



## SMASH THE TORIES ON ALL FRONTS

# TORIES OUT - SMASH ALL PAY LAWS

At the present moment the centre of the political stage is occupied by the fiery speeches and bitter personal clashes between the various Parliamentary politicians.

But it is not here that the real fight for the defence of working class living standards is going on. That job is being carried out by the thousands of miners pickets at pits, power stations, steel mills and coal depots around the country, and the tens of thousands of workers who are supporting them.

No matter who wins next Thursday's election, the fight will have to go on. After all, what has been the most powerful instrument of the ruling class in holding down workers' wages? The Tory incomes policy.

By Chris Balfour

And what is Labour's position on this? Well, of course, it is against Tory incomes policy. And what does Labour stand for? A Labour incomes policy, of course.

Every Labour spokesman has made it perfectly clear that a Labour Government would be just as eager as the Tories to hold down wages. The only difference is that where the Tories have had to rely on a statutory policy and the intervention of the state into 'free collective bargaining', Labour hopes to use its special relationship with the trade union leaders to work out a 'voluntary agreement'.

So the working class can relax - their wages may be kept down under Labour, but at least it will be 'free collective starvation'.

The recent sell-out operation of the TUC, designed to sweet-talk the Tories into making concessions to the miners, makes it clear that they would be only too willing to make such a deal with the Labour Party.

Of course, Labour promises to keep prices down. But they have little to say about how this could be done. When the Tories produce facts and figures about the rise of world prices, Labour prefers to change the subject.

Only a Government which is prepared to bite deep and hard into the profits of the capitalist class could take the kind of ruthless measures necessary to hold prices down. But in a capitalist economy it is 'profits that make the world go 'round' - so this would require a sharp break with the whole capitalist system.

Moreover, the civil service of the capitalist state has neither the will nor the ability to control the myriad of prices in the shops - this is

openly admitted by the Tory Prices Commission. Only the organised might of the millions of working class shoppers is capable of this job - and we can be sure that they would do it thoroughly.

But the present leaders of the Labour Party are wedded to the defence of the capitalist system - that is revealed in their every word and deed. And could we expect a Government of Labour bureaucrats who have either avoided or scabbed on every big struggle of the workers' movement during the recent years of Tory rule, who fight tooth-and-nail the simple democratic proposal that the Party Conference should exercise control over the Parliamentary Party's actions, to actually mobilise the mass of working people?

Whether we have a Tory or Labour Government on 1 March the working class will have to carry on the struggle - the struggle against any form of incomes policy or pay restraint as long as the capitalist class controls the economy, and the struggle to squeeze better wages and conditions out of the bosses.

That is why the miners' strike and the movement in solidarity with it is so important. But the next step - which is becoming increasingly urgent - is to strengthen the miners' struggle, and strengthen the fight of the entire working class against the problems unleashed by capitalist crisis, by throwing the weight of other groups of workers into the fight alongside the miners.

Of course, the election is not irrelevant. A Tory victory would signify that the working class was divided and hesitant about going into struggle, and discourage other workers from taking up the fight. A Labour victory would show that the class was united against the Tories, and create expectations among every sector of workers that could rapidly be turned into mass action.

For that reason we say: *Smash the Tories on all fronts - Vote Labour, but rely only on your own struggles - Carry on the mass struggle.*



The appeals of the three Shrewsbury building workers jailed in December for their picketing activities opened in London last Tuesday. Over 500 building workers took this opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity. The appeal hearings are continuing.

## NUM EXEC STEPS BACKWARDS

The decision of the NUM leadership to submit evidence to the relativities inquiry is a serious step backwards.

The inquiry is operating under the terms of the Pay Board's relativities report, which makes it clear that the relativities machinery is part-and-parcel of the Tories' incomes policy.

Sir Frank Figures, chairman of the Pay Board, spelt this out when he opened the inquiry. Its purpose, he said, was to answer the questions 'Was it right that the relative pay of the miners should be changed? Was it possible to change the relative pay of the miners in such a way that the change endured?' In other words, are there special reasons why the miners should be allowed to break through the Phase 3 net, and if so is it possible to ensure that the hole can be effectively sown up after them so no one else gets the benefits?

Of course, there are special circumstances involved in miners' work. But the overwhelming argument in favour of the miners' claim is not these special circumstances, but the factors which they face in common with the rest of the working class - the phenomenal rise in prices over the recent period, and the exploitation of their labour for the capitalist class.

Special cases may be all very well for submission to gentlemanly courts

of inquiry', but they are not the stuff working class unity is made of - and that unity is the only way the miners or any other section of the working class can win.

The NUM's participation in the Wilberforce inquiry in 1972 was a different matter. That was a one-off body set up to deal with the miners' claim, a face-saving escape-hatch for the Government. Although even then the NUM was wrong to base its claim on the 'special case' argument.

The Wilberforce award smashed a hole in the Tory pay guidelines because there existed no means of scrutinising other workers' claims to similar rises, and no means of preventing employers granting such rises. But this is not 1972. The statutory incomes policy now provides both those things.

A miners' wage settlement, obtained through the relativities machinery and based on the 'special case' argument, far from strengthening the struggle of other groups of workers as it did in 1972, could seriously weaken them. This would be disastrous, not only for these other workers but for the miners themselves.

After all, how much of whatever increase the miners win will be left after inflation pobbles up a colossal 15% of next year's paypacket? If the miners then have to once again go into struggle as they are now doing just two years

after the unprecedented 1972 increases - where will they find allies if the rest of the working class has, in the meantime, been thoroughly ensnared in the 'relativities' trap?

Of course, if the Government chooses to hold an inquiry in the miners' absence and concede their claim using the 'special case' argument, or any other excuse, then this should be accepted. But there is a world of difference between that and actively assisting the Tory manoeuvre as the NUM executive is now doing.

The NUM executive's action has done serious damage to the cause of the working class. Before it is too late, some of that damage must be repaired. The NUM executive must issue a clear and unambiguous statement that they are totally opposed to the Tories' Phase 3 and all its machinery, that they believe every group of workers is fully entitled to a wage rise well above the Phase 3 limits, and call for a boycott of the relativities machinery by the trade union movement. Resolutions to this effect should be carried by NUM branches across the country.

Jack Collins, Kent delegate to the NUM executive, and other leading NUM militants, have attacked the TUC's acceptance of the 'special case' argument. They must now take up the fight in their own union for repudiation of this false and dangerous idea.

RAY ALEXANDER

### REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN AND EUROPE

HEAR: Tariq Ali (IMG candidate for Sheffield, Attercliffe)  
Charles Michaloux (formerly member of Political Bureau of ex-Ligue Communiste)  
John Ross (IMG candidate for Newham North-East)

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Sq. Tuesday 26 February, 7.30 pm

# FASCISM GAINS GROUND AS NATIONAL FRONT FIELDS 54 CANDIDATES

In this election there are 54 candidates standing for the National Front, Britain's largest fascist organisation. Television viewers will shortly be treated to vile racist and nationalist cant, alongside the usual rubbish from the more traditional politicians.

It is easy for the capitalist press to dismiss the revolutionary candidates as 'cranks' and therefore representing no danger. But no-one on the left should make the same mistake about the extreme right. The growth of fascism is a very serious development indeed, and as a result of their impact in this election they can only grow faster.

Similarly, the refusal of Enoch Powell to stand has been dismissed as either the act of a man who imagines himself as Charles de Gaulle, or a man demoralised by political life. Powell's withdrawal is more significant than this. His opposition to the Tory leadership, which has driven him to virtually call for a vote for Labour, expresses the bitter mood of a section of the population who are also attracted to the National Front.

## SWIFT SUFFOCATION

When we talk about the struggle between the two major classes in society, the workers and the capitalists, we are talking about a battle in which the classes seek to slowly strangle one another. However, for those social classes who stand in between, crushed and pumelled by the flying boots and fists of both sides, suffocation is swift.

They include small industrialists ruined by the end of the Commonwealth preferential trading system—a key point in the NF programme; small businesses sent to the wall by European competition, and then bought out for a few bob by the banks and big monopolies; high-salaried white collar employees thrown out of a job by mergers; those living off share income who find themselves ruined by bankruptcies or speculation; small shopkeepers ruined by supermarkets; and a host of administrators and ex-military men driven back from the colonies to search for some second-rate clerical job in state administration, often side by side with their colonial ex-servants.

These layers see only a crumbling post-imperial Britain, led by a Tory Party which is 'selling-out' to Europe, and torn apart by a conflict between the two major classes which threatens to engulf and drown those in the middle. Both Powell and the NF share this view of the Tory leadership. Heath is not an Englishman, but a European, and he has stirred up the class struggle as a diversion.

For these people, what is needed is a new 'national unity', a fanatical nationalist

revival to be achieved by kicking out black people (repatriation), international speculators (nationalise the banks and stop the export of capital), and communists (who owe no allegiance to the Crown or the nation).

The only difference between Powell and the NF is a thin line: their attitude to parliament. And as life becomes more intolerable for the man in the middle, more and more are crossing this line. The NF has no time for the institution which Powell worships. They say that politicians are nothing but careerists and opportunists, incapable of decisive solutions. It is decisive solutions which the NF offers.

From among these desperate and disillusioned ex-Tories, the NF will be able to create the nucleus of future fascist bands. The decisive solutions will be physical attacks on the workers' movement and on the blacks.

## BLACK THEM OUT!

It is vitally important that the workers' movement take action against the fascists during the election period. There are already signs that the NF in some areas intends to attack Labour Party and other meetings, and shop stewards should take measures to defend meetings wherever fascists are making these threats.

But it is also necessary to expose the fascists as people out to destroy the workers' movement. It is necessary to deprive the fascists of their platform, both to prevent the spreading of their propaganda and to prevent the fascists from being able to present themselves to big capital as a useful strike force.

The ACTT should issue a call to its members to black all the TV propaganda of the Front, and print workers should refuse to handle any NF material in the national press. The TUC should give its backing to these actions and take a clear position against the fascists.

Local bodies of the labour movement should warn the workers' movement of the danger of the fascists and use all means at their disposal to do this. Representatives of black workers' organisations should be drawn into the election campaign to assist in the fight against racism and fascism. All workers' candidates should see anti-racist agitation as an important duty.

In the localities, workers should seek to prevent the fascists from holding public meetings. Labour Councils should ban the fascists from using any premises which come under council ownership or control. Ward Committees must refuse to allow fascist candidates to speak in election forums with other candidates.

These sort of actions can prepare the ground for a determined fight against the fascists in the coming months.

A. JENNINGS

# Birmingham conference on Shrewsbury a farce

There have been many conferences on Shrewsbury in the labour movement, and a lot of stupid things said at them. But the contribution of one platform speaker at a Birmingham Trades Council conference on Shrewsbury last weekend, must take the prize.

George Wright, Secretary of No.4 Region T&GWU (Wales) made the main point of his speech to the 200 delegates, an attack on the North Wales Defence Committee. He implied that they were mis-using funds. He then went on to announce that the demonstrations that took place outside Shrewsbury Crown Court during the trial were responsible for the viciousness of the sentences!

Here was a contribution to set the conference alight with the desire to struggle, an offering from a man so impassioned over the imprisonment of the Shrewsbury pickets that he couldn't even remember how many had been sent to jail.

But this individual was only marginally worse than the rest of the platform when it came to the real question: what action needs to be taken to free the Six? The only action proposed by the platform in its resolution was support for the 20 March national day of action, first outlined at the Liverpool Conference.

Only Lawrie White, delegate from the AUEW (TASS), and an IMG member, made the point from the floor about the need for indefinite strike action and the need to link the campaign to the defence of miners pickets.

He moved an amendment which called for the joint organising committee which the platform proposed to set up, to create a picketing pool to defend the miners pickets, carry out a propaganda campaign about Shrewsbury, and take steps to initiate indefinite strike action to free the 6.

But the conference broke up in confusion when the democratic chairman refused to take amendments to the main resolution, even though one had been signed by over 20 delegates.

The charade in Birmingham is an example of what the Communist Party call 'getting official trade union backing'. Under this guise, the CP have only succeeded in taking the campaign out of the hands of the rank and file, and handing it to the right wing on a plate. There were very few rank and file building workers at the conference, let alone militants from any other union.

With support like this, the Shrewsbury 6 might as well turn their organising talents to setting up a prisoners' union.

# Campus battles

## Oxford students beaten up after occupation

This week a campaign began for the abolition of Oxford University's special police force. Lectures have been halted and a national demonstration is planned for 4 March to coincide with the first of a series of trials of Oxford students. The students have made clear that any attempt at victimisation by the university authorities will be answered by an immediate occupation.

The crisis in the university erupted last week in the face of a campaign by students for temporary union facilities and the preparation of a central students union building for the future. Oxford, unlike every other university in the country, lacks facilities. Students organised a sit-in in the examination halls last November to back up their demand. But last week the authorities gave a final 'no'.

Last Wednesday morning an advance guard of 80 students occupied the former Indian Institute, which now houses essential University administrative offices. The occupation was carried out smoothly and without any force.

But 2 hours later, 50 hired thugs, led by university officials, and armed with hammers, were let into the building by a staff member. The students decided to leave in order to avoid violence, but as they went out they were set upon, kicked, punched, photographed and finally thrown by the University goon squad down the steps onto the street and into the tender hands of the local police. Eight people were arrested, and one student went to hospital with a suspected burst kidney. No police were injured.

By Wednesday lunch-time 700 students were demonstrating outside the Institute against brutality by the university cops and the regular police. Meanwhile Geoffrey Caston, the university registrar, had issued 15,000 leaflets declaring that no violence had taken place.

On Friday a General Meeting of the students overwhelmingly condemned the actions of the university authorities and the police and reaffirmed its support for the campaign to get a students' union building. The meeting decided to march immediately to the Institute. When the marchers arrived, someone in the demonstration threw an egg at the police, who then attacked with the same brutality witnessed 2 days previously. Four students were arrested.

The students had made clear before the struggle began that they would throw open the facilities of the occupied building for solidarity activity with the miners strike. They regarded the strike as as much their concern as their own lack of union facilities. The alliance of the university authorities and the local police is a dramatic exposure of the united interests of these bodies in repressing a section of the population struggling for decent living conditions.

## Kent students win victory over victimisation

After a seven-day occupation of the Registry by 500 students, the senate of Kent University has agreed to the reinstatement of Joe Cotter, a Communist Party member who was asked to withdraw from the University on 5 February because of his 'unsatisfactory' academic record. This amounted to no more than his missing two seminars, and even this allegation proved to be false.

The University authorities went to amazing lengths to prevent the reinstatement of one student.

Two days after the occupation began, writs were issued against 12 students and 'others unknown' for 'unlawful possession' of the building. But the writs were thrown out on a technicality. At the same time, the authorities were offering to pay the catering staff to stay away from work.

When the students picketed the one major lecture taking place during a boycott of lectures, the AUT took the unprecedented action of calling a strike against 'the interference, intimidation, harassment and physical assault suffered by AUT members at the hands of the students.' They made no mention of the issue of victimisation of Cotter.

On a split vote (89 for, 87 against, 12 abstaining) they decided to take strike action, having never before been on strike in support of students, or even, in support of their own members, against the university authorities.

The authorities were clearly prepared to have the university closed down rather than allow militancy to increase among the student body.

At a meeting attended by 1500 students, the largest ever at Kent, all were agreed that action to reinstate Cotter should continue. But there was disagreement over tactics. It was finally decided, by 900 votes to 658, to vacate the building for three days of negotiations, on the understanding that the occupation would be restarted then if Cotter was still out. A demonstration 350 strong of all those determined to reoccupy a 'strategic' building if Cotter wasn't reinstated ended the occupation on a



Oxford student being held down by police. He was taken to hospital with a suspected burst kidney.

high point. Twenty-four hours later the Senate caved in.

In the spirit of the slogan raised by the 600 who had voted to continue the occupation—'What do we want—a Fighting Union'—the whole executive, since the end of the occupation, has voted to take similar action to defend any student victimised as a result of the occupation. That slogan should be taken up and repeated by students throughout the country.

## CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS STUDENT VICTIMISATION

On 16 March, a conference at Essex University will be discussing the victimisations of students at Oxford and Essex universities, drawing on the lessons of the successful resistance at Kent and Northumberland. The aim will be to prepare the national defence of all victimised students. Speakers from the Shrewsbury building workers and Yorkshire miners have been invited.

Delegates should be elected for the conference and their names sent to Essex University Students Union, Wivenhoe Park, nr Colchester, Essex.

## Women against the Tories

In the 1970 general election campaign the Tories made a strong bid for the women's vote by appealing to the housewife's interest in food prices. This time Wilson is attempting to turn the tables on the same question. But the present onslaught against the working class has much wider implications for women than how it affects prices, and thus requires a much wider response.

This was the theme of the 'Women against the Tories' conference held in London last Sunday. The main objectives of the conference, attended by 80 women and men and organised by London IMG, were to discuss the ways in which women were particularly affected by the present crisis, and how they could be drawn into struggle in defence of their rights and their standard of living.

In addition to two discussion workshops on equal pay and union democracy—both of which directly affect women workers—there were workshops on how to organise women on the miners' strike, the three-day week, Shrewsbury and picketing, and Ireland.

## SPUCed out

Harrow and Hillingdon Socialist Women Group picketed the inaugural meeting of a local Society for the Protection of Unborn Children group last Tuesday. The picket was supported by women's groups from Brunel University, Enfield Poly, Watford and Wembley IMG and others. They also heckled speakers and succeeded in disrupting the meeting to the extent that the organisers were unable to make any effective announcements or take a collection.

# IMG CANDIDATES RAISE REAL ELECTION ISSUES

As Labour beats a hasty and undignified retreat before Tory allegations of extremism, the decision to stand International Marxist Group candidates is shown to be thoroughly justified. It is only the revolutionary candidates who are raising the real issues confronting the working class.

## Newham

In Newham North East, IMG candidate John Ross has consistently raised the need for a miners', engineers' and railworkers' alliance to smash Phase 3. He has stressed the need to defend pickets and explained the importance of national strike action to secure the release of the jailed Shrewsbury workers.



Speaking in the constituency he said: 'The Industrial Relations Act and the 1875 Conspiracy Act are laws used by the ruling class to try and break the power of the working class movement. They will be used to jail workers and where necessary to frame-up workers. These laws must be broken, otherwise they are weapons to smash living standards.'

'What does Reg Prentice, the Labour MP for this constituency, have to say about them? He tells workers to obey them! He attacked the Pentonville Five and has denounced 'violence' on the picket lines. Not, you must note, the violence of the police, but the actions of building workers against scab labour.'

The Labour Party is making every attempt to play down the smouldering issue of racism. Labour's despicable record on this issue has encouraged racism within the working class. As Ross explained: 'Last weekend an anti-racist demonstration was being organised in Bradford by *Militant*, a paper published by left-wing Labour Party supporters. At the request of the Labour Party leaders this was called off. What an absolute disgrace! Just at the very time when it is vital to take up the fight against racism, the Labour Party decides it does not want to scare off potential voters who are affected by racial prejudice.'

The Workers Revolutionary Party, who are standing Vanessa Redgrave in this constituency, let Prentice off the hook on this issue by devoting only a glib phrase in their Manifesto to racism.

IMG members and supporters are conducting a vigorous campaign in the constituency. Last Saturday they organised a motorcade along the main streets. Meetings were held at street corners, shopping precincts and in the markets. Over 200 copies of the *Red Weekly* were sold on Saturday. After Sunday's first distribution of the election address a follow-up sale of the newspaper resulted in a further 112 copies being sold on Monday evening. Some 20,000 election addresses have now been delivered and these will be followed up with the *Red Weekly*. Leaflets have also been produced and distributed in Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi.

On Friday 22 February Ross and Tariq Ali will be speaking at East Ham Town Hall. The meeting will be chaired by Terry Barrett, convenor at William Warnes Factory in East London. Meetings are also being organised at factories and outside the Royal Group of Docks.

Members and supporters able to help any day should either call at 97 Caledonian Road, London, N.1., or phone 278 9526.

Motorcade. Members and supporters with cars call at 97 Caledonian Road at 9.00 a.m. Saturday, 23 February. Comrades without a car report to East Ham tube station by 10.00 a.m.

There will be a canvass and paper sale on Sunday, 24 February. Cars report to 97 Caledonian Road by 9.30 a.m.—otherwise East Ham tube station by 10.30.

## Attercliffe

In Attercliffe, Sheffield, the IMG candidate Tariq Ali has held a number of highly successful meetings. On Tuesday nearly 100 people



attended a meeting in one of the wards. At the end of the meeting 30 people handed in their names and addresses. This followed a meeting of 300 at Sheffield University where 12 students signed up to work in Tariq's election campaign.

Despite the attempt of the local Labour Party to mobilise support for their candidate amongst the immigrant community, 'Vote Ali' posters are given prominent display in a number of immigrant cafes. These cafes are also distributing Urdu and Bengali translations of his election address. On Sunday, 24 February, at 4.00 p.m., Tariq will be speaking to an immigrant workers' meeting in the Urdu and Punjabi languages at the Colridge Youth Club, Colridge Road, Attercliffe.

Regular meetings are being held outside factories such as Bone Cravens Ltd., where some 40 workers heard Tariq and IMG national organiser Brian Heron explain the need for united working class action to smash the Tories. Meetings are also being held in the mining areas around Sheffield accompanied by a showing of the film 'Salt of the Earth.'

The campaign has attracted considerable press publicity, and Tariq has had a live interview for London Broadcasting, along with 'Manny' Shinwell and Norman St. John Stevas, in which he argued for the continuation of the mass struggle and the revolutionary road to socialism.

In a special election programme run by Yorkshire Television that well-known defender of 'law and order,' the Bishop of Wakefield, asked: 'Just how revolutionary is Tariq Ali? Does he want to destroy society as we know it?' Ron Thompson, a Sheffield engineering worker and an election campaigner for Tariq, gave the succinct reply: 'Yes.'

On Wednesday, 27 February the campaign will culminate with an election rally. Speakers will include Jean Jepson, the sacked convenor from the Huli factory, Armstrong's in Beverley, Charles Michaloux, former member of the banned Ligue Communiste, John Wilkinson, Tariq's election agent and Sheffield shop steward, and Tariq Ali. This will be followed by a play given by a group of London Equity members, and the evening will end with a social. Tickets for this are 10 p each, obtainable from 7 Newman Road, Sheffield 9, or pay at the door. It will be held in Samantha's, Mecca Dance Hall, Queens Road, Sheffield 2.

There is no doubt that this big working class constituency, much of it designated as a slum clearance area, with its rows of run-down houses and its immigrant ghettos, is being made aware of the real political issues facing the working class. By Sunday over 30,000 election addresses will have been delivered. Sales of *Red Weekly* have more than doubled and the IMG has won new members and supporters in a number of factories and colleges.

Members and supporters ring Sheffield 23764 or call at 44 Hatherley Road, Sheffield 9.

Saturday, 23 February, IMG members and supporters should join demonstrations called by the Sheffield Trades and Labour Council in conjunction with the Sheffield District Committee of the AUEW. Demonstration starts Wicker Goods Yard, Sheffield at 10.30 a.m.

## Queens Park

Taking Heath at his word that this is a contest between the moderates and the extremists, the Glasgow IMG challenged the Tory Premier to a debate. After a top meeting with Scottish Tories, Heath called a press conference at Abbotsinch Airport, Glasgow. IMG members and supporters of Bob Purdie's election campaign, picketed the conference. Their leaflet said: 'You say extremists are the main issue. We are the extremists, why not debate us?'

Queens Park, the more genteel name now affixed to what was once the Gorbals constituency, has a five cornered contest. There are candidates from the Labour Party, the Conservatives, the Scottish Nationalists, the Communist Party and the IMG contesting for the constituency once fought by John MacLean.



As the workers at Maclaren's, scene of a twelve week sit-in against the multi-national ITT company, said to Purdie: 'The other candidates have been here once—to get our vote. The IMG is here every day helping our struggle.' Purdie's meeting at the factory was attended by over 70 per cent of the workers occupying.

As Purdie told the workers: 'It is the kind of struggle that you are waging and the means that you are using to wage that struggle which shows the way forward for the working class. What you have demonstrated is that there is a workers' solution to the crisis. That is how the working class must fight, not rely on electoral methods of struggle.'

The Glasgow IMG have held regular street-corner meetings, and on Sunday morning held a meeting outside the biggest Catholic church in the area. An interested and generally sympathetic audience heard Purdie talk about the repressive attacks being made on the working class and argue for the right of the Price sisters and their fellow prisoners to be returned to Northern Ireland to serve their sentences.

On Monday 25 February the Govan Hill Ward Committee, a community association, have invited Purdie and the other four candidates to address a public meeting on their election programmes. On Tuesday there will be an election rally which will be addressed by Bob Purdie and veteran Glasgow militant Harry MacShane. MacShane was an active collaborator of John MacLean, for many years a member of the British Communist Party, and the main organiser of its work amongst the unemployed in Scotland during the thirties. Both meetings will be held at Dixons Halls, Cathcart Road and begin at 7.00 p.m.

Help is needed for this campaign. Please ring IMG Committee Rooms, 429 5943.

Heath's decision to go for a snap election in Britain opens up the possibility of a major upset of the whole Sunningdale appellation in Ireland.

The new 'power-sharing' Executive, the end result of Whitelaw's Carrot and Big Stick policy, never expected to face an election within two months of its formation. A majority of the Protestant working-class community and a substantial minority, if not an actual majority, of the Catholic working class community are hostile to the Executive. Fitt and Faulkner, with the backing of Britain's Gauleiter Pym, had hoped for a further period—perhaps stretching into years—to stabilise their hold. They were counting on a British Army victory over the IRA and a further disintegration of the Protestant opposition before facing the voters.

### MELTING POT

Now all this is in the melting pot once again. Although this election to select the 12 members from Northern Ireland who will sit in the British House of Commons will not in legal terms affect the new Assembly, in practice it will have an important impact. If it reveals that the Sunningdale agreement is massively

## Ireland: election threatens Sunningdale strategy

opposed by either of the two communities, this will undercut the talk of politicians like Fitt and Faulkner about the 'democratic mandate' and provide an added stimulus to resistance.

This, combined with the growing evidence that a section of the Protestant community is now willing to think the unthinkable, and

talk about an 'amalgamated Ireland' and 'getting the Brits out', could ruin Britain's whole strategy for Ireland.

Sinn Fein, under considerable pressure both from genuine grass-roots feeling, particularly in the Andersonstown and Ballymurphy areas, to boycott the election, and from some of the more sea-green incorruptibles to put up candidates in all 12 constituencies (including those held by Bernadette Devlin and Frank McManus), has decided not to 'participate' in the election.

### NON-PARTICIPATION

The meaning of this 'non-participation' will vary from constituency to constituency. Sinn Fein President Rory Brady has made it clear that Sinn Fein would not mount any campaign urging voters to boycott the poll, and it can be assumed that in this situation candidates like Albert Price, father of Dolours and Marion Price, should be able to count on enough support to topple Gerry Fitt from his West Belfast perch.

This will depend on how many voters the pro-British Northern Ireland Labour Party can gain among those sections of the Protestant workers, particularly in engineering and shipbuilding, who are concerned that any break

with the British connection would lead to unemployment in these industries.

Elsewhere, the SDLP has deliberately decided to split the anti-Unionist vote and give the seat to Unionist candidates so as to defeat militant, anti-imperialist spokesmen like Frank McManus and Bernadette Devlin.

This makes it almost certain, before the counting has even begun, that the Loyalist anti-Sunningdale candidates should take at least five seats, with another two possible. If Devlin and McManus can retain their seats, despite the splitting tactics of the pro-British SDLP, this would mean upwards of seven out of 12 seats returning anti-Sunningdale members.

Such a massive rejection of Sunningdale, if coupled with a defeat of the Tories in Britain and the return of a Labour government faced with the growing mood in the labour movement for a withdrawal of troops from Ireland, could spell the total defeat of British strategy in Ireland.

Even in the event of a Tory victory, a massive rejection of Sunningdale would remove one of the main props of its carefully conceived package solution for the Irish problem.

SEAN REED

All parliamentary elections are a fraud. They offer to the working class a choice between v

Dave Bailey, Richard Brinsley, and Robin Blackburn examine the L

# THE GREAT PARLI



## HEATH: THE JOKERS UP HIS SLEEVE

'I know that the miners themselves are democrats,' said Heath. 'It is therefore especially disappointing that the politically motivated arguments of some of their leaders should have prevailed.'

Heath was referring, of course, to one of the central targets of his election campaign—the reds under Gormley's bed. And, it seems, under the bed of every other bureaucrat in the labour movement.

'The great majority of you are fed up to the teeth with them and the disruption they cause,' Heath generously informed us. 'The election gives you a chance to make it clear to these people how you feel.'

### SUBVERSION

Even our poor old moderate Harold Wilson couldn't escape the storm. Attacking the motion of support for the Clay Cross councillors passed at the last Labour Party conference, Heath said: 'A party which passes such a motion—a party which sets itself up in defiance of Parliament—is a party which is subverting the high standards of British public life.'

The attack reached the most absurd lengths. 'Throughout the last Parliament, they supported every inflationary wage claim... They have backed the law-breakers, and undermined the moderates on every important occasion.' Not even Heath can seriously believe all this. It will certainly come as a surprise to trade unionists and to the Clay Cross councillors betrayed by the Labour leadership.

The Tories' election tactic is very simple. They aim to take advantage of the widespread faith in Parliament and the law among workers to browbeat the miners and the railmen into calling off their struggles, and to obscure from the working class the real magnitude of the attack they are preparing.

In the name of electoralism and respect for Parliament, ASLEF has been persuaded to bring its struggle to a halt. The miners have been pressured into running a very defensive picketing campaign, even though this opens up picket lines to attacks by police and scabs. Some

miners' leaders have openly denounced those, such as students, who have offered to join the picket lines. The miners' leaders have also been browbeaten into accepting the principle of the relativities report and the Pay Board, and therefore Phase 3, for other workers.

### CLASS COMBATIVITY

The pretence that the Communist Party members in the trade unions are using industrial struggle to overthrow the Government and the election process serves a very useful purpose. It helps the Tories to conceal the fact that it is the combativity of the working class as a whole which really concerns them.

The measures which a new Tory Government would introduce to attack the trade unions as a whole would be extremely severe. Yet the only proposals they have made at all precise are those for electing union leaders by postal ballot. The point here is to try to isolate those militants (many of whom believe in Parliament) who play a leadership role among rank and file workers.

The other proposal—for cutting benefits to strikers—is less precise, but the Tories can make out that it is only aimed at the 'wildcats' and 'trouble-makers' who stir up unofficial strikes since unions will be more careful about which strikes they make official. Some backbench Tories have also made noises about curbing free speech for communists.

The real proposals are kept in the background.

What, for instance, are the Tories going to do about the 7 per cent threshold in Phase 3? Since October, when the threshold was introduced, retail prices have already risen by 3½ per cent. The Tories cannot allow even these automatic threshold increases to be triggered. After all their huff and puff about defending Phase 3 and the rule of law, Phase 3 will have to be amended when it comes to something which might benefit the working class.

### WAGE FREEZE

If Heath wins the election, he will have to settle with the miners. But he can take advantage of the collapse of working class morale which his victory will cause to force harsh conditions on the miners. The price demanded from the TUC will be high. Sooner or later, a total wage freeze will be given consideration by a new Tory Cabinet.

The red scare is an attempt to divide the working class movement and disarm it in the face of the coming economic attacks. On all the central economic questions of concern to the working class, the Tories remain completely silent.

Barber has refused to give a guarantee that he will not institute a total wage freeze, abolish threshold agreements, or extend VAT to cover food. On prices, they say nothing can be done by a Government in Britain in the face of rising world commodity prices. They remain silent

on the bankruptcies and unemployment which will be used to attack workers in the coming months.

### UNITED STRUGGLE

The Tories are out to cripple the organisations of the working class and shift the cost of capitalism's problems on to workers' backs in the most determined way. No amount of demagoguery about Parliament should be allowed to conceal the need to get rid of the Tories and step up a united struggle to defend living standards.

The divisions between different groups of workers about the best means of doing this—in line with Parliamentary law or against it—will be decided by a political struggle within the workers' movement.

## WILSON: NO ACES TO PLAY

Labour has conducted an uninspiring campaign but not because Wilson is a tired old man. It is because the Labour Party is buffeted between the conflicting needs of the working class and the capitalists.

In the 1960s, this caused some seasickness. In the present crisis of British capitalism, it can only cause shipwreck.

Not since the 1920s and 1930s has it been so difficult for Labour to conceal the scale and seriousness of the class confrontation behind a paper mask of 'national unity' and 'new social compact'.

If Labour wins the present election it will not be because it is able to convince either workers or capitalists that it has positive policies but only because the working class understands the urgency of getting rid of the Tories.

### MINERS AS 'SCAPEGOAT'

To the capitalists, Labour is ducking all the main issues. Wilson's analysis is that the miners are just a 'scapegoat' for the Government; a device for diverting attention away from Heath's 'mismanagement' of the economy. The whole confrontation with the miners was 'unnecessary'. The problem flows from Heath's personality—the man who stirs up militancy wherever he goes'.

But the big company bosses understand perfectly well that enforcing Phase 3 and beating the miners is the only way to avoid a new wages offensive by the working class. They know that even in the immediate term, the decision by the engineers whether to take serious action for their claim depends on what happens to the miners' struggle.

They know the miners must be smashed because the real issue at stake is not Heath's personality but the combativity of the working class, for which the miners are a symbol.

### NO VIABLE POLICY

They also know that Wilson has no viable policy for controlling the wages offensive. A voluntary incomes policy, in which the trade union bureaucracy replace the Industrial Relations Act and the pay laws as policemen, will break down under the pent-up deluge of working class demands.

Wilson is making a desperate effort to convince the capitalists otherwise, and Len Murray has openly and cynically talked about a voluntary deal with the CBI and a future Labour Government.

But even Wilson's useful services in getting ASLEF's executive to call off industrial action and go to arbitration, were dismissed by Heath as nothing but an election gimmick. It didn't prove that Labour could deliver the long-term goods.

The capitalists understand that State regulation of wages is crucial. To abolish the pay laws, the Industrial Relations Act, and try to turn the clock back to 'free collective bargaining' would mean only that the working class offensive would get under way again, making it even more difficult for the capitalists to shift the burden of the deepening economic crisis on to the working class.

But Wilson now appears even more ridiculous, for Reg Prentice virtually conceded on television that some statutory backing to incomes policy would be necessary 'if the voluntary policy broke down'. So Labour's policy amounts to 'giving another try' to policies already known to be useless.

### LABOUR 'WRECKERS'

To the capitalists, Heath is right when he says: 'The total effect of Labour's present policies would be to wreck the economy, undermine the free society, and accelerate the present inflation beyond the point of no return.' The return of Labour would be a 'national disaster'.

Labour's posturing before the big bosses and the financiers is absurd. But Labour's attitude to the working class involves outright lying, scabbing, and distortion. The first big lie is Wilson's attempt to blame the Tories for the economic crisis. In a month where the output prices of industry rose by 2½ per cent, while input costs rose by 17 per cent (having yet to be passed on to the consumer), and in a year

ous bourgeois leaders when what is required is an entirely different system of political power. and manoeuvres of the three major parties in the election campaign

# PARLIAMENTARY TRICK



where unemployment is expected to rise to two million, Wilson's prattle about the crisis being 'brought about by a Government which has consistently sought to govern against the will of the British people and not with their consent', is sheer dishonesty.

It can only disarm the working class movement. It is not Government policy which has brought about the economic crisis. It is a crisis of the system. No amount of talk about Heath's 'petulant personality' will change that.

These lies allow Wilson to obscure the main issue: what decisive solutions are needed? Not even the Labour left has been wheeled out to spout on about nationalising the big companies and instituting 'workers' control'. It is the Labour right who have conducted the national campaign, while those like Benn have been shovelled off to their own constituencies.

## ANOTHER BIG LIE

Labour has concentrated instead on the need to control prices and to introduce mild social reforms on such matters as pensions and housing. But here again there is a big lie.

Labour promises to 'exercise firm control over prices'. What they have not identified are the items which are to be subsidised and by how much. They have not even promised a price freeze! With the current rise in world commodity prices, any serious control over prices by this means would soon cut into the other items of Labour's programme.

Labour refuses to spell out the implications of this. *The real issue is which class will pay.*

The debate between Healey and Barber about financing Labour's programme was thoroughly false. It is not a matter of how much money can be raised by taxing the rich, but the reaction from the rich that this will provoke. Investors will save or export their capital rather than invest in the face of higher taxation. Production will decline, unemployment rise, and the working class will once again bear the cost. The central issue is: *How are the ruling class to be made to pay?*

When Healey spoke about taxing the rich until they 'howl', Wilson replied by saying he didn't want to hurt anybody! In reply to Heath's attacks on the Labour Party for capitulating to those who broke the law, such as the Clay Cross councillors, Wilson replied that it was the Labour Party who had most consistently defended Parliament and the rule of law.

This is utterly useless. You can't solve the present crisis at the expense of the ruling class if you don't hurt anybody. *It involves breaking with the rule of law, and especially the law of private property.*

## EXPROPRIATION

Under capitalism, if the bosses can't pass on

the rise in imported raw material costs to the working class, the result is a cut back in investment and production and a rise in unemployment. Under a socialist planned economy resources need not be wasted in this way. But it is not possible to *buy out* the capitalists without yet again impoverishing the working class.

Only *expropriation* will do the job. This involves *breaking* the law, and it involves consciously mobilising the workers to smash the legal and extra-legal violence with which the ruling class will reply.

Wilson has eroded this question also. Instead, he has sided with Heath in attacking the militants in the unions and condemning the 'extremists—who have no respect for the rule of Parliament'.

This is Wilson's third big lie. He says that the main issue in the election is 'not the miners, the militants and the power of the unions'. Yet he admits that the whole social programme of Labour is designed to 'create the atmosphere' in which the 'Government could get the consent of the TUC' for a voluntary incomes policy.

In other words, the programme is a big con, designed to trap the working class movement into accepting further cutbacks in its standard of living while prices soar.

## COERCION

Far from the power of the unions being irrelevant, it is *only* the power represented by the trade unions, the power of the working class, which will be able to shift the burden on to the backs of the ruling class. This must involve the workers' movement taking a determined stand against Parliament and the rule of law and creating its own organs of violence and coercion.

# THORPE: GIVE ANOTHER SHUFFLE

Behind a smoke-screen of talk about 'community politics' the Liberal Party is attempting to cash in on Labour's political traditions. They are trying to sell the idea that the State can be the guardian angel of those groups who are

being squeezed by the capitalist crisis. They hope this strategy will win to them former Labour voters, particularly amongst unorganised workers and sections of the middle class.

## BUILDING CONTRACTORS

The vaunted Liberal concern for 'community politics' has not meant that Liberals have become militant proponents of extra-parliamentary agitation. Peter Hain discovered this when he sought to mount a campaign of harassment against the juggernaut lorries. He was repeatedly and vigorously denounced by almost every section of the Liberal Party.

This slogan really refers to the use of local government resources and powers to defend and advance local privileges and interests. In areas of Liberal advance like Liverpool many of the Party's councillors are local businessmen, especially building contractors. The local programmes they conveniently promote boost expenditure on such items as street repairs and sanitation.

The Liberal campaign seeks to translate into national terms the secret of their successes in local government. They insist that the State, and especially the taxation system can be used to defend those who are threatened by the 'monopoly power' of large companies and large unions. The Liberal manifesto outlines a scheme whereby the tax and social security systems would be merged. This would be used both to distribute tax credits to 'the needy' and to penalise 'inflationary wage settlements'. There are also many proposals for enlarging the powers of local government. The mortgage holder paying penal rates of interest is promised relief and students are offered larger grants through the new tax system.

## CLASS COLLABORATION

Liberal policy seeks to institutionalise class collaboration at every level from the board room to an incomes policy enforced by wide-ranging fiscal powers. The election by employees of company directors and a profit-sharing mechanism would, according to the Liberal manifesto, 'achieve the identification of employees' interests with those of the firm by providing a visible link between the immediate limitation of wage demands and the future prosperity which will be generated both by employees and share-holders as a result.'

But in case these 'co-partnership' schemes fail to have the desired effect of moderating wage militancy then they are to be backed up by the new fangled tax system. 'If average earnings per person (including fringe benefits) within a company rose faster than the agreed annual rate then both the employer and the employees concerned would have to pay an extra sur-

charge on their graduated National Insurance contributions, on a sliding scale according to the amount by which earnings had exceeded the norm.'

Implementation of this scheme would be hard to reconcile with the Liberals' declared policy of cutting down the size of the civil service. But this device for using the resources of the State and the taxation system for curbing trade union action could well be taken up by future Governments, whether the Liberals participate in them or not.

In both by-elections and local elections, the Liberals have shown that they can cut into Labour support. Labour's electoral support has traditionally rested on mobilisation of its trade union base and promises that the bourgeois State machine can be used to improve, or even transform, the capitalist system. The failure of the last Labour Government to bring about any significant improvement in the welfare services has undermined this appeal.

## CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE

But the rise of trade union militancy has forced Labour to cultivate its traditional base more closely. In particular the Labour leaders have been forced to abandon any open commitment to a statutory incomes policy. The problem for the Labour leadership is that as the Party becomes more identified with the trade unions, Labour's reformist appeals to the unorganised sections of the working class and the middle class become less convincing, leaving openings for the Liberals.

The whole welfare side of traditional Labour policy was lifted from the Liberals in the first place, from the so-called 'gas and water socialism' of the Fabians to the Beveridge Report. The Liberals are now in a strong position to present themselves as the more convincing champion of a State machine lifted above the 'sectional interests' of big capital and organised labour.

The attempts made by the Labour Party to project itself as the agency of voluntary class collaboration and national harmony cannot really compensate for its waning credibility as the protector of the welfare state. The only way for Labour to recuperate the situation is one that is anathema to the parliamentary Labour Party: that is to encourage the development of independent working class action, as the Clay Cross councillors tried to do.

Liberal demagoguery represents a real threat to the working class movement. It can only be effectively countered by organising tenants, claimants and housewives quite independently of the bourgeois State for militant, extra-parliamentary action against the deterioration of living standards and other expressions of the capitalist crisis.

# The Revolutionary Left and the elections

## 1. Workers Revolutionary Party

Last Tuesday afternoon, the plush banquet hall of the New Ambassadors Hotel echoed with the revolutionary rhetoric of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). Gerry Healy, National Secretary of the new organisation, formed last November to supersede the Socialist Labour League, was conducting the WRP's election press conference.

Healy began by painting a vivid picture of the political situation. He made a number of correct points on the deep-going crisis of capitalism and the imminent slashing of working class living standards in Britain. He exposed the vicious Tory schemes for police and military repression, and declared that the reason why the WRP was fielding candidates was to drag these conspiracies into the light of day, since none of the main parties was prepared to do this.

The WRP leader is given to apparently inexplicable exaggerations in his utterances, distortions which can only weaken the credibility of the revolutionary left in the working class. He claimed that right now concentration camps were being built outside the six main cities in the country. But he refused to give any

evidence for this. He then likened the present election to the situation in Germany on the eve of Hitler's seizure of power. Nevertheless, the WRP's paper, *Workers Press*, has done valuable work in highlighting the facts about the repressive drive of the ruling class. The Manifesto of the WRP correctly states: 'The scab force that the state is recruiting and protecting today will become the fascist bands of tomorrow'.

But what policies was the WRP proposing to guide the struggle of the working class, whichever party wins the election? How, in the coming months, is the working class movement to throw back the attacks on pickets? How, in the coming months, is the working class movement to deal with the fascist National Front and the racist movement? How, in the coming months, are working people to achieve effective action against incomes policies, redundancies and price rises? How, in the coming months, can a movement be built against the imperialist war in Ireland?

But instead of dealing with these questions, Healy devoted the rest of his speech to an exposition of general socialist ideas. Most of

these ideas were excellent, and have indeed been championed by the revolutionary marxist movement in many countries for many decades. And of course many of these ideas are not put forward by the Stalinists.

Healy called for the nationalisation of the economy under workers control; for the abolition of the standing army; for a struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe; for a workers' militia, and other such general socialist ideas. Such propaganda is a very positive feature of the WRP's campaign. It helps to strengthen the general socialist propaganda of all the tendencies on the revolutionary left. However, discerning listeners could not help noting some glaring omissions from the WRP's list of socialist doctrine.

There was no mention of soviet power, for example, although it is scarcely conceivable that the standing army could be destroyed without the establishment of such organs of a workers state.

The National Secretary sat down without having explained how the working class movement was to throw back the capitalist attacks and open the road to the implementation of the general socialist ideas he had spelled out. *Red Weekly* has always considered that in order to approach the task of disbanding the

standing army, it is necessary for the working class movement today to have a policy for defending its picket lines and dealing with the scab squads. Yet there did not seem to be any policy in the WRP manifesto for defending pickets.

When Healy was asked why he had proposed no plan for defending pickets, he replied that the Manifesto spelt out very clearly how pickets were to be defended: by disbanding the standing army! (Miners' pickets please note!)

This was only the start. As the question period went on it became clear that the WRP leader does not feel the need for putting forward a concrete line for intervention in the current class struggle. The WRP have no policy for building up a mass movement to withdraw troops from Ireland; no policy for combatting racism; no policy for dealing with the National Front.

How, then, does the WRP leader propose to reach the situation when the workers' movement can implement the socialist programme, if it is not through a fighting intervention in the class struggle today? This question was put, and, in the full glare of the film cameras and press microphones, the National Secretary gave his answer: 'In this election', he declared, 'we are fielding only a handful of candidates. But capitalism is finished—gone for good, and soon millions of workers will turn to our policies. In a year or two, at the next election, the Workers Revolutionary Party will be fielding 500 candidates. Then we will introduce legislation which will be supported by the working class and the middle class, and we will nip any military conspiracies in the bud.'

Everything fell into place: the WRP's policy for the working class after the election is to turn to the WRP and build it into a mass party so that it can do much better at the next election! All the talk about being on the verge of fascism is a crude attempt to pull social democratic workers over to support a small group on the far left like the WRP. Meanwhile, the WRP must posture as a mass party and refuse to support the candidates of another small revolutionary group, the IMG.

One other question remained unanswered in the mind of the *Red Weekly* reporter. If the Tories win would the WRP re-open the protest campaign that *Workers Press* has been running recent months against the fact that the Tory government has had no electoral mandate for its anti-working class policies? Before he could ask this question Healy closed the conference. The *Red Weekly* reporter left, chewing over a remark that Vanessa Redgrave had managed to edge in, despite the near monologue of her leader. She had naively said that she had joined the WRP because she was fed up with protest politics.

OLIVER MACDONALD



WRP National Secretary Gerry Healy speaking at press conference—refused to give any evidence that concentration camps are being built

## 2. International Socialists

The International Marxist Group has decided to vote for the candidates of the WRP in the constituencies where the IMG is not fielding candidates. In other areas the IMG will be voting Labour. The International Socialists have taken a different position. They are voting Labour right across the board. They are not putting up any candidates of their own, and although this has not been made clear in *Socialist Worker*, the IS leadership has informed *Red Weekly* that it will call for its members to vote for Labour against the candidates of the IMG and the WRP.

Who is right? Who is putting forward a consistent socialist tactic for working class militants?

Like the IMG, the IS is not calling for a Labour vote because it believes a Labour Government would improve the lot of the working people. Only social democrats hold that view.

Their National Committee statement on the election (*Socialist Worker*, 16 February) states: 'An electoral victory [for the Tories] would signify that many workers were blaming their organisations for the crisis. It would make the miners feel isolated from other sections of workers. It would give encouragement to every non-unionist, every scab and every racist. And to this extent it would weaken the ability of all workers to resist cuts in living standards, anti-union laws and attacks on picketing.' These arguments are correct.

But this is only part of the fight that socialists must wage in this election. As the IS statement also points out, it is necessary to build a mass revolutionary movement because only such a movement can solve the problems which working people face today. Therefore a consistent socialist intervention in the election must get this across—what the statement calls 'the full-blooded socialist case'. The question is: must this fight be restricted to articles and speeches, or can it also be expressed at the ballot box?

The IMG says that it can and must. It can be done by putting up candidates in safe Labour seats and fighting for the highest possible revolutionary vote in such seats. A really substantial vote for revolutionary candidates in these constituencies, combined with a massive Labour vote in the other constituencies, would constitute the best possible result for the socialist movement in this election.

It would represent the massive class rejection of the Tories that the IS statement very rightly wants. But it will also signify a growing working class repudiation of the Labour leadership's anti-working class policies and a rising determination to fight for revolutionary solutions on the part of the working class. That surely is what revolutionaries should want—not simply a vote in defence of the unions, but also a vote for 'full-blooded socialist' policies.

But, what about the danger of losing some Labour seats to the Tories through putting up revolutionary candidates? There could indeed be such a 'danger'. But a moment's thought shows that the political meaning of such a 'danger' would not be dangerous at all. In the constituencies where the revolutionary candidates are standing it would require many thousands of Labour votes going to the revolutionaries, and no gains by Labour from the Tories, before the Labour candidate could be defeated.

### ELECTION FUND DRIVE APPEAL

The IMG's intervention in the elections is our most ambitious effort to date. Already it is clear that our campaign is playing a vital role in strengthening the revolutionary voice in the labour movement. But to continue this essential work we urgently need more funds. NOW, Please rush donations to: IMG Election Fund, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

In Newham, for example, if the IMG got 5,000 votes and if, after all that the Tory Government had done in the last four years, Reg Prentice was not able to win any votes from the Tories, then Prentice would lose. What would be the class meaning of that result? Would it demoralise class conscious workers in Newham, make them think they were more isolated, make them think that working people in Newham were turning against their trade unions? Or would it rather be a massive demonstration of the bankruptcy of the Labour leadership and the fact that workers were increasingly looking left for solutions?

Of course, it would be different if the revolutionary left put up candidates in marginal constituencies, where the outcome hung on a handful of votes. A Tory victory there might not signify any significant shift to the left by workers. That is why the IMG and WRP are putting forward candidates in safe Labour seats.

In this election it is vitally necessary that revolutionary solutions are fought for to prepare the working class for the bitter confrontations and upheavals ahead. And yet the leadership of the International Socialists has decided not to go beyond speeches, articles and posters to make a revolutionary option available to working class militants. Worse, the IS leaders have decided to urge their supporters to vote against the candidates of the IMG and the WRP, in spite of the fact that a big vote for the revolutionary left candidate would strengthen the fight of all socialist organisations against the disastrous policies of the Labour leaders.

The IMG has big differences with the policy of the WRP leaders. But a worker who votes for the WRP would be voting for revolutionary politics. No one could dispute that such a vote would mean a rejection of the reformism of the Labour and Communist Parties. The IS membership may well want to heavily criticise the policies of the IMG and the WRP. But will they want to vote against them and for the Labour Party? What would be the class meaning of such a vote?

OLIVER MACDONALD

## WHAT'S ON

**SOCIALIST WOMAN:** New Spring issue out now. Articles include General Strike, SPUC, Equal Pay, etc. Orders to: 21 Highview Court, College Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex. Price 10p plus 3p p&post, 10% off on orders for more than 10 copies, sent post free.

**'NATIONALISATION OR EXPROPRIATION?'** pamphlet translated from original by ex-Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. Copies still available from: Alex Stein, c/o 72 Cambridge Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham. All profits to Red Weekly Fund Drive.

**BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and *Lata* (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mullvadén, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

**LONDON RED FORUM:** Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Pictor pub, Caledonian Road, N1. 15 mins Kings X tube). CANCELLED THIS WEEK. Tues 5 March: 'The struggle in Ireland'.

**'CONTRACEPTION & ABORTION'** teach-in, Saturday 23 February at YMCA, Ellison Place, Newcastle, from 2-6 pm. Speakers from medical profession. Organised by Tyne-side Socialist Woman Action Group.

**EDINBURGH SOCIALIST FORUM:** 'Fighting inflation'—what practical steps can trade unionists, housewives and students take against rising prices? Tuesday 26 February at 7.30 pm in the Trades Council, Picardy Place (top of Leith Walk).

**'UKRAINE: UNREST & REPRESSION'**—pamphlet produced by the Committee to defend Ukrainian Prisoners, price 15p plus p&post from: 83 Gregory Crescent, Elham, London SE9.

**'WOMEN AGAINST THE TORIES'** Public meeting Monday 25 February at 7.30 pm in the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle. Speakers from Boldon NUM. Organised by Tyne-side Socialist Woman Action Group.

**'WOMEN AND THE IRISH STRUGGLE'**: Public meeting and discussion, Sunday 24 February, 5 am at Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road. Rose McArdle from the Ardoyne will speak, and wives and relatives of Irish political prisoners will be present. Details: Women on Ireland Collective, 435 2057.

# SOLZHENITSYN HAILED AS ENEMY OF SOCIALISM

With the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn the West is rejoicing: its anti-Communist arsenal can claim one more piece of ammunition. Those who expelled Rudi Dutschke, refused to receive Chilean refugees, and introduced a notorious anti-immigration act now profess disgust with this 'insult to the civilised world'. Heath has declared that Solzhenitsyn would be welcomed should he wish to settle in England.

What he omits to point out is the treatment meted out to the last exile from the USSR, Leon Trotsky, who was hounded from one capitalist country to another and denied any stay whatever in Britain. The message is clear: Solzhenitsyn is being welcomed and feted, not because he is a refugee from 'tyranny,' but as an enemy of socialism.

## IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Nevertheless, the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn raises important questions for socialists as to the nature of the Soviet Union. The capitalist press orgy must not be used as a pretext for evading serious discussion on his deportation in the working class movement.

Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Soviet Union following the publication of the first part of his book *Gulag Archipelago*. In the Soviet Union most of the facts described in the book are unknown to the mass of people. Hence the heat it has created, and the treatment its author has received. This expulsion is only one act in the systematic repression of all independent working class activity and dissent by intellectuals; repression which reached its climax in 1972 with the arrest of hundreds of dissidents in Ukraine and the attempt to dismantle the whole of the samizdat network.

The slanderous attacks on Solzhenitsyn's book in the Soviet press have provoked a reaction in dissident circles in Moscow. Most important have been the attacks on the Kremlin's action by Yevtushenko (one of the more popular poets who has hitherto toed the Party line) and Roy Medvedev, a prominent Marxist historian. On 6 February, Medvedev issued a 7,000 word review praising Solzhenitsyn's contribution to the history of Stalinism and defending his right to publish such a work.



Pictures of Solzhenitsyn with West German author Heinrich Boll were flashed across the world — he has been welcomed and feted as an enemy of socialism

Medvedev said that prior to his first arrest, Solzhenitsyn considered himself to be a Marxist, but that he lost his belief while being imprisoned. But, Medvedev added: 'Marxism will certainly not perish for the loss of one of its former adherents. We even think that Marxism will only benefit from debate with such an opponent as Solzhenitsyn.'

Medvedev has also gone further in criticising Solzhenitsyn's identification of Stalinism with Leninism. In *Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitsyn writes: 'In the years before prison and in prison itself, I thought for a long time that Stalin had given a fateful direction to the course of the Soviet state. Then Stalin quietly died. But how much has the course of our ship of state changed in fact? The particular personal imprint he gave to events was dismal stupidity, wilfulness and self-glorification. Otherwise, he simply followed exactly in the footsteps.'

Medvedev replies: 'Stalin did not "follow in the footsteps." In the very first years after the revolution he did not always follow in Lenin's footsteps. And certainly afterwards, with every step he led the party astray. 'Stalinism in many respects negates—and is the bloody annihilation of—Bolshevism and all revolutionary forces. In a certain sense, it is a real counter-revolution.'

Medvedev also adds: 'I do not very much like these [religious] ideals of Solzhenitsyn. I am deeply convinced that for the

foreseeable future, our society should be built on a combination of socialism and democracy, and that specifically the development of Marxism and scientific Communism will allow creation of the most just human society.'

## BRITISH CP

The reaction of the British Communist Party has been to declare that they oppose dealing with dissidents like Solzhenitsyn by administrative and punitive methods: 'in our view, dissidents should be handled by political discussion. (*The Times*, 14 February). However, this protest is only an abstract plea intended for public consumption. After all, it would be difficult for them to explain that the Soviet bureaucracy cannot behave otherwise, for fear of exposing its past crimes and revealing the repressive character of the regime. Any real discussion would have to take up not just the present reactionary positions of Solzhenitsyn, but the whole history of bureaucratic dictatorship which Solzhenitsyn refers to in his own way.

No, our task is not to give advice to the Soviet bureaucracy about how—in its own interest and in the interest of its friends who seek alliances—it should behave a little more discreetly. Our task, and that of any real communist, is to explain why, concretely, it is impossible for the Soviet bureaucracy to allow any criticism; why they can't combat reactionary ideas in a communist way; and why so many million tons of coal, plus so many dams built, plus so many peasants educated, is not necessarily equal to socialism. On the contrary, the building of socialism demands above all else the active involvement of the mass of the working people—that is to say, the utmost development of workers' democracy at all levels.

Juliet Wyrter

## LED PARTY ASTRAY

Medvedev replies: 'Stalin did not "follow in the footsteps." In the very first years after the revolution he did not always follow in Lenin's footsteps. And certainly afterwards, with every step he led the party astray. 'Stalinism in many respects negates—and is the bloody annihilation of—Bolshevism and all revolutionary forces. In a certain sense, it is a real counter-revolution.'

Medvedev also adds: 'I do not very much like these [religious] ideals of Solzhenitsyn. I am deeply convinced that for the

## Death of Swedish comrade

Kenth-Ake Andersson, a founding member of the League of Revolutionary Marxists of Sweden (RMF), is dead. His death, which came suddenly after a short period of illness, is a great loss to Swedish Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

Comrade Andersson was the editor of the RMF's theoretical magazine, and a frequent contributor to the RMF's newspaper, *Mulbadern*. All too few of his articles have been translated and made available to a broader public: through the magazines *Quatrième Internationale* and *Intercontinental Press*.

His most important contribution to the building of the Swedish Trotskyist movement was a long series of articles, pamphlets and a book answering the various Stalinist slanders which still blind the minds of thousands of young revolutionary militants. In his book, *The Rebirth of the Lie*, which was an answer to a Maoist book called *Marxism or Trotskyism*, comrade Andersson not only exposed the bankruptcy of the Maoist 'theories' and slanders, but also made significant contributions to Marxist theory, especially on the question of culture and art. Neither his book, nor any of his many articles written between 1969 and 1974, were ever answered by the Maoists/Stalinists, and this polemic was an important factor in the weakening of these currents in the Swedish left.



During the last years of his life comrade Andersson was deeply engaged in studies on the development of Swedish social democracy. Some of the first results of this work have already appeared in various articles, but the bulk remains in unfinished manuscript form. Other comrades will continue his work, taking up his pen as others pick up the rifle of a fallen comrade.

## Strike wave hits French colony

France's 'colonial problem' flared dramatically again last week when police opened fire on a group of strikers in the Caribbean island of Martinique, killing one agricultural labourer and wounding another two.

Martinique, one of the group of islands known as the Antilles, has been the scene of a series of strikes since late last year. The major focus in this strike wave has been the struggle of the workers at the *France-Antilles* newspaper, one of a chain owned by a former Nazi collaborator and MP, M. Hersant. But numerous other groups have been drawn into struggle during this period—notably workers on the sugar plantations, building workers, and electricity workers.

This movement culminated on Tuesday 12 February in a general strike called by the official trade union organisations. Limited by the bureaucrats to a one-day event, it was intended as a kind of warning shot to the bosses to make a few more concessions if they wanted to avoid trouble in the future. However many workers opposed this perspective, recognising the need for an ongoing focus to unite the various struggles. It was one of these workers, Perrier Ilmany, who died when police opened fire on a picket trying to keep the strike going on one of the sugar plantations.

The French authorities are now quite clearly preparing to use the betrayals of the trade union leaders to mount a witch-hunt against the leading rank-and-file militants. Last Friday, a statement published by the Ministry for Overseas Territories claimed that: 'The trade union organisations have been outflanked by wildcat groups, as is shown by a leaflet distributed by the Communist Party, which calls on its supporters to stay calm and beware of provocateurs.' The number one target here is the GRS (Groupe Revolution Socialiste—Socialist Revolutionary Group), a Trotskyist group which recently affiliated to the Fourth International.

What most alarms the French authorities about the GRS is that while its influence in the trade unions is still quite limited, its internationalist, socialist perspective has had a dramatic impact in the struggles of the last few months. It has been particularly prominent in organising support around the *France-Antilles* strike, and perhaps its greatest achievement is that it has successfully challenged the traditional rivalry fostered by the authorities between the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The GRS recently played the leading role in organising a joint strike of school students on the two islands.

The latest struggles have raised very sharply the question of permanent revolution and the need to develop a socialist perspective for the struggle against French colonialism. In connection with this, the GRS at its recent conference adopted the slogan for a federation of Socialist States of the Caribbean. It is precisely because such a perspective cuts through nationalist rhetoric and poses the need for a sharp break with imperialism that the authorities are now preparing to crack down on the revolutionaries. But the massive response to the death of Perrier Ilmany shows that this will by no means be an easy task. Combined with the domestic problems of the French regime, it is no wonder that the parallel of Algeria is already being openly discussed.

JOHN MARSTON

**'WOMEN & THE TORY OFFENSIVE'**: 25-page pamphlet analysing the Tory offensive against women workers and women in the home, and taking up the immediate struggle. Price 15p inc. postage—10p for orders of six or more—from: IMG Women's Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

**SHREWSBURY & MINERS**: Benefit social, Friday 1 March at 8 pm in Nightingale pub, Nightingale Road, Wood Green, London N22. All welcome. Organised by Tottenham IMG.

**'FIGHT THE TORIES—Back the Miners'** Public meeting, Saturday 23 February, 8 pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (near Holborn tube). Speakers include Jack Collins (NUM Executive), a Labour candidate, and a member of NUS Executive. Organised by NUS London Student Organisation, Miners Solidarity Committee.

**IRISH POLITICAL HOSTAGES** Campaign picket of British Medical Association, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1 on Sunday 24 February at 2.30 pm, to protest against refusal of BMA to comment on ethics of its members involved in force-feeding of Winchester prisoners.

**REVOLUTIONARY PARTY** Saturday 23 February at 8 pm, 14 Tregarva Road, London SW11 (Clapham Common tube or 37 bus to Judd St). Admission 15p (10p to *Red Weekly*, 5p to London Student Organisation, Miners Support Committee).

**PERFORMERS (M&F) NEEDED** by 'The Combination' at the Albany Empire: a new community cabaret theatre. Singing essential. Instrument/strong personality/experience preferable. Write plus photo Jenny Harris, The Albany, Creek Road, London SE8.

**'CRITIQUE' SEMINAR**: David Yaffe on 'The economic debate of the 1920s in the Soviet Union', Friday 22 February at 7.30 pm in Room S175, St Clements Building, London School of Economics.

**EIGHT WOMEN ON TRIAL**: Arrested 13 January and charged with threatening behaviour, obstruction, assault, and actual bodily harm, after being refused drinks in a pub. Come to Maryebone Magistrates' Court at 10 am on 27 Feb and demonstrate your support. Also money needed for defence fund—send to: St Johns Wood Defence Fund, c/o Womens Liberation Workshop, 38 Earlham Street, London WC2.

## International Marxist Group



(British Section of the Fourth International)

97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

## MACLARENS - NUM STRIKE CENTRE ?

The Occupation Committee at Maclaren's Controls in Glasgow has offered the facilities of the factory to the miners, including the use of telephones, the canteen, and duplicating equipment. The committee has informed the NUM that the premises could be run as a 'strike co-ordinating centre, as a base for the organisation of picketing, and for a publicity campaign in support of the miners.' The offer is being discussed by a number of miners' lodges.

The occupation of Maclaren's, a subsidiary of the International Tele-

phone and Telegraph Company, began 15 weeks ago after the management had initiated a systematic campaign to smash union organisation, and this week a mass meeting rejected a management proposal for 150 redundancies, with only nine workers voting in favour.

A contingent from Maclaren's joined the student grants demonstration in Glasgow earlier this month, and regular collections are now being made in local factories, with a conscious attempt on the part of the occupiers to link their fight with other struggles against Phase 3.

'We cannot separate our fight from the issues presently before the working class movement,' a leaflet states, 'the Tories' attacks on living standards through incomes policy; the attacks on the right to picket at Shrewsbury; and the Government's national lockout to try and isolate support for the miners.'

'We at Maclaren's recognise that if these attacks are to be beaten back,' the leaflet continues, 'it will be by the combined efforts of the whole movement. This means that every struggle must be won and every struggle supported.'



Election address for Bob Purdie, IMG candidate for Glasgow, Queens Park, stuck up on window of occupied Maclaren's factory. The workers told Purdie: 'The other candidates have been here once - to get our vote. The IMG is here every day helping our struggle.' Half the signatures for Purdie's nomination papers came from Maclaren's workers. \*

## NEW SUPPORT FOR JEAN JEPSON

The fight to secure the re-instatement of militant Transport & General Workers convenor, Jean Jepson, is still being waged. She was sacked from the Armstrong Patent factory at Beverley, near Hull, five weeks ago for refusing to sign away the guaranteed 40 hour week and her members on to 3 days wages and two days dole or social security.

'I was acting on the official union instructions', she said, 'which were that no local branch official had the authority to sign away an agreement negotiated at national level'.

Last Friday members of the strike committee put out a leaflet calling for a mass meeting of all workers and denouncing the bogus election for new shop stewards. (This election was boycotted by over sixty percent of the workers.) The leaflet also pointed out that Jean had been elected convenor at a meeting where all the workers were present, whereas it was being suggested that the convenor would be elected only by the 'phantom' shop stewards committee.

On Tuesday pickets manned the gate. One person who ignored the pickets was Les Uppfield, the local T&GWU official, who calmly drove past them into the official car park. Perhaps Mr. Uppfield found the cold morning and the chilly reception of his members rather too much. The pickets' banners read: 'Elect your own convenor', 'No to management stooges', 'Re-instate Jean Jepson'.

Forty two workers left the factory to attend a meeting outside the gate where they heard Jean expose the blatant victimisation carried out against her and denounce the plans of the management to wipe out the guaranteed week. As she explained, they had been aided and abetted in this by the union.

By 9.00 o'clock, the union, with the agreement of the management, had secured the canteen for a special meeting to elect a new convenor. The forty two workers then returned

to attend this meeting. They were intent on pressing the union to take up the fight for Jean's re-instatement.

But the union and the management showed a solidarity that has never existed between union and workers. When they got to the door of the factory the forty two were told: 'Go Home. You are all suspended for three days.' The incensed workers insisted that they were members of the union and had every right to attend their union meetings. Even the versatile Mr. Uppfield could not find an answer to that. So in they all trooped.

All but one of the suspended workers have appealed against the suspension. Of the first 23 to appeal, 18 have had their period of suspension reduced from three days to one. So far none of the appeals has been won. All are being heard by a union-management committee, with the shop stewards invited along as 'observers' and Uppfield leading the union team. Also involved is the newly elected 'convenor', Tom Shields, getting his first taste of action in this management-led fight against his predecessor.

The union has still refused to declare an official dispute. This means that although feeling in the factory is running high against the dismissal, the workers feel isolated and without support.

The strike committee, encouraged by the latest walk out, has gathered signatures in the Hull labour movement from dockers' stewards at Fenner's Engineering and Hollis Brothers - where an almost identical dispute took place some few months ago - promising practical support in the event of action by workers at Armstrongs.

The Committee has plans to hold a picket of Bevin House, headquarters of the local T&GWU. They are not only asking the workers from Armstrongs to attend this picket but calling on militants from the entire Hull labour movement to give it their support.

There is no doubt that this case of victimisation can be won. It does, however, need support. That means strengthening the picket line, sympathetic strikes in other factories, a 'blacking' of all goods to and from Armstrongs, and a campaign within the trade union movement, particularly inside the T&GWU, for official strike action.

To date, only the Hull International Marxist Group has given real, practical support to this campaign. It is urgent that the other revolutionary groups throw their weight behind these workers and help carry this struggle forward.

## NUM LEADERSHIP HAMPERS STRIKE

The miners strike in the North East is still moving forward despite some vicious scab tactics and disruption created by official NUM policy.

At the National Coal Board's Gateshead offices, employing 1,000 clerical staff, 200 members of COSA, the mine-workers' clerical section, are defying the instructions of their regional organiser by continuing work. But they are becoming increasingly isolated. Last Monday COSA members in Northumberland joined others from Durham on the Gateshead picket, and members of the other white-collar union involved, APEX, have come out on strike.

At first the scabs were able to drive through the picket lines in special buses. But last week bus drivers in the T&GWU refused to cross the picket lines and now dump scabs some distance from the offices, forcing them to confront the pickets by walking into work.

But other buses still operate. One, owned by Northern Transport Ltd., drove straight at some pickets almost killing two. A management official drove his car at another, running over his foot.

The picket line is now about 20 strong, with some 15 miners from Marley Hill

Colliery and five COSA strikers, including three women telephonists. Asked about how women pickets were received by the men, telephonist Linda Rowntree told *Red Weekly*, 'You're treated as an equal, of course. A picket is a picket the world over.'

A serious problem for the development of the strike in the North East has been the attitude of the NUM leadership. The limitation of the NUM pickets to six excludes the mass involvement of the 1972 strikers. In Gateshead and many other areas visited by *Red Weekly* the ineffectiveness of six man picketing is raising the disgust of strikers. John Ragan, a COSA clerk at Gateshead explained: 'If we had 200 people, no one would get by. If they're so keen to work we should let them go in, then put 2,000 pickets on and not let the fuckers out till the strike's over.'

Problems of communication have also arisen because of insistence that contacts with other workers be handled via the official channels of the NUM. In Middlesbrough pickets complained that oil tankers were crossing the lines, only to discover from the T&GWU stewards that they had been given official instructions

## 'MINERS NOT A SPECIAL CASE'

On Saturday, 16 February, more than 300 people marched through the streets

of Canterbury in solidarity with the Miners. The demonstration, made up of miners, local militants and students, was organised by the Labour Party and supported by two local miners' lodges, ASTMS, AUEW, the Communist Party, the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group.

At the end of the march a meeting was addressed by a Labour Party Councillor, the President of the Kent NUM and CP member Joe Burke, the President of the Canterbury Students Union and IMG member John McGowan, and Kent area NEC member and CP member Jack Collins.

All speakers called for a vote for the

local Labour candidate, Mike Fuller who was present at the meeting.

John McGowan brought the fraternal greetings of Kent students to the meeting and re-affirmed the importance of students fighting and winning their own struggles in the battle against the Tory government, as this would be the best help students could give to the miners. He emphasised that the calling of a general election in no way diminished the importance of the miners' strike, whose victory would be a victory for students and the labour movement.

Jack Collins called for unity around the miners to replace the Tory government with a Labour government committed to socialist policies. He said that the TUC's decision to allow the miners to be treated as a special case was a great disservice to the trade union movement. He called for unity with other sections of the working class, and repeated a call which he has made at other meetings - that the miners should not go back until the Shrewsbury workers were out of jail.

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## SPECIAL PUBLICATION PLANS

In order to assure our readers of the best possible coverage of events in the crucial week ahead, there will be TWO, 4-page editions of *Red Weekly* next week. The first will appear on Tuesday, the second as soon as possible after the election result is known. BE SURE NOT TO MISS THEM!