sec. Bryan Stanley could muster.

Not satisfied, Stanley went on to argue quite hysterically in the next debate — over a reduction of hours from 40 to 35 — that such a thing would be in breach of the Social Contract. But Conference drove a bus through his arguments and voted overwhelmingly to fight for a 35 hour, 4-day week. For the motion, 82,018. Against the motion, 41,488. Spontaneous applause greeted this result.

And well it might; it was the left's only major success of the conference.

DAVE WARD

## NALGO Despite gains militants face a hard year

THIS YEAR'S NALGO conference, held in the week before the TUC recall, saw the Union endorse the NEC's proposal to support the Government's pay restraint by about 2½ to 1.

The left can draw lessons from the debate which took place over this.

The discussion was centred around two motions.

There was the emergency motion from the NEC supporting the deal. It called for such an agreement to be tied to a list of 8 demands ranging from vague calls for 'vigorous steps to reduce unemployment' to downright reactionary "selective import controls".

The opposing resolution, a composite of various proposals by some thirty branches, merely repeated the eight demands of the NEC, but argued that since they hadn't been met, the union should therefore not support the new agreement.



Geoffrey Drain, NALGO general secretary

During the debate the speakers from the NEC were able to make great play of the fact that the opposition had not put forward a single improvement to the NEC's proposals. Unfortunately this was all too true.

Even so, the atmosphere was such that the outcome might have been a much closer affair, if it hadn't been for the very large number of delegates who had been mandated to vote for the pay agreement.

The rest of the conference was in fact not such easy sailing for the right wing.

On the NHS, the entire policy of opposition to pay beds and private practice was completely saved in face of a counter-attack by the right. Potentially useful motions were passed against the cuts in

British Rail, and against current government housing policy which would increase the number of homeless.

A motion from Cheshire County branch, which would have thrown the union back by about 20 years by keeping it out of 'party political matters' was roundly defeated. And a resolution proposing to ballot the members about affiliation to the Labour Party was also overwhelmingly lost.

Conference, though, made a serious mistake in reversing a decision of 1971 Conference, which had adopted a policy of non-cooperation with the keeping of separate records for ethnic minorities. The keeping of such records can only encourage the Powellites and fascists with their obsessive counting and help them in their racist witchhunting.

An important step forward was won by Nalگو's Gay group, with an instruction to all union negotiators that henceforward "sexual orientation" should be added to the non-discrimination clause in all collective agreements. And conference also instructed all districts to draw up annual reports giving details of progress made towards implementation of equal rights for women.

Despite these gains, militants in Nalگو will face a difficult fight in the coming year.

It will need to make something real out of Nalگو's 'Save your Services' campaign, and a start was made in an emergency motion from the Lothian Region branch which expressed full support for the college occupations and urged all branches to take positive action in support.

To complement the workplace fight to sabotage the cuts, we must fight for the Union to adopt a policy that socially useful public spending be linked to any rise in costs and be fully compensated for such rises.

And together with this, that the members' wages be linked to a working class cost of living index and rise with it automatically.

If the left can build a campaign in the next year around these demands, next year's conference debate will be a very different affair. The left will be able to pose a real alternative to the NEC, rather than being an echo for the NEC's befuddled and misleading policies.

If the left, and in particular the Nalگو Action Group, fail to take up these tasks, then real progress in Nalگو will be stifled and will set the scene for a possible resurgence by the right wing, which still has a considerable presence in Nalگو.

KEVIN FEINTUCK  
(Imperial College Nalگو)

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# WARRIORS IN ACTION

## STUDENTS MARCH AGAINST CUTS

**TWO THOUSAND** student teachers marched through London last Wednesday, June 16th, as part of their campaign against cuts and unemployment.

Starting after the lobby of the special TUC, in which many of them took part, they marched past the headquarters of the Department of Education and Science, past the TUC and on to the head office of the National Union of Teachers, where a delegation went in to argue their case for action against teacher unemployment.

But the anger of the students broke out most forcefully when they arrived at the HQ of their own union, the National Union of Students. While the student teachers shouted 'NUS - Fight the Cuts' and 'Clarke Out', a selection of the Broad Left members of the NUS Executive perched on the roof of the building, protected from the membership by a line of police.

The Broad Left on the NUS Executive have done nothing to build the campaign and everything to destroy it. When the delegate conference of colleges in occupation met at Manchester three weeks ago and called for a continuation of the campaign and for the national focus to be the lobby on June 16th, the

Executive ignored the conference decision and built for their own (singularly unsuccessful) lobby of Parliament on June 15th as a national demonstration. The final sell-out came at the NUS Executive meeting two weeks ago, where the Executive showed their first and last glimmering of 'leadership'.

They called off the occupations! The reason that the Broad Left sell out the campaign stems from their politics. They see a fight against the cuts in terms of themselves negotiating with the Ministry of Education, backed up by a stage army of students who will spill out into the streets on demand.

And they see "links with the working class" as consisting of themselves having talks with other union executives to aid their negotiations.

But the clearest lesson of this campaign is that any fight which is to win must be based on the direct action of workers and students. And any manoeuvres which subordinate that direct action to friendly chit-chats will lead the campaign to defeat.

But the Broad Left are not having it all their own way. After the demonstration last Wednesday the students packed into the Friends Meeting House in Euston where they pledged to continue the campaign.

The way forward was shown the next morning when Moray House College in Edinburgh (which started off the whole campaign) voted to go on with their occupation, using it as a base to spread the fight against cuts and unemployment into the labour movement.

Throughout the campaign, the Moray House occupation has given a lead in terms of the politics of the campaign and the tactics needed to win. For a week before the day of action on June 15th, they published, in conjunction with Edinburgh University, daily bulletins which were used to build in the labour movement.

Issues of the bulletin dealt with the situation in EIS (the Scottish teachers' union), cuts in the NHS, discrimination against overseas students, and the Working Womens Charter. The bulletins were taken to schools, colleges, and factories, and distributed on the demonstration in Edinburgh on the 15th.

The Moray House students have built a trade union committee to coordinate their intervention in

the local labour movement. This committee organised, together with other colleges in the area, the build-up to the Day of Action.

The key task now is to build for the continuation of the campaign, and towards a mass campaign in the autumn.

To do this we need to link up the area committees, local coordinating committees, and occupational committees. This is all the more necessary, given the treacherous role of the NUS Executive. A step in this direction will be taken on June 26th, when there will be a national conference of colleges in occupation in Liverpool. This conference can debate the way forward and coordinate the activities of those colleges which remain in occupation.

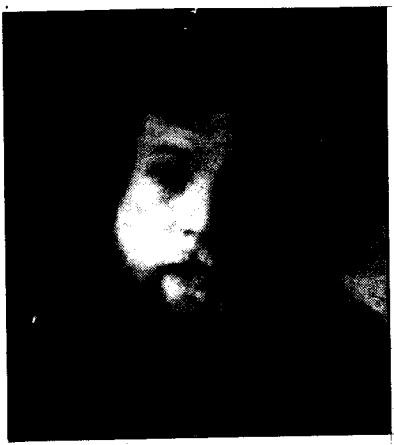
**BILL FORD**  
(President-elect of Moray House)

(some from outside Glasgow) turned up to hear speakers from NUS, NUM, NALGO, NUPE, and EIS.

Keir Bloomer, from the National Executive of EIS [Educational Institute of Scotland, the Scottish teachers' union], was hard put to convince the students that his union had done anything to support the campaign. The only applause heard during his speech was for those who heckled him and called for teachers' contracts to be renegotiated to reduce class size.

The rally, which was supposed to build greater link-ups between the public sector unions, showed no way forward. The conclusion to be drawn by students in occupation is: yes, we want the maximum unity with all workers fighting unemployment, but not with those like the EIS leadership who have done nothing to defend the interests of their members.

**GORDON BREWER**



Charles Clarke, NUS President. Student marchers called for his resignation.

On Saturday 19th June North East London Poly finished occupation after 26 days. This was the longest occupation on the question of overseas students fees.

The decision to stop was forced by the fact that the Director had completely closed down the precinct at Barking and shifted work to other precincts. Also figuring in the decision was the refusal of the 'Broad Left' leadership of NUS to support North East London Poly students union against possession orders and injunctions served on it.

The betrayal by the Broad Left leadership caused North East London Poly SU to occupy NUS offices last Monday. Students also intend to hold snap occupations of key admin buildings until the end of term to keep the campaign going.

**MICK WOODS**

THE EXTENT of state surveillance over radicals was illustrated once again a few weeks ago... in a comprehensive school in East London. A Scotland Yard officer visited the school. He was not investigating any crime. Instead, he announced that the Yard had just opened a file on one particular student - the local organiser of the National Union of School Students. He asked for information on what the student will be doing when he leaves school.

Fortunately he got none.

**JIM HAWKINS**

## Trades Council backs victims of police riot

ON MARCH 19th, when the Right to Work marchers were within 10 miles of finishing their 340-mile long march from Manchester to London, they were attacked by police at Staples Corner in the London borough of Barnet. 44 marchers were arrested, and 43 had charges brought against them, ranging from obstruction to grievous bodily harm.

Soon afterwards, Barnet Trades Council set up a Committee of

Inquiry, whose members included Syd Bidwell MP, Jack Collins (EC of the NUM), Mike McGrath (EC of the CPSA), Dolly Sewall (shop steward, Patent Die Castings), and Vincent Flynn (former General Secretary of SOGAT). The nine-person committee's findings were released in a report last week.

After noting that the rest of the Right to Work march was free of trouble with the police, the Committee saw written evidence of an agreement between the organisers of the march and police about the route the march would take to its destination at Old Oak common lane, London. The marchers were following the agreed route.

But despite this, the march was attacked when it reached Staples Corner. Earlier on the same day, at Stirling Corner just south of Hatfield, several police, including an inspector, had tried to halt the march and detain John Deason, the march organiser. Their attempt was unsuccessful, and this may well be the reason, say the committee, why they tried again at Staples Corner.

Only this time they had made sure of reinforcements. The marchers resisted the police attacks, and this led to what the committee describes as "excessive and indiscriminate violence by the police".

## Attack

All the evidence gathered from the marchers and independent witnesses by the inquiry shows that the attack was in no way provoked by the marchers. They say, in concluding, that "an unjustified attempt to seize a march leader and grab the lead banner makes no sense unless the aim is to break up the march, discredit the marchers' cause, and stifle their protest".

After reaching this conclusion, the committee points out that its enquiries were limited because of incomplete access to evidence, particularly from the police. Although the police were invited to present evidence to the committee, they refused to do so. Indeed, the Director of Public Prosecutions has written to the committee threatening prosecution because the inquiry report is "in contempt of court".

The committee calls for a full public enquiry before which the police would be required to lay evidence. Resolutions and letters backing this call should be sent to the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, at the Home Office, Whitehall.

**NEAL SMITH**

Copies of the report can be obtained from Barnet Trades Council March 19 Committee, c/o J. Connolly, 80-108 The Broadway, West Hendon, London NW9.

## Automat: A lesson in determination

THE LEADERSHIP of the 1½ million strong AUEW is still allowing Automat, Swinton - a small scab firm producing electrical gear - to keep 28 union members on official strike outside its gates. The 28 are now in their 21st week of dispute.

Lobbying by Automat strikes of the National Executive of the AUEW at Scarborough elicited the firm verbal assurance of complete support from Hugh Scanlon.

But then the executive of the NUR, after consultation with AUEW officials, wrote to the local union that it was not possible to carry out the blacking of the goods of Automat customers. Such Third Party blacking would, they said, put them in dispute with the employers!

The strike committee have dispatched flying pickets, mainly to the south and in particular to Southampton, with success. The stewards of Vosper Thornycroft (marine engineering) have blacked Automat goods. Other firms have threatened to shift orders.

Now, after nearly 5 months, a meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions shop stewards has been held. The decisions taken by the 250 stewards at that meeting were to:

- \* Step up the blacking (a list of Automat customers has been compiled).
- \* Step up picketing. A committee of 6 Confed shop stewards, six AUEW district committee members, and two strike committee members has been elected to direct picketing.

200 trade unionists turned up for a mass picket three days later, on Thursday 17th June. A large contingent came from Gardners, where, about 3 years ago, an occupation lasting 13 weeks brought victory in a wages dispute.

Unfortunately it turned out to be a token picket. Management had got wing of it, and scabs had got in an hour earlier than customary, leaving only office staff to encounter the picket line. One scab charged the picket line with his car, knocking down a picket, fortunately without serious injury.

At 9.30 Mather, the AUEW official, addressed the picket. "Thank you for coming", and suddenly it was over. By 10 o'clock only the original strikers were on picket, and scabs came through in a bunch.

In a similar situation after a previous mass picket had ended, one of the strikers was attacked by a scab. The call has been raised for a 24-hour extended mass picket. The picketing committee must, by leafletting and publicity, get sufficient and effective pickets to bottle up the factory.

The AUEW must see to it that Automat goods, and also the goods of Automat customers, are blacked. Only by stepping up the campaign can this strike be won. As yet the director, Chamberlain, is not convinced he should even talk.

**BILL COPPOCK**

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### PUBLIC DEBATE BETWEEN I-CL and IMG 'Building a Trotskyist International'

SPEAKERS: SEAN MATGAMNA for the ICL JOHN ROSS for the IMG and representatives of the leaderships of both organisations

AT THE CONWAY HALL, on Friday June 25th at 7pm. Admission 10p CHAIRMAN: HARRY WICKS

The I-CL and the Fourth International



30p

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's issue.

Thursday 24th June. LEICESTER ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE: 'Fight Fascism and Racism'. 8pm, AUEW Hall, Vaughan Way.

Thursday 24th June. Meeting of TRADE UNION COMMITTEE AGAINST THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT. 7.30pm, Willesden Junction Hotel, near Willesden Junction station.

Saturday 26th June. TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT Open Forum in support of the Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland. Speakers: Tony Cliff, Eamonn McCann, Pat Arrowsmith, Colin Sweet, Ken Livingstone, Mervyn Metcalf. 10am to 5pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Sunday 27th June. LEICESTER NAC Working Conference on Outpatient Abortion Clinics. 10am to 5pm at AUEW Hall, Vaughan Way. Creche provided.

Sunday 27th June. Manchester Trades Council SPANISH SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE. 10.30am to 4pm at AUEW offices, The Crescent, Salford. Delegates credentials 50p from Frances Dean, Room 165 Corn Exchange, Manchester 3.

Tuesday 29th June. TOWER HAMLETS Action Committee on Jobs demonstration Assemble 6pm at Tower Hill to lobby Parliament.

Friday 2nd July. BIRMINGHAM WORKERS ACTION social evening. At the Golden Eagle, Hill St. Bar, disco, raffles. Tickets 50p; 60p on the door.

Thursday 15th July. Organising meeting for conference on RACISM AND THE MEDIA. 7pm at St Brides Institute, Bride Lane, off Fleet Street.

DEFEND THE HANDSWORTH 28. Defence costs for those arrested at the anti-fascist demonstration at Winson Green are rising, and money is urgently needed. Messages and resolutions of support form trade union and labour movement bodies especially welcome. Send to the Handsworth 28 Defence Fund, c/o Lozells Social Development Centre, 1 Finch Rd, Birmingham 19.

GAYS AGAINST FASCISM. Members of the Gay Workers Group/Gay Working Peoples Collective are preparing a paper and ask for information to be sent in on fascist attacks on gays, to 33 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.