

CHARTIST

LABOUR'S REVOLUTIONARY VOICE

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FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST EUROPE:

VOTE 'NO' TO THE BOSSES' MARKET!

EVERY LABOUR voter in the country must register a NO vote in the Common Market Referendum on June 5th. This will be a major blow against the plans of the monopoly firms, the City of London, the

Confederation of British Industry, the Tory Press, almost every Tory, every Liberal, and the wealthy, but ill-named, European movement.

All these forces are determined to ensure a Yes vote - no matter how much cash they have to spend on the campaign.

Do these organisations back the EEC because they hold to the mystical philosophy of "Europeanism"? Far from it!

PRESERVATION

They understand that the Common Market is, and, always has been, an organisation dedicated to the preservation of capitalism at our expense. They are backing the Market because they think that it will help them rationalise and restructure their capital to enable them to compete in a situation which is turning towards trade war. And under the present system these changes will be made with working class families footing the bill through cuts in wages, conditions, and the growth of unemployment.

But far from mobilising a fight, Labour's Parliamentary leaders are doing their best to aid and abet the Tory campaign - despite the decision of Labour's Special Conference, by a two to one majority to call for a NO vote.

HEFFER SACKED

Wilson and Callaghan have always supported the Market. Under the previous Labour government they applied for entry. In 1971 they allowed 69 Labour MPs to vote with the Tories and ensure that Britain joined the EEC. Yet when Eric Heffer dared to speak for the Labour Party's position against Wilson, he was sacked from his job!

Wilson and his ministers must not be allowed to sabotage Labour Party decisions. The full resources of the Labour Party should be thrown behind the fight for a NO vote. At the moment, Transport House has no plans to

BY PAUL MOORE
(NORWOOD CLP delegate
to Special Conference)

spend money on a referendum campaign: constituency parties will be denied the money they get at election times and will be fighting an uphill battle against the financial power of big business.

BITTER ENEMY

Instead, local parties have been advised to work in the "Get Britain Out" campaign - a group sponsored by Enoch Powell, bitter enemy of the Labour movement! This is the logic of the position of the Left MPs, whose opposition to the EEC is based on "loss of National Sovereignty". This is to argue that workers should be exploited by British Big Business instead of French or German Big Business! It represents a complete departure from the internationalist principles of the Labour movement. Local Labour Parties and Trades Councils should throw out this nationalist opposition and launch a socialist campaign based on the unity of workers throughout Europe in the fight against the Common Market and the multi-national companies.

£300 FIGHTING FUND

THE CHARTIST Fighting Fund stands at £152.10p. Our thanks to PD (Colchester) £1, and GB (ASTMS) £5. But if we are to reach our target of £300 by June 30th, we need to collect as much in the next two months as we've collected in the last four.

Also, we have unfortunately had to raise the price of the paper to 6 pence. But this still won't bring in enough to cover costs. So we ask all our readers to continue to contribute to improve the quality of the paper.

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North Vietnamese photo of victorious liberation troops crossing Thang Tien bridge into Hue

VICTORY IN INDOCHINA

ON APRIL 17TH., the American-backed puppet regime of Lon Nol crumbled as the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, fell to

the Khmer Rouge liberation forces. This marks the biggest blow yet in the final disintegration of the United States' position in Indochina. As we go to press more news comes in of the crushing defeats of the Saigon regime in Vietnam. United States imperialism has been forced to withdraw the tattered remnants of its once-mighty war-machine. Clearly, the Vietnamese liberation forces are on the verge of total victory.

For almost twenty years the Vietnamese people have suffered under the heel of the most savage and cruel war in the history of mankind. No people have suffered as much as the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Indochina.

TRIUMPH

The complete rout of the U.S. forces and the collapse of the crumbling puppet regime in Saigon represents a massive triumph for the international working class and peasant poor everywhere. It is an historic defeat for the forces of imperialism.

The Vietnamese people have waged their struggle for national liberation over a period of 30 years. They have taken on three successive imperialist regimes, the French, the British, and the Americans. In the period of American intervention alone the U.S. airforce dropped more bombs than the total by all sides during world war 2.

But aid from the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies was only a small proportion of what the corrupt Saigon

government received from their imperialist backers. Even in these last stages, U.S. aid to the south was 2 to 4 times what the North received from its allies. But the massive military superiority of Saigon only existed on paper, when deprived of U.S. ground and air support. The regime was rotting away from the inside. The Government was unable to combat the raging inflation and unemployment of the South. Catholics, Buddhists, businessmen and workers, had long ago lost faith in their rulers.

DEMORALISATION

The disorderly retreats from Hue, Da Nang and Nha Trang demonstrated the demoralisation of the armed forces of the corrupt Saigon regime, as did also the mass desertions to the liberation forces.

The efforts of President Ford to get more cash to hold the Saigon area and put pressure on the NLF were doomed to failure. The "humanitarian" airlifts of refugees is cynical hypocrisy. Many who have fled have been panicked by Government propaganda, driven out by rioting Saigon troops, or are simply fleeing the fighting, fearing reprisal bomber raids on liberated areas. Forecasts of massacres have been quickly disproved in the North, where life and business is functioning smoothly.

The unmourned regime of Lon Nol had even less basis for existence than Thieu's. Cambodia, like Laos, was dragged into the war willy-

nilly. The Americans toppled the "neutralist" President Norodom Sihanouk in 1970, to secure a government which would give them a free hand in their barbarous war-mongering against the Khmer Rouge (Red Khmers) and the NLF (whose "Ho Chi Minh trail" supply routes led through eastern Cambodia.)

Lon Nol was never able to consolidate his power, despite massive U.S. and South Vietnamese help. Peasants, workers and intellectuals flocked to the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk's National United Front of Cambodia (FUNK). FUNK forces were soon running rings around the Phnom Penh ruled areas. A symbol of the decay of the area was provided by the army unit which killed and ate their officer after months without pay.

The final FUNK offensive that began this year amounted to finally finishing off a regime that was already on its last legs. It was achieved almost wholly without arms other than those captured from the enemy.

REVEALED

The Indochina war has more and more revealed itself as a conflict between world imperialism and the workers' states of the "communist bloc".

World imperialism has been infinitely weakened by the victories of the liberation forces in Cambodia and Vietnam in these recent months. One of our tasks in Britain is to help the workers and peasants of Indochina build on these victories by demanding that the Labour government immediately recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Vietnam and the new regime in Cambodia.

THE BUDGET illustrates yet again the anti working-class nature of Labour's economic policies. It is a flagrant attack on workers' living standards.

Income tax has been raised to 35p in the pound. VAT has been jacked up to 25% on so-called luxury goods. Piled on top of this come slashing cuts in government spending. These amount to reductions of £1,000 million this year, rising to £3,000 million next year. Subsidies for nationalised industries have been pruned from £550 million to £70 million, while food and housing aid have been cut by £150 million and £65 million respectively. Cigarettes, beer and spirits have also been heavily clobbered. The purpose of all this was spelled out by Healey when he stated: "The measures I have announced will mean a continued improvement in the financial position of companies. This is both necessary and desirable."

GIANT BANKS

Healey puts the interests of the giant banks and monopolies before the needs of the working class. In his Budget speech he threatened workers that "unless the voluntary incomes policy achieves stricter adherence to the guidelines laid down by the trade unions of their own free will, the consequence can only be rising unemployment, cuts in public expenditure, lower living standards for the country as a whole and growing tension throughout society." As if all these developments are not taking place already!

Healey's message is clear. The working class is to blame

The Budget: Where is the Manifesto commitment to full employment now?

for the crisis and must therefore accept falling living standards or join the lengthening dole queues. This is precisely what the employing class wants. No wonder that the Budget speech was greeted by Tory cheers. No wonder the 'Financial Times' share index went up several points. And no wonder CBI chief Campbell Adamson applauded Labour's 'good budget.' Said the 'Sunday Times', "Not even the crustiest right-wing industrialists could complain that the chancellor neglected to mention his interests in the Budget." While the 'Times' gave Healey the supreme accolade by referring to him as the 'best chancellor we've got.'

With inflation running at over 25% a year, this policy of class collaboration to help employers keep profits up is a monument to the bankruptcy of the TUC. The whole leadership, including Jones, Murray, Basnett and Scanlon, are all hoping to avoid a break from the Social Contract. Despite Scanlon's statement that the Budget reflected an 'almost absolute compliance with the proposals of the CBI and the City', the TUC has made mild criticisms of the Budget but

regards the Social Contract as sacrosanct.

Fortunately, as the railway men are showing, workers do not view the Budget in the same light. Trades unionists are prepared to fight to defend jobs and wages. The TUC knows this and it frightens them. As the Budget measures begin to bite deep into workers' pockets and as 'lame duck' firms go to the wall, the fight to maintain wage levels and jobs will intensify. The 'Financial Times' said that the government was relying on high unemployment to keep wages down. There are 939,000 jobless who will testify to that.

When millions returned Labour to office last October, it was not to enable Wilson, Healey, and Foot to foist Tory policies on the working class. On the contrary, workers voted to keep the Tories out and get Labour to reverse Tory laws and guarantee jobs and living standards.

But the 'Tribune' group of MPs have no answer to the Healey budget and the capitalist economic perspective which underpins it. To call for import controls and more state spending, as Benn and the Tribune Group are now doing, is to call either for economic nat-

ionalism or an increased trade deficit and higher inflation. So long as capitalist market forces dominate the British economy only huge international borrowing and further increases in the supply of paper money can finance the Tribune proposals for an increase in public expenditure by £20,000m. This would amount to unprecedented growth in the inflationary spiral.

Only six Labour MPs voted against the Budget. The Tribune Group's refusal to provide a clear socialist alternative to policies of state-managed capitalism is underlined by their decision not to vote against the Budget because the government might be defeated!

MANIFESTO PLEDGES

What is required from this government is, firstly, implementation of the manifesto pledges to restore full employment and introduce strict price control. The fight in the unions for a rising scale of wages and for work sharing with no loss of pay should be stepped up. The overwhelming decision of the Scottish TUC against the Budget has been given real teeth with this policy. A mass movement must be built inside the Labour Party and the trade unions to demand an end to our leaders' submission to the bankers, and industrialists and their system.

Without a struggle for a workers government based on the industrial strength and class independence of the Labour Movement, Labour's present policies can only pave the way for the return of a Tory regime based on the programme of 30s-style mass unemployment.

ANTI-FASCISTS

ON WEDNESDAY 9th of April, two Manchester Anti-Fascist Committee activists, Mike Luft and Graeme Atkinson were acquitted of charges brought against them by the Director of Public Prosecutions. These charges related to leafletting, carried out by trade unionists and socialists, against the fascist National Front (NF) in the Manchester Blackley area during the October election. Evidently, the fascists felt sensitive to a working-class exposure of their racist anti-trade union policies and complained to the police. Their activity, however, was not merely verbal. At one point, when they discovered that leaflets were being distributed, they swerved a car across the front of a public bus, boarded it and attempted to manhandle comrades Luft and Atkinson who were on the bus. In their statements to the court, the fascists omitted to mention this assault.....although the police constable who witnessed it offered evidence of it, voluntarily, thereby exposing the 'democrats' of the NF in their true colours of thugs and bully boys.

The police put forward two charges. Firstly, it was alleged that comrades Luft and Atkinson had "distributed a document for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate and the document did not bear the name and address of the printer

CLEARED IN ELECTION CASE

and publisher." A second summons claimed they had incurred the expense of issuing such publications with a view to promoting or procuring the election of a candidate without the authorization of an election agent. As Campbell Malone, the defence solicitor, said, the aim of the leaflets clearly was "to discourage people from voting for the National Front - not out of a desire to increase the chances of the other candidates. It was purely to combat the growth of fascism."

The case was dismissed by Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. J. Bamber, who summed up "If somebody has a detestation of some political theory - in this case fascism - and takes the view that the election of a fascist candidate would be the beginning of the destruction of our democratic process, are they entitled to campaign against that campaign?"

The acquittal of the comrades is an important victory in the fight against the National Front. A precedent has been established for the distribution of anti-National Front literature in elections. The central question is still however, that of demanding that Labour Parties and their candidates meet the fascists head-on and organise against them through the election campaign itself.

E.E.C.-The Socialist Alternative

A "NO" VOTE in the referendum would be a mighty upset to the plans of the capitalist class in Britain, and indeed, throughout Europe. This much has been admitted by the director-general of the bosses' "Confederation of British Industry", Campbell-Adamson, by the elder statesmen of the Tory Party, and by Labour's own spokesman for big business, Roy Jenkins.

But the left wing of the Labour Party and the trade union movement, from Tony Benn through to Jack Jones, are quite wrong to think that withdrawal alone would solve the problems of mass unemployment and a dwindling wage packet for the millions of workers in Britain.

The only "sovereignty" workers have to defend is the independence of the trade unions and other class organisations. In the event of withdrawal these will come under savage attack from the employers as the struggles against redundancies and price rises becomes sharper.

TGWU leader, Jones, describes unemployment as "the Common Market disease" as though it would vanish if the Labour Government was forced to withdraw. The ASTMS Secretary, Clive Jenkins, talks about Value-added Tax as if it were the sole cause of inflation. These ideas

are very dangerous to the Labour movement because they obscure the real cause of inflation and unemployment.

INFLATION is an attempt to resolve the declining profits of the capitalist class at the expense of the workers. UNEMPLOYMENT is produced by the need to close down all factories and plants not producing a profit for the bosses.

Employers will attempt to hit back in the event of withdrawal from the Common Market, by closing down more factories and throwing more people out of work. Under these circumstances it is vital that the Labour movement is prepared to follow up a victory at the polls by victories on the shop floor, the factories, the building sites, etc.

The entire Labour movement must be armed with a socialist programme of demands aimed at forcing open the books of industry, of cutting the working week without loss of pay; of introducing a rising scale of wages which would abolish the effect of inflation eating up wages; and finally, of taking over industry and running it directly under the management of the working class.

With a programme based on these demands, all workers could have confidence in the fact that a massive "NO" vote would be a great step forward!

New threats to railwaymen

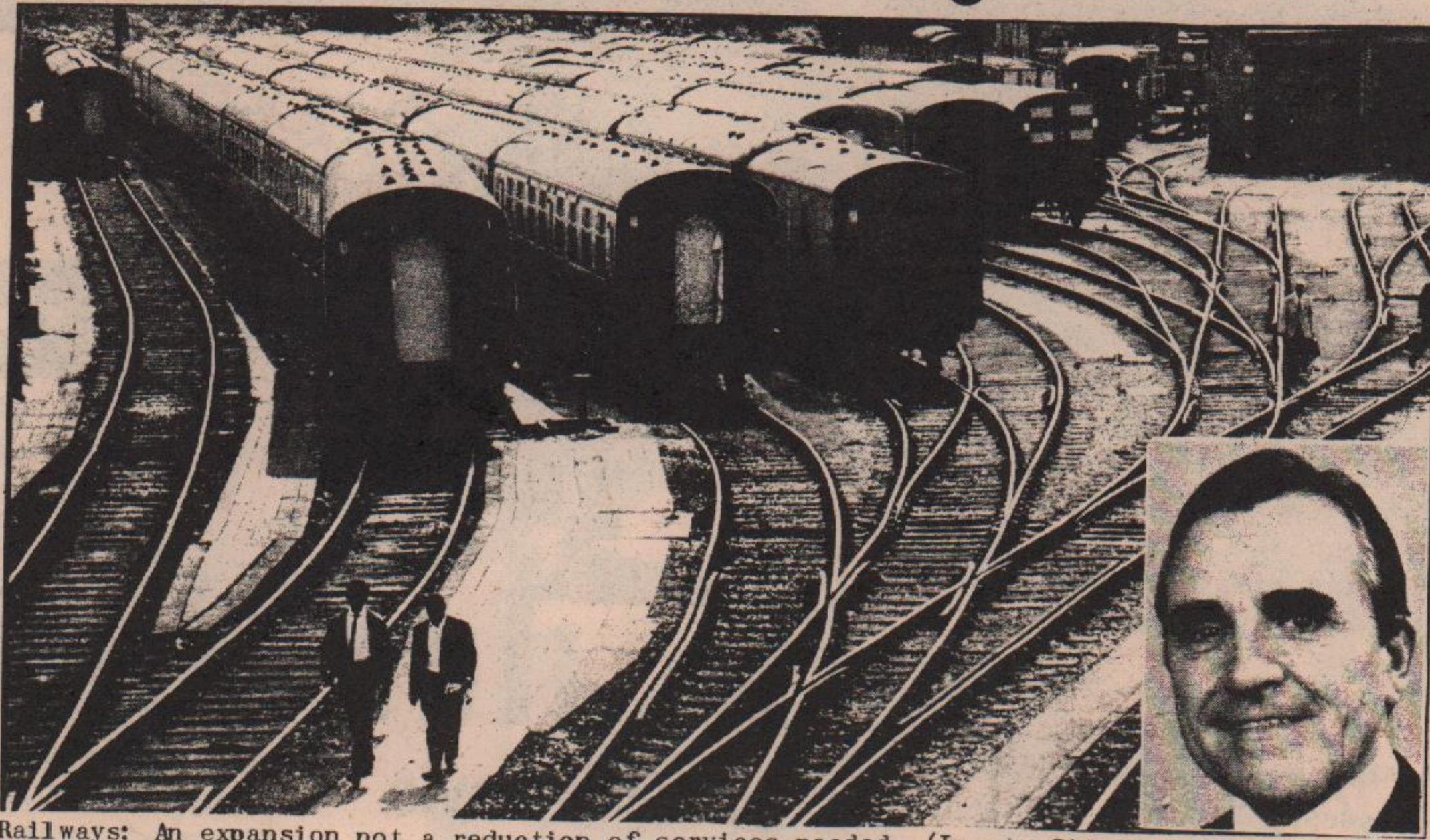
BY KEVIN MOORE
(Battersea No. 1 NUR)

AS THE RAILWAYMENS' 30-35% claim goes to arbitration new threats to railway workers loom on the horizon. British Railways Board, under government pressure have commenced a threatened programme of cutbacks on expenditure and manpower. It has now become quite apparent that even the nationalised service industries are to come under the government axe. Overtime, traditionally relied upon by railwaymen to boost their poor basic wage, has already been seriously slashed. No more staff are to be taken on (apart from guards in some areas) and where possible staff are to be made redundant!

VACANCIES

Thus, a situation, where only a few months ago commuters were daily faced with adverts for staff vacancies in every field on British Rail, and the media was full of "expanding railways" as the solution to the "energy crisis," has now been reversed.

The railwaymen's pay claim has therefore come at a very vital time. Healey's budget has made it very clear, one way or another, the labour government is going to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. Not satisfied with three and four day weeks and redundancies in private industry, they now want them in the nationalised industries, as the proposed 20,000 redundancies in the steel industry show.



Railways: An expansion not a reduction of services needed. (Inset: Sidney Weighell).

On Healey's own admission, the budget is deliberately designed to increase unemployment. In this situation BRB plans cutbacks in freight and passenger traffic and, therefore, in manpower.

So far the NUR's opposition to this has been restricted to a few articles in the Railway Review. But the two issues are not separate. It is no good winning a 30% rise if we lose staff in the bargain. The militant stand of a majority of the National Executive Committee (unfortunately not the necessary two-thirds majority required for a strike) must be supported. But it is very apparent that pure militancy in the wages question will not do in this situation.

Sid Weighell, NUR General Secretary, has argued on the basis of parity with the miners and a form of threshold (end of

the year increase in line with cost of living.) At the same time he argues in favour of the social contract. Despite Sid Weighell's verbal militancy, without a decisive break from the social contract and notions of pay restraint, no successful wages fight can be waged. To defend the projected pay rise, the threshold the NUR has been demanding must be extended. Wages must be adjusted weekly or monthly, every time there is a rise in the cost of living.

In the coming months, a campaign should be launched by the NUR EC linking the pay claim with the fight against redundancies in preparation for an inevitable struggle with the British Railways Board and the Labour government. The expansion of the railways must be an essential part of this campaign.

Tribune's nationalism derails anti-Market struggle

by Graham Bash

WELL OVER two thousand people packed 'Tribune's' anti-EEC rally in Manchester, and 1,500 attended at the London meeting. This clearly reflects the deep hostility felt throughout the Labour movement both to the Common Market and to the pro-market leaders of the Labour Party.

These rallies could have provided the occasion for beginning an independent socialist opposition to the Common Market. But it was not to be. Instead we were treated to the obscenity of so-called socialists indulging in patriotism and Union Jack waving.

Barbara Castle, in her quite disgraceful contribution, told us that France and Germany 'will walk into our markets under trading conditions that serve their national interests and not ours'. She then went on 'I believe anything which, like the Treaty of Rome, diminishes the democratic vitality of the British people, diminishes the contribution which Britain can make to the world wide strengthening of democracy'. And even worse, 'the basis of our campaign is to preserve our Social Democratic system...and if that fails cynicism would result and that would open the doors to communism'.

Yet Barbara Castle's speech was not exceptional. And indeed nearly all the speakers on the Labour left, at these rallies and

elsewhere, have opposed the EEC, not on the basis of defending working class interests—but on the basis of defending Britain's 'sovereignty' and 'national independence'.

These arguments are thoroughly reactionary and provided no way forward for the struggles of the Labour Movement.

The Tribunites tell us that the main enemy is the 'faceless bureaucrat' in Brussels. This is just not true. It is the British capitalist who is trying to force down our living standards and throw us on the dole. And it is the British state machinery that has goaded two building workers for exercising the right to picket.

And the Tribunites also say that Britain's future lies 'alone', and not as part of the continent of Europe. This again is nonsense. The national boundaries dividing Europe are obsolete and hinder the development of the productive forces. The fundamental criticism of the Common Market is not that it unites Europe—but that, because it is based on capitalist property relations, it cannot unite Europe.

The arguments of the Tribunites are paving the way for disaster. Already the Common Market is in the process of disintegration. At a later stage the British capitalist class will turn away from the EEC to nationalist solutions to

FASCISTS CHALLENGED IN BURLEY

FOR the second time this year a National Front has stood a candidate in local elections in Leeds. The newly formed Burley Anti-Fascist Committee was active throughout the campaign. Leaflets explaining the threat of the fascist NF were distributed throughout the ward and a public meeting attracted over 40 people.

Both Labour and Communist Party candidates were invited on the platform. They refused. The CP candidate demanded that the Liberal candidate be allowed on the platform as a condition for his attendance.

The meeting was held outside the ward, since the Anti-Fascist Committee was refused permission by the Labour-controlled Leeds Council to hold a meeting in municipal property in the area.

their crisis. And they will pick up the arguments about 'national independence' as a hammer with which to beat the working class.

Above all, the Tribunites are making a 'Yes' vote practically certain. By confusing the working class, by putting forward no socialist alternative to the EEC and by failing to challenge Wilson's right to lead the Labour Party, they are ensuring that Wilson and his friends in the Tory Party and CBI get their way on 5 June.

Print Conference to Fight Redundancies

BY IRENE MACDONALD
(Magazine & Book Branch NUJ)
IN THE FACE of massive redundancies throughout the print, publishing and broadcasting industries, a conference has been called to work out a determined policy of opposition to cutbacks.

First sponsored by the NUJ chapels at the Stratford Express and Penguins, both victims of the redundancy weapon, the conference is intended to involve members of Sogat, Natsopa, Slade, NGA, NUJ, ACTT, ABS and ASTMS. It will take place on Saturday 17th. May at the London College of Printing, Elephant and Castle, SE1, from 10.00am.

Job Security

Already, in the first few months of this year, chapels at the International Press Corporation, BCP, Penguins, Marshall Cavendish, Thomas Nelson and Education Audio-Visual have had their job security knocked from under their feet with threatened redundancies—and this is only one segment of an industry that is being hit nationally. In the latest instance of declared redundancies involving Sogat and the Book Branch section of the NUJ, members at Cassell Collier Macmillan only won back their jobs by taking strike action and maintaining a firm principle of no redundancies.

But non-organised employees have no such recourse—unorganised, they and their jobs fell victim to the management attitude now spreading over the whole of the print; workers must be sacrificed in the interests of profit.

Resolution

To combat that, a preliminary resolution has been formulated to map out the way ahead from the coming conference. Its main demands are:—the setting up of fixed staffing levels, all overtime at the expense of jobs to be banned, all plans and accounting from a company's whole field of operations to be open to examination by the workforce and any change in the level or method of production to be subject to a workers' veto, and the federation of chapels at a local level is called for to ensure a unified struggle. In the event of redundancies or of closure, the resolution states that the premises should be occupied to prevent the removal of assets and to keep the workforce united and that, to ensure the full involvement of women workers, canteen and nursery facilities should be established. Winding up, the resolution states "All attempts at closure or mass sackings by firms declaring themselves bankrupt, should be met by the demand on the government for nationalisation of the company under workers' control, without compensation."

Information on recent redundancies is now being collected, together with details of job wastage, and an attempt is being made to forecast what may happen in the future so that workers may face this threat to their livelihood well prepared and, above all, unified.

factory occupation

UNEMPLOYMENT IN Britain is now nudging the million mark according to the latest Department of Employment figures. The 939,767 U.K. jobless figures for March was the biggest jump—137,069—in one month since the war. But as thousands of workers up and down the country are aware, to be signing on at the Labour Exchange is not the only way the international recession is affecting jobs.

For besides the registered unemployed there are 181,000 workers on short-time, laid-off for a whole week or on three-day working, and an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 workers who have not even registered. This includes thousands of women workers or part-time workers who don't sign-on knowing that if their husbands are working they would not receive any social security benefit.

DEPRESSION

But unlike the Depression period of the 1930s workers are organising against redundancies and factory closures from a position of strength. Rather than the hunger marches and sit-down protests in the streets, factory occupations and work-ins have been the militant response to bankruptcies and the capitalists' attempts to rationalise production at the expense of workers' jobs.

Over recent years an unprecedented flowering of developed methods of struggle against redundancies has occurred. When the Heath Government tried to break the power of the organised working

class through forcing up unemployment in 1972, workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Fisher Bendix Liverpool, Plesseys, Alexandria, Bryants Colour Print South London and many more gave their answer. Work-places were occupied, plant and machinery were seized and the collective strength of organised workers in occupation was recognised as a huge advance on a simple strike method in opposing redundancies.

U. C. S.

The UCS work-in, despite its weaknesses, alongside the spate of other occupations provided a beacon to many other militant sit-ins that have been staged since late 1971-72. The factory occupation tactic with seizure of plant has now become a widely accepted method of struggle even on the wages front, as the wave of sit-ins in Manchester revealed during the 1972 engineers pay claim.

The prime concern of most occupations has been defense of the right to work. But in the fight for this fundamental right which capitalism now attempts to deny to the working class in order to overcome its profitability crisis, the problem of political strategy is paramount.

As many workers who have occupied their factories in defence of jobs are discovering, it is not enough to turf out the management and seize the plant. A clear policy is required. What is to be done when the employers stooges, bailiffs and police invade the occupied plant and remove valuable bargaining weapons like finished machines and equipment. Such was



by Mike Davis

the experience of workers at Crosfields, North London, which we examine below. Or the problem of police evicting workers as occurred at Strachans Engineering in Hampshire. The lessons of the great Flint sit-down strikes in America are instructive on this problem. We look at what happened at Flint, especially with relation to workers' defence, in this feature.

But even more important. How are the sit-ins in isolated factories to be spread? How is the whole Labour movement to be galvanised around the struggles of laid-off or unemployed workers? Finally, who is to maintain production in a period when capitalism requires a drastic rationalisation and destruction of uneconomic units of capital—mass unemployment—to restore profitability?

The factory occupation is a vital tactic in the fight against redundancies. Besides raising immeasurably the level of struggle an occupation also poses the question of control

and ownership. It poses the question of an alternative form of industrial organisation with a fundamentally different content: democratic workers control of decisions, jobs, mobility, work speeds and hours etc. In other words, factory occupations could act as a powerful motor towards workers control of production and the creation of a regime of economic dual power in the factories—where the capitalist class is being blocked at all points by the workers' strength—leading towards the struggle for state power and workers management based on a socialist economic plan.

Clearly, a factory occupation could develop in this direction with a clear policy. How is this policy to be developed? With capitalist recession developing internationally rationalisation and bankruptcies are inevitable. We must start by stating that it is not our crisis and therefore we are not going to pay for it with the loss of our jobs or living standards. In the event of redundancies being declared we must demand of the employ-

ers work sharing without loss of pay. When the capitalist replies, "I'm bankrupt" the shop stewards must demand to see the books. But it will not be enough merely to see the books of individual bankrupts in the car industry, for example, but the accounts of the whole industry must be forced open to inspection by trade union committees.

Throughout the whole of the car industry workers are being laid off or put on short-time working. At Fords', Swansea and at British Leylands the threat of redundancies is being met with occupations. But the key to achieving unity between all the disparate sit-ins, and indeed all workers, is the fight for the abolition of business secrets and the 'exposure' of the swindling and profiteering of the Henry Fords' and Lord Stokes of this world.

OPEN BOOKS

The Labour government must also be made to force open the books of all industries, banks etc. to workers inspection. The dangerous clauses protecting employers' "confidentiality", despite talk of "disclosure", contained in Wedgwood Benn's Industry Bill must be removed from the legislation. If the Bill goes through as it is workers will not be permitted to exchange information with fellow trade unionists in other countries—because of the "national interest" clause. The Bill will protect the activities of the giant multi-nationals who are throwing workers everywhere on the scrap-heap with impunity, but tries to block acts of international solidarity between workers facing common

their role in the fight for jobs

CROSFIELDS UNDER OCCUPATION

by Don Flynn

Already nine machines from the Holloway building are being completed on these new premises. Another company development is taking place at Bretton, where 90,000 square feet of building is being taken up. But the net effect of the transfer of work on this basis is the loss of a large number of jobs, particularly those of the skilled sheet-metal workers.

MANAGEMENT

Crosfields are saying that the reason for these moves is the need to save on rent, rates etc. But the workers point out that high rent and rates is a burden borne most by working class families who are dependent on firms like Crosfields for their own livings.

The Crosfield management have so far refused to meet or speak to the men occupying the fitter and wiring factory. The convenor has actually been branded a trespasser for being in the building. He is one of those who was supposed to have taken their notice at

the end of March. Furthermore, the leaders of the sit-in have claimed that union organisation at the company will be crippled as a result of these redundancies owing to the fact that over half the present shop-stewards committee are included in those to go!

RAIDING PARTY

But while refusing to talk to the sit-in workers, the management have hit out at the occupation in a very real way. One Monday night in the middle of last month, a number of lorries, marked "Revells, Brentford", turned up outside the main building and proceeded to cart away £½ million worth of completed machines. The loading of the machines took from between 8.00 pm to 1.30 am and was carried out by members of management under a very heavy police escort. At that time, the pickets from the occupation were powerless to prevent this raiding party taking the machines.

The fight against unemployment also affects the other 600 odd employees of the firm at Highbury and Holloway who are currently



Police with dogs aid

lumbered with the three-day week. Other buildings have been constantly picketed for support by the workers from the occupied factory and they have had a lot of sympathy from the workers there, several actually coming down and joining in the sit-in. But three-day week or full-time working, the management will attempt to exploit the differences between those who hold onto their jobs and those who don't. It is this question of organising the occupation, and spreading the fight that naturally concerns the men most.

Bill Haywood, spokesman for the shop-stewards and the sit-

SOME OF THE men at Crosfields Electronics have been made redundant five times in the last eight months. Now the management of the factory in North London's Holloway Road have decided to close the building housing the fitter and wiring shops, sending 350 skilled sheet-metal workers onto the streets.

LARGEST

Crosfields is one of the largest industrial concerns in this area of North London. It employed over 1,000 men in 1974. But the latest move on the part of management is in line with the general run-down in industry throughout the London area. The prospect of new jobs for the skilled workers at the plant is very bleak. That is why the response of the shop-floor to the shut-down proposals was swift and sharp. On Wednesday March 26, one day before the intended closure, workers seized and occupied the factory and have remained sitting in to date.

The men in the occupied factory are justifiably angry. A member of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, which represents workers from the AUEW,

the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, the EEUU, and TASS, told the Chartist that before the announcement of the closure and redundancies, the management had maintained that they were telling the truth to the workers about the state of the company. The workers know otherwise. Even without full access to the company books the firm has an annual turnover of £10million and holds orders for this year valued at £6.8million.

DEPRESSED

In the months prior to the shut-down a recruitment drive for new, skilled workers was well under way, with bonuses being handed out to men able to introduce new craftsmen to the company. But now Crosfields are saying that because of "the depressed state of the world market" orders have dropped by fifty per cent.

But the redundancies at the Holloway Road plant obviously tie in with plans management have had up their sleeves for some time. The work from the North London factory is being moved to a subsidiary firm established within the last two years in Peterborough, called Westwood Instruments.

SI

HOW THE WORKERS WON AT FLINT

by Graeme Atkinson

problems. Secondly, the Industry Bill is also dangerous in its present form because of the clause threatening gaol and unlimited fines if workers disclose information to fellow trade unionists which is subject to a government order.

On the basis of full knowledge of the employers operations the fight on the shop-floor for the Labour government to nationalise without compensation industries declaring redundancies would assume real power.

WORKERS' CO-OPS

Workers' Co-ops which have been attempted at Triumph Meriden, Coventry, the Scottish Daily News and IPD Fisher Bendix, Liverpool, despite the determination of the workers to save jobs, provide no way forward. Because the trade union bureaucracy allowed these struggles to be confined to single plants, workers there are now being forced to supervise their own wage-cuts, intensification and speed-up of labour and increased working hours. Worse still, the same iron laws, the need to make a profit, which led to collapse in the first place have become an even tighter vice upon the co-op ventures.

Redundancies and factory closures are not caused primarily by the whims, incompetence, corruption or bad-management of the capitalists but by the ruthless system of capitalist production. Factory occupations, when organised on the independent class programme we have outlined can become the launching pad for establishing full workers control of production and the overthrow of the profit-system responsible for unemployment.

A TOWN OWNED BY General Motors (G.M.) of 150,000 people. Of these, 120,000 were directly dependent on the firm. Inside the factories, 45,000 labour for long hours and low pay. The town's newspapers, city officials, and administration were all under the thumb of G.M. This was Flint, Michigan, U.S.A. in 1936.

"The nappy G.M. family" was how the bosses described this near feudal set-up. The firm's share-holders had good reason to be happy. In 1936, they grabbed 225 million dollars profit from this employers' paradise. Really, they were sitting on a powder-keg.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Wages and conditions in the car plants were the explosive material. The plants were virtual concentration camps. 1,600 dollars a year was the minimum on which a family of four could live—according to the U.S. government. The average wage in G.M. was 900 dollars. Hiring and firing was done at will by the foremen, so job security was non-existent, as was unemployment benefit. Work was carried out at break-neck speed on body torturing assembly lines amid intense heat and deafening noise. There was no union to fight back.

On December 30th 1936, all that changed. G.M. workers began a sit-in which defied everything the bosses threw at them. The sit-in was the product of a new wave of militancy in the American working class, of a trend towards large industrial unions which rejected the craft-minded policy of the American Federation of Labour. More immediately, it was the outcome of six months of dogged, secret work by militants of the Auto Workers Union (UAW). It began in Fisher Body No 1 when management tried to shift production to a non-organised shop.

Instantly, the 1,200 men sealed off the plant. Car bodies were piled high to form barricades. Cast-iron sheets with hoses screwed into them covered every window. Wet clothes for protection against tear gas were held ready. Soon Fisher No. 2 plant was occupied. Because

these plants produced chassis the whole GM. combine ground to a halt. By January 7th, 100,000 workers were laid off. The U.A.W. presented its demands: recognition of U.A.W.; re-instatement of victimised workers; a 30 hour, 5 day week; abolition of piece-work and slowing down of the assembly line. The capitalist press, naturally, attacked the workers. G.M. chief, Alfred Sloane, told share-holders, "The sit-in is revolutionary in its dangers and implications".

The occupation was highly organised. A strike committee of five was freely elected, with committees (food, education, intelligence etc.) to look after various aspects of the occupation. The plant general meeting was the supreme decision making body. Leaders were elected from it; rules were made by it.

The bosses hated this demonstration of working class



Victory! Jubilant scenes in Fisher Body No 1 on 11 February 1937

Barricades and workers' battalions versus armed violence from bosses and state: the story of Flint, USA, 1936-37

independence and went all out to smash the sit-in. First, the law-courts were used, but a sherriff brandishing a writ was laughed out of the plants. Next a group of "loyal" workers were dug up and formed into the "Flint Alliance", only to be exposed as a fraud. Still, G.M. refused to meet the strikers.

Violence soon replaced deception. A large mob of police and company hooligans attacked Fisher No. 2 and were repulsed in the "Battle of Bull's Run". The National Guard stood by, while new negotiations took place which granted the UAW sole bargaining rights. But, as workers prepared to evacuate the plants G.M. broke the agreement and went on a new witch-hunting offensive.

RUSE

To recapture the initiative, the workers decided to recapture the Chevrolet No. 4 plant, where 14,000 worked. They succeeded by means of a ruse in which the G.M.'s spies were misinformed that the workers were going to seize Chevrolet No. 9. The management then concentrated its thugs around "Chevy" No. 9, leaving No. 4 vulnerable.

The workers now occupying G.M.'s key plants prepared to "fight to the death". Governor Murphy now ordered a show of force by the National Guard. The workers ignored it. Faced with the alternative of a blood-bath or surrender, G.M. opted for the latter. On February 11th, 1937, 44 days after the sit-in commenced, G.M. signed a contract recognising the U.A.W. as the sole bargaining agent in the whole General Motors combine, and guaranteeing no victimisations. Victorious, the strikers marched out as they had sat-in,

in a disciplined manner. At last, the union was established in G.M.. Flint was now a union town.

The American Trotskyist, Art Preis, wrote about the consequence of this victory in these words: "...it was an inspiring victory to all American labour in 1937. The flood-gates of the class struggle were opened. The cry "sit-in" echoed from one corner of the land to the other. One month after the end of the G.M. strike, some 193,000 workers engaged in 247 sit-ins; nearly a half a million took up this weapon before 1937." The example of Flint served--along with other big class battles--as a beacon to the U.S. working class. The Flint workers had faced witch-hunts, slanders, truncheons, spies and the violence of the cops. They had overcome them and won. Their determination is an example, highly relevant to the British Labour movement today. Without such determination and unity, British workers cannot defend the gains of the last three-decades.

In the coming period, as capitalism intensifies its efforts to make workers pay for the crisis, the occupation of factories will be a key weapon of the battle. For this reason above all, the lessons of Flint must be studied and absorbed as an instructive example of how to wage this type of conflict, which explicitly challenges capitalist property relations. Only by understanding these lessons can workers elevate this form of struggle and extend it into a challenge to the whole capitalist system, by transforming defensive struggle (ie. against sackings) into an assault on the framework and structure of capitalism itself.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Crosfield picket-busting!

in, told me that up until now, the response from other trade unions and trade unionists had been "magnificent". He argued solidarity action must be spread to other parts of the labour movement, particularly the Labour Party which has a strong responsibility to the working class people of this area of London who have a history of support for the Party. The sit-in has organised lobbies of London Labour MPs Ron Brown, Jock Stallard and local MP, Michael O'Halloran. So far they have had "sympathy" but no commitment for action to ensure that police cover for the management's raiding parties, or even the constant police

harassment of the pickets will be stopped.

An idea canvassed by GLC councillor Illyd Harrington to the men is the need for a joint meeting of MPs, management, and unions throughout London on the question of redundancies in the region. This is nonsense. Management at Crosfields are refusing to speak to sit-in workers at the moment and the only reason that they would consent to do so in a Labour MPs presence is if they thought that they could get the support of the Labour man for the bosses case.

Any meeting organised by the London labour movement on the question of aiding the Crosfields men must be aimed at setting our own house in order by adopting a real programme

for the fight against redundancies. This means a London-wide meeting of workers from all the plants and factories in the Home Counties threatened with mass redundancies and short-time working together with IP and socialist activists.

Donations have been flooding in from trade union branches and many individual trade unionists, socialists and Labour Party members. But this is not enough. Unemployment benefit is being denied the workers because a three-day week and forced redundancies has been declared by management an "industrial dispute".

Please send donations to W. Hayward, 34, Dresden Road, London, N. 19.

Vietnam - the 30 year bloodbath

Martin Cook



French attempts to re-establish the colonial regime collapsed after defeat at Dien Bien Phu, 1954.

THE CURRENT victories of the Indochinese masses are writing the final chapters in an unequalled history of thirty years struggle against Imperialism. At the beginning, in 1945 when Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" in Hanoi, the Stalinists of his Indochinese Communist Party were trying to pull off deals with imperialism. Americans, British and French were successively welcomed by Ho's Vietminh as "liberators." But Western imperialism had no interest in reaching an accommodation with an independent DRV: they wanted absolute control, and by the end of 1946 the French had driven out the Vietminh and the war had begun.

Ho Chi Minh's policy had been to rest on the support of one or another "great power" within the global status quo. After 1946 this did not change, but Ho was rescued by the appearance on the scene of Mao Tse-Tung's People's Republic of China in 1949. (Unlike the West, the PRC had no economic stake in opposing the national independence of Vietnam: it was essentially a deform-

ed extension of the existing workers state of the USSR, based on the 1917 Revolution.)

Only in this context can we understand the success of Ho's "People's War" strategy. Support from Russia and China not only meant a great MATERIAL aid; it "allowed" the Vietminh to adopt a radical LAND REFORM programme. At last the peasants had something to fight for!

On this basis General Giap launched his guerrilla war from the Chinese border areas, relying on the massive enthusiasm of thousands of peasants glad to transport giant field-guns on foot, using ropes. This led to the historic victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, when French resistance collapsed.



Ho Chi Minh

The Vietminh controlled at least two-third of Vietnam, and could easily have won the rest. But Ho Chi Minh, resting on the support of Moscow and Peking, allowed them to pressure him into the disastrous Geneva Agreements. These partitioned the country, leaving the South under the jackboot of the imperialist puppet regime of Ngo Dinh Diem.

Once power in the North (the DRV) was in the hands of the Vietminh, it became itself a "deformed workers" state like China. There was no basis for the continued existence of capitalism and landlordism, whatever illusions Ho may have had. The nationalisation of the economy and land reform represent tremendous conquests for the international working class. They have allowed

unprecedented progress for the Vietnamese people, despite Hanoi's bureaucratic regime.

The DRV would have liked a period of quiet and consolidation to ensue. But this was not to be. The hated Diem regime in the South combined slavish devotion to U.S. interests with vicious repression and total corruption. The old landlords returned to grind down the peasants, who began spontaneous uprisings, especially from 1958. But not till 1960 did Hanoi give the struggle its blessing and set up the National Liberation Front (NLF) to take control of matters.

The force of popular hatred for Diem and his clique rapidly undermined the regime. By the time the CIA got rid of him in 1963, Saigon had already lost control of most of the South. The United States was not prepared to see the country "go Communist," however, and it launched possibly the most barbaric war in human history. It was not so much the desire for economic control that justified the colossal drain of military expenditure by



Ngo Dinh Diem

Washington. It was the "domino theory," which correctly understood that the liberation of Vietnam would give the green light to all the other peoples in S.E. Asia fighting imperialism.

Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon poured in "aid" to their stooges

in Saigon. By 1968 there were half a million U.S. troops (over 50,000 were to return home in boxes.) The U.S. Air Force in a few short years dropped the equivalent of 720 Hiroshima Bombs—more than the total by all sides in World War II. Two million died. Vast areas were made uninhabitable. All to no avail. The puppet forces could control the main population centres, and (just about) keep the "Vietcong" at bay in the highlands with massive bombing. The Tet offensive of 1968 exploded the facade of "pacification."

Again, it fell to Moscow and Peking to prolong the agony. They sent the essential military hardware without which guerrilla heroism could never have been successful. But not enough for total victory. While the latest SAM missiles and Mig-23 fighters were sent to capitalist Egypt, Hanoi was fobbed off with miserable cast offs and museum pieces. The Indochina War was being used by Mao and Brezhnev as just another bargaining counter in their "detente" policy with the United States.

But the courageous advance of Vietnamese workers and peasants against imperialism could not be halted by the "peaceful co-existence" stand of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. The Paris Peace Agreement of January 1973 was the beginning of the end. The White House and the Pentagon, knowing they could not establish a stable client regime in South Vietnam, wanted to withdraw without losing too much face. The war was far too costly in men, money and political discontent at home. Cut off from direct U.S. intervention, the puppet regime in Saigon has been left to its fate. Nothing can now stop the forward March of the Vietnamese masses and the removal of the corrupt regime.



Part of U.S. warplane shot down over DRV

SINCE THE RENEWAL of the Provisional I.R.A.'s ceasefire on 10 February, the belief that the responsibility for the violence stems directly and solely from the IRA has been shown to be utterly false. There has been a continued escalation of indiscriminate sectarian murder of catholics by Protestant terror gangs linked to the UDA and UVF.

A number of bombings have been carried out against the catholic areas, particularly in crowded pubs. The worst one occurred at the beginning of April in the catholic enclave Short Strand area of Belfast when five were killed and thirty injured. Over the last three months, more than fifty people have been killed, the majority being catholics.

Also, despite the ceasefire, the British army continues the systematic harrassment of catholics. The

N. IRELAND: ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR?

by John Quirke

hated RUC has begun again to enter Republican areas with a massive back-up from the military. In reply to this the IRA has revised the terms of its blanket ceasefire. Adopting a policy of defence, they are relating their military actions to the violent and hostile activity of the army and the sectarian forces.

The ceasefire is on the brink of collapse, despite assurances that were given by Merlyn Rees about the peacekeeping role of the army. This lie was exposed with the recent statement from General Sir Frank King lambasting Merlyn Rees for being too soft on the Provisionals and pleading for the army to be let loose. He said, "We were making


such good progress. My own view is that the campaign would be over in two months." This made it perfectly clear that the top brass in the army are thirsty for renewed action to defeat the IRA and drive the catholics into submission.

Of course no action was taken against General King for involving himself in politics and embarrassing his nominal 'boss', Merlyn Rees. If a rank and file soldier were to utter a criticism of a "superior" he would no doubt find himself in the guardhouse.

These events were taking place in the lead up to the new "Constitutional Convention" elections

on 1 May. The elections are another futile at a British imposed solution to the "Irish problem". They arise as a direct result of previous failings, particularly of the 'power sharing' and Sunningdale agreement destroyed by the Loyalist general strike of last May.

The outcome of the elections is likely to result in a massive majority for the United Ulster Unionist Council of Paisley, Craig, West, etc. Then the choice facing the Labour government will be either handing power over to Loyalist reaction or the continuation of direct rule. Either option means the continued use of violence and oppression against the catholic minority.

Continued 

AFTER THE APRIL ELECTION:

PORTUGAL KEEPS LEFT

By Chris Knight

EARLY THIS YEAR, the outcome of Portugal's first free election in 50 years seemed a foregone conclusion. There would be a comfortable majority for the bourgeois parties: the PPD (Peoples' Democratic Party), the PDC (Christian Democrats) and the CDS (Social Democratic Centre). The only elected body in Portugal, the Constituent Assembly, would then have been distinctly right wing. A perfect legal cover for a right-wing military coup would have been provided.

This result would have emerged for one reason: the lethargy, ignorance and political backwardness of large masses of the Portuguese peasantry and working class, still untouched by the revolution of April 1974 and still dominated by the spiritual legacy of almost half a century of fascist rule.

LANDSLIDE

The attempted rightist coup of March 11 this year changed everything. Virtually the entire working class aroused its forces to defend its revolutionary gains. Almost all layers of the oppressed were awakened to one degree or another. And at the end of last month, the results of the elections of April 25 were declared. Portugal had voted massively for socialism.

In Britain, the reporter for the Guardian (28.4.75) put it best when he wrote: "one thing is clear, the combined vote of the Socialists, Communists and other Marxists is overwhelming, placing the overall Portuguese electorate to the Left of even those in France and Italy." Together, the votes for the Communist and Socialist parties totalled 55 per cent. In the district of Setubal—home of much of Portugal's heaviest industry—the total was 80 per cent (40 per cent for each party). In Evora, a district of huge landed estates and a population of landless labourers hired by absentee landlords, the Communists gained almost half the votes. In the similar and adjacent district of Beja, the Communists topped the poll! In most of the industrial areas, the Communists obtained close on half the working class votes, while the Socialists, attracting more support from other classes as well,

In this situation things look decidedly bleak for the Catholics with no real political leadership. With the SDLP taking part in the elections and likely to get the majority of Catholic votes. Their intention is to somehow be brought into the decision making process at government level. But of this there is no hope as Ian Paisley declared he "would never share power with people like John Hume." Other Loyalist leaders have reiterated this sentiment, for example Harry West said "the Loyalists are entering the convention with a fixed determination that there will be no room at the top in the government for the SDLP."

In the event of the expected massive majority for the UUUC, the Loyalists will expect a return

gained a massive 38 per cent of the national total.

Against this, the only Conservative party, the CDS, gained a derisory 7 per cent, the main capitalist "opposition" being the "liberals" or PPD, which took 25 per cent. With a turnout of 92 per cent (probably the highest voluntary poll ever recorded in the world), this amounts to one of the greatest electoral landslide victories for the left in modern European history.

PACT

But what will be the results of this victory? The elections were deprived of much meaning when the real rulers in Portugal today—the radical officers of the Armed Forces Movement (the AFM)—got the main political parties to sign a pact surrendering power to the military for the next three to five years. The Communists



Socialist leader Soares: Victory in election



PORTUGUESE PARATROOPER DESCRIBING ELECTION PROCESS TO VILLAGERS

eagerly and the Socialists reluctantly signed, and the AFM declared that therefore they need take no notice of the election results. But indirectly, the elections have created a situation in which it may be harder for the military rulers to establish themselves as the autocratic "arbitrators" between the competing political forces in Portugal. But to understand this, we must look at how events have been developing in recent months.

AFTERMATH

In the aftermath of the attempted

to the protestant ascendancy and the subjugation of the Catholics, which the Loyalists have the power to impose. If this is not forthcoming from the Labour government, then the possibility of an all out civil war is on the agenda.

Any solution proposed within the context of the six county state can succeed only on the basis of crushing the resistance of the Catholic minority.

The Constitutional Convention is doomed to the dustbin of history like all other attempts at British imposed solutions to the "Irish problem." For socialists in Britain the task remains: The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British Troops from Irish soil. And the granting of the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

right-wing coup of March 11, the possibility arose that the officers of the AFM, or some of them, might succeed in establishing themselves as the military-bureaucratic rulers of a "Communist" state on the lines of Eastern Europe. This would have meant, on the one hand, expropriating Portugal's capitalist class, but, on the other, stamping hard on the autonomy and rights won by the working class in the recent period—banning parties to the left of the Communist Party, integrating the trade unions with the state, regimenting society from above, and carrying out the expropriation of capitalist interests under slogans of "order", of "patriotism" and so on instead of those of socialist internationalism. The NATO powers on the one side, and the Soviet bureaucrats on the other—as well as many advocates of "order" within Portugal itself—might well have reg-

arded this as the lesser of two evils under the circumstances. It would have been better, from their standpoint, than allowing the possibility of a genuine and internationalist workers' revolution to unfold in Portugal, a revolution threatening to upset the entire existing world balance of forces between the great powers and undermine the dominance of the Stalinist bureaucrats in the "communist" countries themselves.

STUNNED

But the opposition of Portugal's workers to the idea of any kind of one-party military dictatorship—however "benevolent" or "socialistic"—was one of the highlights of the election results last month. The AFM had called for voters who were "dissatisfied with all the political parties" (a typical formula used by all Bonapartist dictators) to cast blank votes. AFM leader Jesuino (the Information Minister) declared that he had expected 40 per cent of the votes to be cast in this way. The military leaders would have interpreted this as a vote of confidence in their own plan to "merge" the existing workers' parties into a monolithic party of their own ("standing between the Socialist and the Communist parties"), outlawing groups opposed to this idea and, in effect, moving towards a one-party state.

In the event, the AFM got a hefty kick in the teeth on this issue. Only seven per cent of the votes cast were blank. Quite stunned by this, Jesuino comically turned matters on their head in seeking an explanation. He felt the low figure reflected a "lack of political awareness" which still existed in the country.

DEMOCRACY

The truth is the opposite. The workers of Portugal are determined to defend the rights won in April 1974, and determined to defend the right to choose between their own political parties themselves. This determination in large part explains the big vote for the Socialists compared with that for the Communist Party, which had closely identified with the AFM's paternalistic aims. The whole attitude of the AFM leaders has seemed insulting to many workers, no matter how strong their sympathies with the AFM. Jesuino declared the elections merely a "pedagogic exercise". But it's no good telling the workers that "bourgeois elections" are not to count—without providing an alternative means whereby the workers and peasants can freely express their will! If workers and peasants' councils existed in Portugal (built out of their embryo in the existing workers' organizations, such as the "Interempresa" in Lisbon) it would be a different matter. It could be argued convincingly that such councils—elected at their places of work by the workers and peasants, with the immediate right of recall over all delegates—represented a superior form of democracy to the system of Parliamentary democracy. Without that, the workers are naturally suspicious of "leaders" who tell them elections are not really important.

DUAL RESULT

So what has been the result of these elections? Essentially, they have helped preserve a number of quite contradictory possibilities. On the one hand, in the short term, the capitalists may feel relieved that the strong "moderate" Socialist vote will protect them from the speedy expropriation which they have feared since March 11. They will hope to be given time in this way to prepare the ground for another right-wing military coup in a few years' time. But this is not the only result of the elections. For a blow has also been struck for the democratic political rights of the working class: a blow which in the longer term could help create the conditions for an internationalist workers' revolution (the key in this connection will certainly be events in Spain). Never since the months between February and October in Russia in 1917 have the prospects for such a revolution seemed so bright. And never have the conditions for the building of a disciplined party to lead such a revolution been more favourable.

YS TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTI ABORTION BILL

AT THE LPYS National Conference in Blackpool over Easter weekend, delegates voted unanimously in favour of an emergency resolution sponsored by Epsom & Ewell YS calling for opposition to Labour MP James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill. The motion called upon Conference to support the stand taken by the 10 women Labour MPs against the predominantly male, anti-abortion compo-

come into the country to have abortions on any grounds, as there is a 'residency clause' of 20 weeks, before a woman can even be considered for an operation, and of course all abortions will be illegal after 20 weeks.

EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

It is ironic that the Bill has come up so soon after the findings of the Lane enquiry were made public. Set up to consider the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act in April 1974 the commission concluded, '...we are unanimous in supporting the Act and its provisions. We have no doubt that the gains facilitated by the Act have much outweighed any disadvantages for which it is criticised.' The rationale for the introduction of the new Bill, which so blithely ignores the Lane recommendations, was to prevent the gross exploitation of women by private profit making abortion clinics. Whilst we support this laudable intention, it is clear that this is not what the Bill will do in practice. Why do these racketeering clinics flourish in the first place? The Lane enquiry provides us with the answer: "the passing of the Act, resulting in a greatly increased number of those seeking legal abortions, has imposed considerable strain on the NHS...Neither was the NHS in numbers of staff and facilities equipped to meet the heavy demand of increased services. Too many women have been forced to pay for abortions when they had legitimate medical grounds for termination of pregnancy under the Act." In 1975, tied in with a programme for reduced spending in the social services, the drastic cuts in hospital building programmes, etc., the NHS provisions for abortion are amongst the first to go to the wall. This is all part of a gradual erosion of access to social service facilities so vitally important to working class women and men, and a further example of the inability of the 'welfare state' to meet the needs of the people in a capitalist system.

DESPERATION

The anti-abortionists' main platform is the moral issue. Backed by organisations like SPUC, LIFE, the National Front and the whole of the Catholic church, they claim that it is immoral to kill a human foetus. One wonders what they know about the desperation which causes women to seek an abortion in the first place. The anti-abortionists, swept off their feet in a cloud of pious pontificating, ignore the fact that abortion will not disappear just because it is illegal. The rich, of course, will still obtain hushed up private abortions. It is the working class women who are



Nicky Stephens (Wood Green YS delegate and Chartist supporter) speaking to emergency resolution on Anti-abortion Bill.

sition of the Select Committee now considering the Bill, and demanded Young Socialists to act through their Constituency Labour Parties and at National level to stage an effective campaign to oppose the progress of the Bill. Nearly half of the 2,000 Labour Party delegates and visitors signed a petition opposing the Bill,

OUTLAWS ABORTIONS

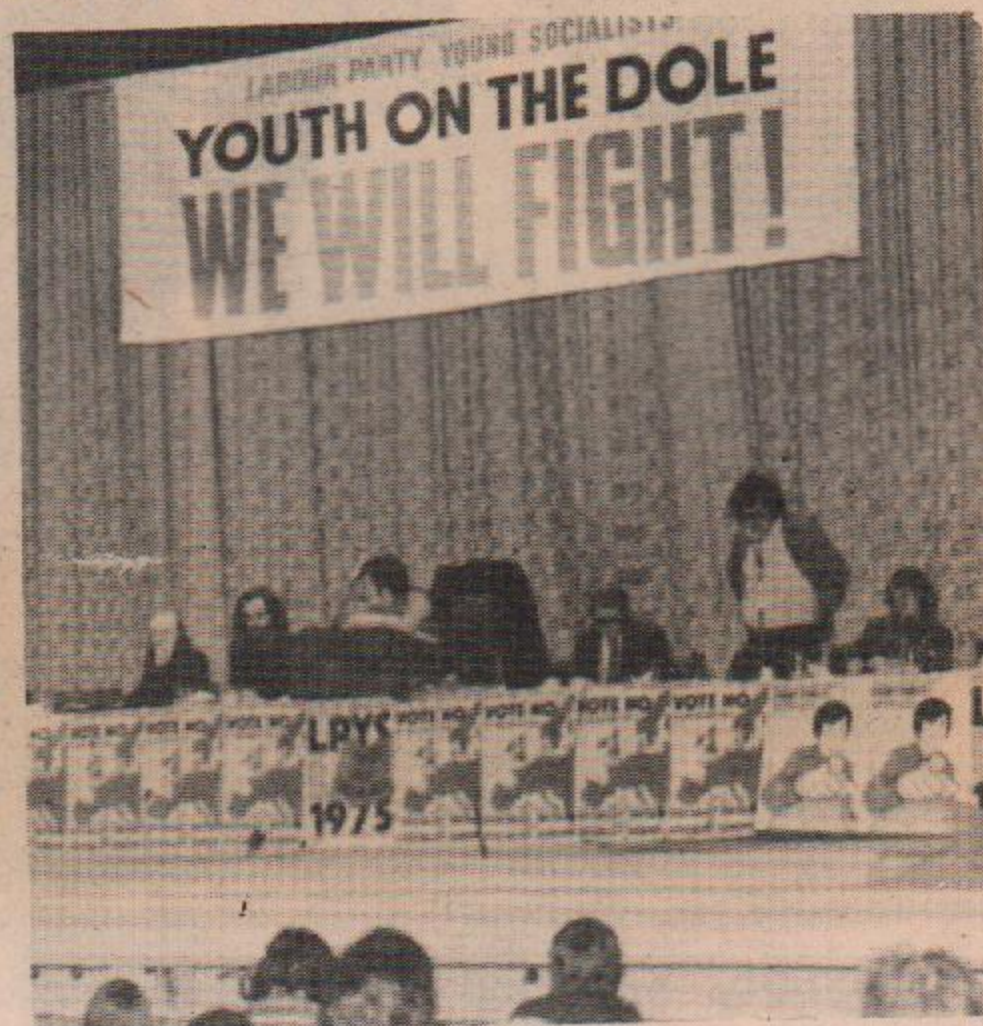
Ever since the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act which facilitated legal abortion, many doctors have been interpreting the Act favourably to grant abortion on social grounds. In fact, about 70% of abortions were carried out on this basis last year. The Bill changes the emphasis of this Act by asserting that only when serious risk to the life of a woman or her children can be proved will an abortion be legal. This will outlaw abortions on social grounds because of this harsh medical criteria; doctors are agreed that it is impossible to prove in advance that not to perform an abortion constitutes such a grave risk to life. The penalties for evading the law are severe, a GP stands to be convicted for up to 5 years imprisonment, and fines of £1,000 if he cannot prove his case. As if this was not enough, the Bill imposes further restrictions on a woman's access to abortion. Distribution of information on how to get an abortion will be illegal—unless it comes from a registered GP—the very ones who risk prosecution for providing such information. Foreign women will not be able to

Working Womens' Charter Accepted But NO REAL LEAD ON SOCIALIST ACTION

"YOUTH ON the dole - we will fight!" was the slogan under which over 2,000 delegates and visitors assembled for this year's National Young Socialists Conference.

Unemployment and inflation were the main issues taken up in the economic debate in the first morning. What became very clear, though, was that the YS National Committee and their supporters, although analysing the bankruptcy of capitalism and the need for socialism, were presenting no real way in which youth, facing redundancies and rising prices, could take up a struggle.

It was left up to the small, but vocal, left opposition from the Chartist, Workers Fight and Socialist Action delegates to relate to these immediate problems facing working class youth. Mike Davis, delegate Hackney North and Stoke Newington YS called for a strategy to fight unemployment by opening the books of firms



like British Leyland, workers' control and the confiscation of bankrupt enterprises.

The question of Ireland found the YS National Committee under considerable attack from the left with resolutions from Ealing-

struggling to bring up large families in poverty stricken conditions, who will face the dilemma—a back street abortion, or an unwanted child. It's not the Mrs. Jill Knights of the world who will be affected, the burden falls as always, on the working class.

It is in the Labour movement, the Labour Party and trade unions, that we will be best equipped to fight this reactionary piece of legislation, and others like it, which threaten to restrict the ability of working class people to control their own lives and fight for their rights. All Labour MPs must be pledged to throw out the White Bill.

BY LIZ ADAMS

Southall, Vauxhall, Eston and Wokingham calling for the immediate withdrawal of the British army and support for the Republican forces. The YS majority (Militant supporters) rejected this. Instead they argued for a rather meaningless "workers unity" and a "trade union defence force!" This ignored the fact that Northern Ireland trade unions are dominated by protestants (essentially the people who have the jobs) and that this would not create "workers unity!" Support for the Troops Out Movement was also rejected on the grounds that their literature did not call for socialism.

ABSTRACT PRINCIPLES

The conference showed clearly the way in which the YS leadership were only prepared to adopt abstract principles of socialism without any notion of how to involve youth in struggle. It was also clear that they had no programme which related to the real struggle in Ireland and which could bring Republicans into the revolutionary socialist movement.

N.C. COMMITTED

The same limited horizons of the YS NC were shown on the issues of racialism, anti-fascist struggles, bans and proscriptions and attitude to socialists outside the Labour Party. Though heavily amended (all references to sexual repression deleted), the Surbiton YS resolution on women was eventually passed, thus committing the National Committee to organising around the Working Womens' Charter campaign. Unfortunately some delegates attacked the Charter because it lacked a socialist programme, totally ignoring the fact that this is the first time that the male dominated Trade Union movement has taken up a struggle for the social rights of women (contraception, abortion, nurseries etc.) and not just economic demands.

SERIOUS CAMPAIGN

But the fact that Conference accepted the Surbiton resolution on the Working Womens' Charter is a definite step forward. We must ensure the YS NC follows this directive, and that this motion is turned into a consistent and serious campaign on the question of womens' rights.

BY GEOFF BENDER (Wycombe LPYS)

SUPPORT ANTI-ABORTION BILL CONFERENCE (see below). Details: Marie Montaut, 14a Hurst St, S.E. 24

PUBLIC MEETINGS

LABOUR MOVEMENT ABORTION CONFERENCE
Against the James White Amendment Bill.
At: NUFTD hall Jockeys Fields,
Theobald Rd, London WC1. On Sat. May 10th
At: 10.30am.

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT delegate Conference: "The British Labour Movement and Ireland", Saturday 24th May, Collegiate Theatre, Gordon St. London WC1. SPEAKERS include: Senator Michael Mullins (General Sec., Irish Transport and General Union), Eamonn McCann, Joan Maynard MP. Credentials (75p) from TOM, 103 Hammersmith Rd., W. 11.

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NORWOOD LABOUR PARTY'S ANTI-COMMON MARKET meeting. At Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton 8pm. Date May 29th

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