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## 2,000 POLICE BREAK UP MAY DAY MARCH



Uniformed and plain clothes police lead away Trades Council secretary Beryl Huffingley

The Callaghan government chose the May Day holiday as the time to strike the latest blow at the democratic rights won by workers in centuries of bitter struggle.

On Saturday, Leeds police arrested Trades Council Secretary Beryl Huffingley for organising the traditional May Day march in defiance of a police ban.

The ban, supposedly directed against the National Front who had announced plans to demonstrate in the town a week earlier, had been imposed by the Chief Constable, and lasts until May 7.

But as similar bans in Tameside and in the London area have proved, such measures do nothing but provide protection and assistance for the fascists, while depriving the workers movement of the right to demonstrate freely and drive the fascists from the streets.

The previous Saturday in Leeds, 1,000 police had cordoned off an entire area of the city to protect a meeting of 57 National Front supporters from a hostile crowd of 600 anti-fascist demonstrators.

But even that operation was dwarfed by Saturday's huge police mobilisation against those workers that insisted on their right to march on May Day.

The 500 marchers who turned up on Woodhouse Moor in Leeds to defy the ban found themselves surrounded by 2,000 police, who had built a small fort on a raised part of the moor, and brought in ambulances, a canteen, horse boxes and Special Patrol Group thugs.

A huge special surveillance camera was pointed at the demonstrators, while a police helicopter flew overhead.

The march formed up and instructions were given to proceed. As soon as the march reached the public highway Trades Council Secretary Beryl Huffingley was arrested along with AUEW member Danny McKenna.

The order was immediately given by Trades Council bureaucrats for banners to be lowered, and to disperse to a protest meeting on the Town Hall steps.

The decision to march had been endorsed at the Leeds

Trades Council meeting by 100 votes to 3. It had been backed by eight other Trades Councils, by the TGWU Regional Committee, four AUEW District Committees and the Yorkshire Area NUM.

The police decision to enforce the ban on a demonstration overwhelmingly backed by the labour movement is a clear proof of the real meaning for the workers movement of state-imposed bans.

The entire strategy of the Lib-Lab government for continuing to cut workers living standards and worsen working conditions in the interests of British capitalism hinges upon its ability to prevent the independent mass mobilisation of the working class.

Up to now this objective has been pursued with the aid of TUC bureaucrats who have sabotaged every independent struggle against wage control, social service cuts, closures and redundancies.

But the emergence of massive working class hostility to the fascist National Front—which has been reflected in a series of major counter-demonstrations in various areas, and in the huge Anti Nazi League carnival—has created a new problem for the Lib-Lab

leaders.

Determined at all costs to head off a decisive confrontation between workers and the fascists in which workers would gain confidence in independent action, Labour ministers have resorted to bans on demonstrations that now give the fascists and the police an effective veto over any labour movement march.

It would now be virtually sufficient for the NF to call a counter-demonstration in order to ensure that a workers demonstration is banned—and that ban enforced by the full weight of the state repressive machinery.

Far from opposing these bans or explaining this state of affairs, the leaders of the Anti-Nazi League continue to call and even campaign for state bans on the National Front.

ANL spokesman Peter Hain was one of the first to welcome the two-month ban on all marches in the London area imposed at the time of the Ilford by-election.

This suicidal policy could soon give the reactionary Lib-Lab government the pretext for an

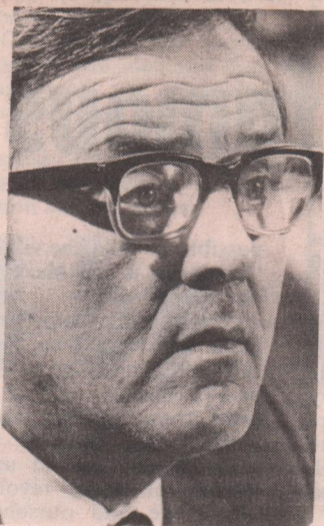


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Rees

almost complete ban on workers' democratic right to march—on top of other attacks embodied in the Criminal Law Act, the "Prevention of Terrorism" Act and the use of Official Secrets laws.

Meanwhile Home Secretary Rees has presided over a massive

strengthening of the state's repressive and strike breaking apparatus.

The picket-busting Special Patrol Group that savagely attacked Grunwick pickets last year has been built up under the watchful eye of Labour ministers; Labour leaders brought in the army to smash the firemen's strike; and now thousands of police are brought out to contain or prevent every demonstration by the labour movement.

The Leeds police operation took place in the same week as a military crackdown by occupying imperialist forces in West Belfast sealed off the Catholic ghetto areas in order to stop a demonstration by republican supporters, and arrested leading members of Provisional Sinn Fein.

Both in Britain and internationally the Lib-Lab government stands for repression and all-out defence of capitalism.

The warning is unmistakable. The whole workers movement must be mobilised to break this reactionary alliance between right wing Labour leaders and the Liberal Party that now threatens the most fundamental democratic rights.

Those trade union bodies that backed the Leeds march must be called on to take the lead in this fight, and to take action to defend the two victims of this latest round of repression.

## Speke: Confed leaders move in for the kill



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

3,000 jobs hang in the balance after last week's decision by union officials to concede to the closure of British Leyland's Triumph plant at Speke and seek improved redundancy payments.

Workers at the plant, who only two weeks ago voted to reject voluntary redundancy were headed off from adopting a clear policy of occupation to prevent the closure. They now face the task of mobilising immediately to stop officials auctioning off their jobs to Leyland management.

After weeks of deliberately fostering confusion and demoralisation among the

workforce had failed to prepare the ground for a peaceful sell-out, union bureaucrats at the mass meeting adopted the alternative strategy of tub-thumping 'left' speeches completely devoid of any policy capable of directing an all-out fight.

### Crocodile tears

The Leyland combine stewards committee chairman, Stalinist Derek Robinson, wept crocodile tears from the platform, proclaiming that "not a nut, not a bolt" would leave the plant if sackings took place.

But he steered well clear of any call to occupy the plant and summon active support from Leyland nationally and the Liverpool labour movement.

Robinson stayed shrewdly silent about his own role as chief advocate of the 'workers participation' set-up, whose report on productivity in Leyland 'fingered' Speke as one of the least productive plants.

Nor did he dwell on his enthusiastic support for the Edwardes rationalisation plan that threatens jobs not only in Speke but throughout the combine, including Robinson's own plant in Longbridge.

### Diverted

But by talking 'left' he succeeded in diverting Speke workers away from an all-out struggle to break the reactionary participation system and defeat the Edwardes plan.

Now the damage must be repaired at once. The Confed decision does not reflect the views of the membership.

Nor, apparently was it unanimous. TGWU delegates argued in favour of supporting the mass meeting decision to reject both redundancy terms and the principle of closure.

These representatives must now be forced to lead the struggle in the plant to defeat the sell-out plan. Speke stewards must immediately convene a mass meeting to explicitly reject all redundancies and adopt a policy of

closure.

A trade union committee must immediately be elected to force Leyland to open their books and reveal their long term plans for cuts in manning levels and sackings.

Such an investigation would reveal that no section will be immune from attack, and expose the huge profits being made by the privately owned component firms out of workers in the supposedly "nationalised" British Leyland, and spearhead the fight for a policy of work sharing on full pay and nationalisation of the private





# MOSCOW BACKING FOR CARRILLO

The Editor of the Soviet Communist Party daily *Pravda*, Victor Afanassiev, attended the Spanish CP Congress where he discovered, among other things, that "Eurocommunism does not exist".

This discovery obviously made him feel a whole lot better since when Carrillo's party officially threw the whole legacy of revolutionary socialism, Leninism, out of the window, Afanassiev could not find it in him to give more than the mildest rebuke.

"Lenin is the banner of the revolution", he said. "We cannot rejoice at the abandoning of Leninism by the PCE".

## Unity

His worry, he said, was that "a debate on principles may weaken the party. The strength of a Communist Party depends on its unity. I haven't found very much unity at this Congress. In fact, I have the impression that the discussion hasn't finished."

But that was as much rebuke as Afanassiev thought

necessary. Aside from that he bent over backwards to support Carrillo's position.

"After all", he said in an interview in *Le Monde*, "it's not words that count, but the policy that is followed".

## Abandoned

Afanassiev, of course, is quite aware that the Stalinist party on whose Central Committee he sits abandoned Leninism as long ago as did Carrillo's party, but hypocritically finds it impolite to say so.

So Afanassiev very strongly insisted that the Spanish CP had not in his view become a social democratic party.

"It continues in fact to define itself as a revolutionary party which struggles for socialism. And the policy it has followed up to now doesn't suggest that it has stopped being revolutionary. We shall see what happens".

The editor of *Pravda* knows better than anyone that to define the Spanish CP as non-revolutionary would be to brand the Soviet CP and all its satellite parties with the same name.

Because, as he explained in detail, the Soviet CP, like the Spanish, accepts the



Carrillo embracing veteran Stalinist La Passionaria at the conference

completely anti-Leninist strategy of the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism, even citing Stalin as an authority.

"Lenin", he lied, "did not rule out the peaceful road

to install socialism. If that wasn't applied in Russia it was because of the conditions of the time, most notably the absence of parliament.

"The October revolution itself resulted in very few deaths. It was imperialist reaction which obliged the people to take up arms.

"The way of arriving at socialism never depends on the peoples but on their adversaries. It is never peoples who want war . . .

"In his book *Eurocommunism and the State*, Carrillo quotes a letter from Stalin to Largo Caballero foreseeing the peaceful road to socialism. It was not the Popular Front which opened hostilities, but Franco. . .

"Lenin said that the main weapon of the working class was not violence but creative work".

## New conception

"It is a new conception of classes with which we agree because we are not sectarians, and we also believe it is positive to combine in this

The Fianna Fail government in the Irish Republic was elected to power last year on a populist platform which promised something to almost everybody.

In practice Jack Lynch's

administration has presided over a situation where most sections of Irish society have experienced substantial losses.

The strategy of the Fianna Fail has been based on further encouragement of international capital, already attracted to Ireland by the extremely favourable conditions for extracting profit from workers.

Capitalists can expect to gain a rate of profit which, at a comfortable 30% is no less than three times the international average!

Eager to sustain and, if possible, expand this figure, the Lynch government has recognised the necessity to impose state wage control as part of a systematic assault on the working class in Ireland.

This analysis has been confirmed by the constant pressure from strikes for higher wages and improved conditions.

Production at Fiat's plant has been stopped by a strike on wages which began on March 16, and solidarity action has thoroughly disrupted distribution of vehicles.

## Aer Lingus

During the same period 1,200 clerical and supervisory staff at Aer Lingus, members of the Workers' Union of Ireland, have also been on strike for higher wages.

Both in this dispute, and in the long running strike within the telecommunications industry, union leaders have refused to support effective picketing which could prevent management scabs from running a skeleton service.

The 6,000 members of the Irish Post Office Engineering Union have now been on strike for three months to secure revised terms for the introduction of new technology.

It is this action in particular which has provoked sharp cries from the bourgeoisie, incensed by this additional obstacle to their ability to extract surplus value from workers.

## Haven

In turn the Lynch government has responded by pressing ahead with its plans to preserve the Irish Republic as a haven of capitalist super-exploitation.

The Industrial Development Authority is to offer even greater incentives to overseas investors, while the government is in the process of setting up a Commission on Industrial Relations.

The aim of this commission is to establish far stricter state control over the labour movement—in particular by the 'rationalisation' of the present trade union structure, and the introduction of compulsory 'cooling off' periods as strikes develop, along with the other familiar paraphernalia of similar labour legislation internationally.

While each day more blatantly exposes the Fianna Fail as the dedicated agents of capitalism and implacable enemies of the working class in the south of Ireland, the occupation forces of British imperialism have continued their repression in the north as their part of the struggle to keep Ireland safe for capitalist exploitation.

Last week saw a renewed crackdown on republican forces with the arrest of 15 people—mainly members of Provisional Sinn Fein—in early morning raids.

Copies of *Republican News*, the Sinn Fein paper which had dared to publish articles exposing conditions and publicising protests at the Maze prison.

Then on Thursday British troops moved in to seal off Catholic areas of West Belfast in a bid to stop demonstrations in support of protesting Republican prisoners at the Maze, who are refusing to clean their cells.

## Independent action

Meanwhile, new talks between British imperialism's minister for repression in Northern Ireland and the bourgeois government in the South are scheduled for this week.

Nothing could more clearly emphasise the necessity for independent working class action North and South of the border to force the withdrawal of British troops and carry through a social programme in the interests of the whole Irish working class.

# The infamous clause

Passed by 968 votes against 248 with 40 abstentions.

"The Communist Party of Spain (PCE) is a Marxist, revolutionary and democratic party, which is inspired by the theories of social development worked out by the founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels and their methods of analysis.

The contribution of Lenin, all parts of it that remain valid, like that of other great revolutionaries, is incorporated by the PCE on the premise that it is no longer

possible to hold the view that "Leninism is the Marxism of our epoch".

We consider ourselves the heirs of those who, in the difficult conditions of Russia in 1917, with Lenin at their head knew how to lead the world's first socialist revolution which opened up the process of world revolution which we find ourselves in today.

From that derives our historic differences with social democracy.

On the other hand, while we consider as our own

heritage of the October revolution and all the socialist revolutions which have freed their people, we reject as something foreign to Marxism the phenomenon of bureaucracy and Stalinism.

We, Spanish Communists, thanks to self-criticism, have overcome Stalinism and are in the course of recovering the democratic and anti-bureaucratic essence of Marxism. We will continue to go forward in that direction."

# After Gang of Four

Teng Hsiao-ping, in opening the national conference of education on 22 April stated "Education must be at the service of proletarian politics and combine with productive work".

The conference was called to "clarify" several problems which have remained unresolved since the fall of the "Gang of Four".

Not much information has as yet been released as to the discussion and decisions of this conference.

We do know however, that it was one of a series on all sorts of subjects, such as agriculture, industry and the sciences.

The turmoil has clearly been such that it was not

felt possible to convene them any sooner.

It is widely known that such measures as the reintroduction of qualifying exams and recruitment straight from secondary school to college, have been introduced.

Teng has placed the emphasis on greater specialisation and academic qualifications.

A noteworthy aspect of the conference was the absence of Wu Teh, mayor of Peking.

Many wall posters have appeared recently critical of Wu's handling of the events in Tien An Min square following the death of Chou En lai.

Evidently the authors of the posters enjoy patronage from people in high places.

The question of material

incentives and piecemeal rates is the major issue of May Day in China this year.

Since material rewards were endorsed at the recent National Science Conference "bonuses" are openly talked of.

## Higher productivity

Ambitious targets demanding much higher productivity have also been set.

Another problem is the laxness in party discipline.

Many examples are given of Party members using Taoist priests and geomancers in funerals of relatives.

It appears that this is a common practice throughout the country and that a network of religious traditions has been re-established.

The break from the Gang

of Four and the Mao faction in the bureaucracy has now become so complete that the anti-Confucius campaign of well before the death of Mao is being strongly condemned.

It cannot be long now before explicit attacks on the entire Maoist legacy are heard.

As the Hua regime entrenches itself further it becomes steadily more obvious that without the development of a Trotskyist revolutionary leadership capable of leading a political revolution for the overthrow of the bureaucracy, there can be no solution to these problems and contradictions within the degenerated Chinese workers' state.

# Zionism exposed

The origins and history of Zionism as a means of giving special privileges to white Jews in the Israeli state were the topic of debate at a 200-strong meeting in Leeds last week.

Called by the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and sponsored by Leeds Trades Council, the meeting heard Akiba Orr, a member of the Jewish anti-Zionist movement Matzpan go on to criticise the reactionary Arab bourgeois regimes that surround Israel, calling for a socialist secular Palestine.

Garth Frankland, a member of the Trades Council and a platform speaker, speaking in a personal capacity, stressed that as a socialist he saw the Palestinian question as not merely a question for the Middle East but one for the British working class.

He called for a trade union delegate conference to be held on Palestine to prepare a call for the backing of the British workers to



Black workers in Namibia constructing a railway

# Vorster manoeuvres with Namibian traitors

South African Prime Minister Vorster last week accepted Western proposals for the transition to 'independence' in Namibia.

The proposals worked out by the USA, Britain, Canada, France and West Germany consist of a ceasefire in the war of liberation; introduction of a UN "peace-keeping" force to replace all but 1,500 South African troops; the holding of an election under UN supervision to decide which nationalist group should form a government.

Vorster's decision to accept was heavily influenced by three specific 'concessions' by the Big Five.

## Ceasefire

The complete ceasefire would be before any reduc-

tion in South African ground forces (some 22,000); the existing South West Africa police force will continue to maintain law and order during the transitional period which would obviously include the period of the elections; and the strategic port of Walvis Bay would not fall within the scope of the independence terms.

## Issue

In his statement Vorster said that the issue of whether troops would remain after the elections would be decided by the Constituent Assembly (originally the plan called for all such forces to go one week after polling).

Within Namibia the pressure to build up the influence of the Turnhalle Democratic Alliance (DTA) is underway.

The DTA is an alliance of

white conservatives and reactionary tribal chiefs. Its chairman is Dirk Mudge, a former member of the local branch of the ruling South African Nationalist Party.

One step which the DTA has taken is to take over ownership and control (through a German millionaire resident in Namibia) of the *Windhoek Advertiser* and the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, two papers critical of the DTA.

Another step taken against the SWAPO liberation fighters has been the introduction of emergency powers following the assassination a few weeks ago of DTA leader Clemmens Kapuuo.

## Arrested

Under the increased powers, many of SWAPO's leaders have been arrested.

Miss Lucy Hamutenya, one of the last remaining



Vorster

SWAPO Executive members who is still free said on 27 April that since 4 April, 31 members had been detained.

She reported threats to assassinate a SWAPO leader as

a reprisal for Kapuuo's killing.

SWAPO's response to the proposals has been to restate the position that guerrilla war is the only way—but in a statement to this effect, President Sam Nujoma stopped short of absolute rejection.

This is a clear warning sign to Namibian workers and peasants, as increasing pressure is applied to SWAPO leaders to accept the terms of these proposals.

It is essential that liberation fighters continue an armed struggle strategy based on the independent mobilisation of the masses.

Central to this mobilisation is the demand for a constituent assembly—a demand which must be tied to the dissolution of the existing state: namely the army, the civilian administration and the courts.

# Euro-union of the right

It was a week of capitalist "internationalism". Margaret Thatcher went off to a rally in Salzburg, which she had helped to organise, of European right-wing parties.

Her fellow Tories included the Christian Democrats and Strauss' CSU from West Germany, Spain's Francoist Union of the Democratic Centre, led by Adolfo Suarez, Chirac's French Gaullists, the Portuguese Democratic Socialist Centre Party (now in coalition with the Socialist Party) and assorted right-wingers from the rest of Europe.



Thatcher

The Italian Christian Democrats—no doubt out of diplomatic deference to the CP which keeps their minority government in office—declined the invitation saying that the whole thing seemed to them 'much too right wing'!

For others, however, not even Thatcher is right wing enough.

These were Giorgio Almirante, leader of the fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI), Blas Pinar of Spain's hard-line Francoist New Force (Fuerza Nueva) and Pascal Gauchon leader of the French group "Party of New Forces".

These three fascist groups meeting in Rome on April 20 set up a "permanent entente" appealing to the "forces of sanity" of the European continent to join them.

Whatever may be the differences between these two right wing alliances they are similarly explicit about their view of the enemy.

For Thatcher it is "Marxism" whether this goes by that name or whether it is lurking inside Socialist Parties.

For Almirante and his gang it is "Eurocommunism". Again this has various guises and covers. According to Blas Pinar

"the immediate enemy, behind which communism hides, is the policy of institutional break practised by

# French CP leaders plagued by outbreak of discussion

The leaders of the CP in France continue, less and less convincingly, to say that they 'welcome' the outbreak of discussion within the party and that there will be no expulsions.

Leading intellectuals and long-standing members have, however, had critical articles submitted to the party press rejected.

What has followed is a wave of articles by party members in non-party papers.

Sections of the bourgeois press have been only too glad to boost their sales among CP members.

The two most notorious series of articles to date are those of the historian Jean Ellenstein, head of the CP's Centre for Marxist Studies and of the well-known philosopher Louis Althusser, both of which have been published by the capitalist newspaper *Le Monde*.

## Different

In many respects the positions of these two Stalinist intellectuals is very different.

Ellenstein wants the party to go rapidly further down the road to explicit reformism.

He implies clearly that, like the Spanish CP, the French party should cease describing itself as "Leninist".

It is not, he says, that we have had too much of the 22nd Congress (at which the dictatorship of the proletariat was announced from the

had enough. Ellenstein's right-wing position, which is known to have some support on the Central Committee, also includes calling into question the theory of dialectical materialism and raising the need for a political opening towards christians.



Marchais

One leading member, close to Ellenstein's politics has resigned in protest from his post as editor of a CP journal.

Other participants in the public discussion have said that Ellenstein doesn't go far enough.

In particular they have argued

to do with socialism and is completely anti-socialist.

This is, of course, an extremely reactionary position as it makes no mention of the contrast between the bureaucratic role of the Soviet Union and its socialised property relations and does not call for a defence of the property relations against imperialism.

Apparently at an opposite political pole from Ellenstein stands Althusser who presents himself as a "Leninist" and believes the party should return to "revolutionary" positions.

## Alliance

But whatever may be the political differences between these long-standing Stalinists, they are now effectively in an alliance against the party leadership.

They are playing down their political differences and launching an obviously co-ordinated attack on the internal regime of the party.

On this, Althusser pulls least punches. He attacks in detail the way in which the Marchais leadership inexplicably reverses its political positions by 180 degrees without explanation, the way in which it "parachutes" completely new slogans into the party without the slightest discussion or preparation.

He attacks some of the slogans directly, such as "Make the rich pay".

"The working class, including

num wage, doesn't spontaneously recognise itself as suffering from poverty, which is a nineteenth century notion, with its overtones of philanthropy and charity; one of the conquests of the workers' movement has been to lead the workers to think of themselves not as 'poor' but as exploited productive workers".

Althusser's main attack, however, is not political but organisational. He describes the party as "a machine to dominate, control and manipulate the militants..."

It is clear that the pressure of opposition within the party goes much deeper than a few individualistic intellectuals and comes also from wide sections of the party's base, disillusioned after the election defeat in March.

In the youth organisation in some areas, members have been refusing to sell the paper because of what they call the "total poverty" of its contents.

The Marchais leadership would appear to be in considerable difficulties: by refusing to permit the debate to take place inside the party it finds itself with a full-scale public debate between party members taking place outside the party and out of its control.

## Statement

Though he denies that the rot has spread from the intellectuals Marchais was constrained to publish an angry five page statement in the CP daily *L'Humanite* last

unanimously" by the 121 members of the Central Committee, said that the party would not "let itself be torn apart by some vague petty bourgeois anarchism".

Marchais would dearly like to dismiss all his opponents in this way—and intellectuals like Ellenstein certainly help him to do so. But there is no doubt that recent events have set off a deep questioning of the CP's strategy within the working class base of the party, which does not have access to the columns of *Le Monde*.

It is this which gave Marchais most cause for alarm.

Sections of this base could now be won to a principled, independent, revolutionary political line.

Whether this happens now depends upon how those who call themselves Trotskyist in France intervene in relation to the discussion the Stalinist leadership wants to strangle at birth.

## IN BRIEF

The Frolinat (National Liberation Front) has called for a general strike and demonstrations in N'Djamena the capital of Chad, to protest against the fresh arrival of imperialist forces.

The French government—imperialism's watchful policeman in west Africa—has sent further 'advisers' and now bombers to aid the military government of General Felix Malloum in its

# Gold scorns Carter's orders

Last week the United States government announced that it intends over the next six months to sell 1.8 million ounces of gold from its reserves.

Three days later, mostly in order to discourage gold smuggling, India unveiled a plan to sell an undisclosed quantity (estimated at 2.2 million ounces) over the same period.

Both moves had the predictable effect of sharply cutting the price of gold on the world market.

That short-term effect,



Carter

however, is of no importance compared with what these developments reveal about the present crisis of the world monetary system.

The objective of the US government is twofold.

First, the gold sales are an attempt to halt the fall in the international value of the dollar which has been going on since last year.

This decline has been to some extent intended by the Carter

administration since it was part of an effort to help US capitalists compete in world markets against competition from other capitalist countries, especially Japan.

But now this devaluation has gone further than Carter wants since it has begun (through raising the price of imported materials) to push up industrial costs and it has so far had if anything an adverse effect on the US trade balance.

Even though the latest monthly trade balance showed an improvement overall, the deficit with Japan surpassed \$1 billion for the first time.

The proposed sales of gold (which still have to be approved by Congress) are not enough by themselves to stabilise the dollar.

At today's prices they will be worth less than 2% of the annual US trade deficit.

### Indirect

So any effect they have on the decline of the dollar will be largely indirect.

It will depend partly on whether or not the private speculators who hold hundreds of millions of dollars believe that the gold sales are a signal of Carter's determination to halt any further fall in the dollar.

The Carter administration also says that the gold sales have another purpose—to help to demonetise gold and convert it into "a commodity like any other".

To this end, the US Federal Reserve (the Central Bank) has hinted that it is prepared if necessary to sell the whole of the American gold stock.

This is a radical change from the period after World War II when the United States had a near monopoly of the world's monetary gold reserves.

This enabled the US to impose on the rest of the capitalist world a monetary system in which all currencies were tied to gold through the intermediary of the American dollar whose value was fixed in terms of gold at the rate of 1 ounce=\$35.

### Gold stocks

As long as the US maintained its gold stocks the dollar could remain the dominant world currency and the special place of US imperialism could continue.

But in the long run the dominance of the United States depended upon its higher level of labour productivity.

As that came to be eroded in the 1950s and 1960s and as the US at the same time maintained and even increased its expenditure on counter-revolutionary activities around the world, so the trade deficit grew, the gold reserve bled away and the dollar was pushed from its pedestal.

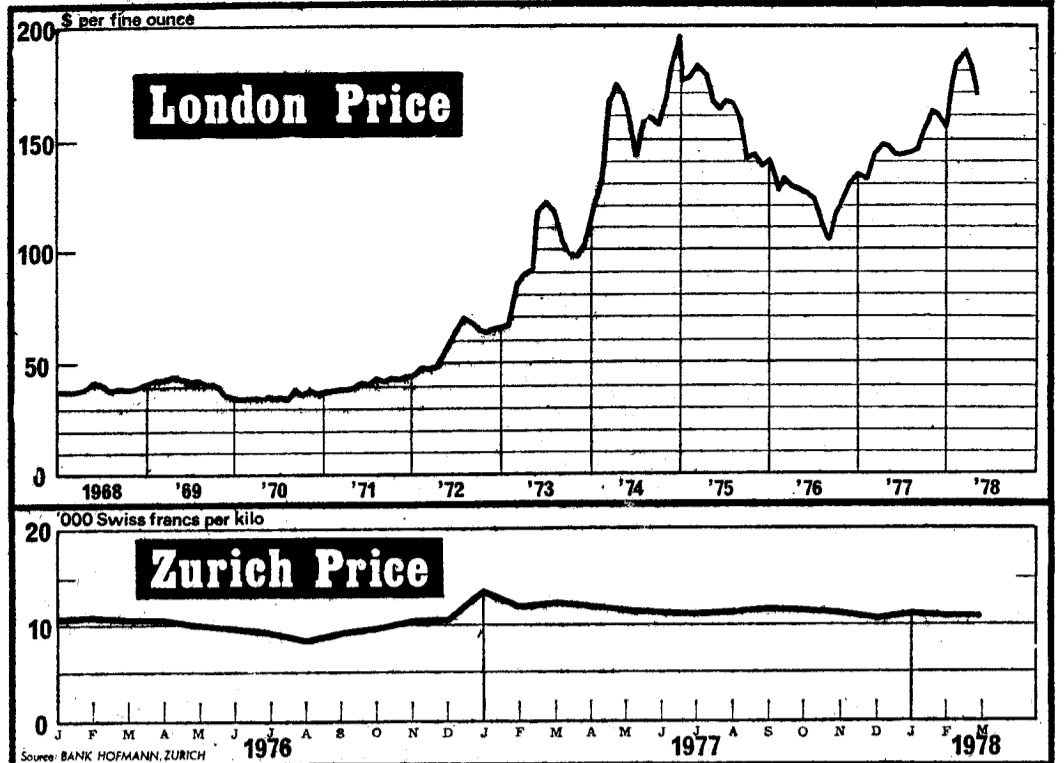
The US could no longer maintain the fixed price of the dollar in terms of gold nor its level in relation to other currencies.

Thus in August 1971 the dollar was devalued by Nixon, its link with gold was severed and the price of gold began a dizzying ascent which took it to \$200 an ounce by the end of 1974.

That price increase represented in part the restoration of the price of gold to somewhere near its true value after the years of inflation in which only the gold price remained fixed.

### Reaction

But simultaneously the price rise reflected a reaction to the growing instability and signs of breakdown in the world monetary system.



Comparison of the London price of gold with that of Zurich shows that the fluctuations are due to variations in the value of currency more than changes in demand for gold

Holders of currencies and other paper money assets fled to the haven of gold as the ultimate store of value.

The fact that the latest round of instability finds not only capitalist speculators doing this but also central banks shows how difficult it is for the US government to demonetise gold.

It is the relative weakness of US imperialism which makes this a desirable objective for US capital.

After the depletion of the American gold reserves, the US hopes it can restore its domination of the monetary system through its especially strong influence in the International Monetary Fund whose SDR's (Special Drawing Rights) are intended in the long term to become a new world paper money to replace gold.

But the US is afraid of its own solution since it fears that it would be inflationary.

And most other capitalist countries are showing themselves totally opposed to the replacement of gold.

The total quantity of gold in monetary reserves is now about 1 billion ounces of which the US holding is only about 14%.

### Revalued

And under the new IMF regulations introduced in April this gold can now be revalued at its current market price instead of at the "phantom" official price of \$42 which has existed since the crisis of 1971 (and which the US government still uses).

It is not only its relatively small holdings of gold which have persuaded the USA to try to

remove it from the world monetary system but also the fact that the world's two major producers are South Africa and, more significantly, the USSR—while the US itself does not produce gold.

The future of gold, therefore, remains uncertain. Its price is however not some mystical thermometer of the temperature of capitalism as is sometimes depicted.

But it does reflect the development and movement of the capitalist crisis—in particular the growing relative weakness of US capitalism and the sharpening inter-capitalist rivalries to which the crisis is giving rise.

One thing is certain, therefore: gold will continue to obstinately refuse to obey the orders of the Carter administration that it become "a commodity like any other".

# 'No nukes' bypass working class action



10,000 people were claimed by the organisers of the demonstration which marched into Trafalgar Square on Saturday last, 29 April.

It was certainly the largest demonstration against the nuclear industry since the CND and Committee of 100 in the early 1960s.

The crowd had much the same character as in that period, with a new sprinkling of ecologists, supporters of organic food, vegetarians and so forth.

Speakers included Leo Abse, right wing Labour MP for Pontypool, Liberal MP David Penhalligan and John Carrol, Vice President of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

Apparently out of place in this company was Yorkshire miners' president Arthur Scargill, who said that he did not have a vested interest in opposition to nuclear energy, being against it simply on grounds of 'humanity'.

Windscale development itself. Rather than sounding off in this manner Scargill should be issuing a call to the trade union movement as a whole to mobilise against the potentially lethal developments planned at Windscale—and to remove the vast body of TUC collaborators who have given their tacit or open support to the scheme.

And the fight needs to be

linked to the struggle to break the pro-capitalist Lib-Lab coalition that places the interests of profit above the interests of the health and safety of the working class.

In the predictable absence of a political lead from Scargill, those workers who recognise the dangers of nuclear reprocessing must take up this fight within the labour and trade union movement.

## YOUTH MEETING

The Economic Crisis and the Way Forward for Youth

SUNDAY 7 MAY at 2.00 p.m.  
Lecture Room 2  
Digbeth Civic Hall  
BIRMINGHAM

Credentials (20p) are available to WSL members and supporters from: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London

# SILKIN GAG BID ON PRESS

As we go to press the editors of two magazines—*Peace News* and *The Leveller* are due to appear in court on contempt charges.

They are being prosecuted by Lib-Lab Attorney General Sam Silkin for the heinous 'crime' of revealing—from published sources and information given in open court—the identity of "Colonel B", an 'expert' witness at the Aubrey/Berry/Campbell official secrets trial.

### Contempt

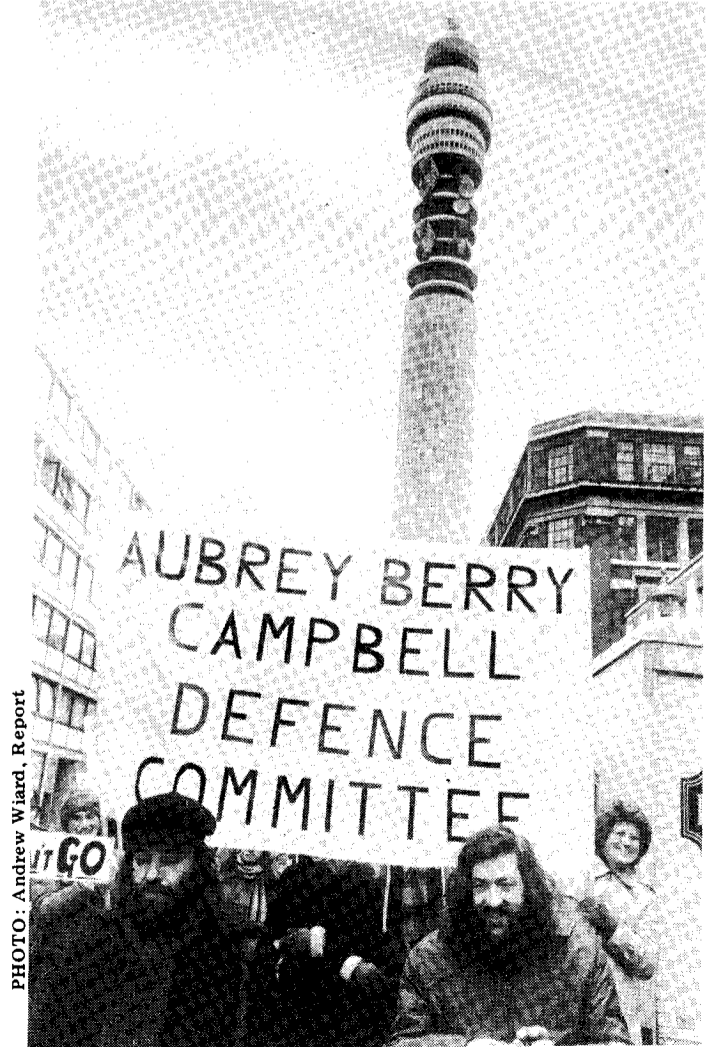
Both papers, and ten workers, are being charged with contempt of court. And the National Union of Journalists' paper *The Journalist* also stands to face punitive fines and costs for publicly putting two and two together, and pointing out that Colonel B's actual identity is that of Colonel H.A. Johnstone.

Behind the crackdown on these papers and the ABC case itself, lies the overall attack on democratic rights being carried through by the Lib-Lab Government.

### Under attack

The right to march, the right to picket, and now the right to piece together publicly available material in investigative journalism have all come under attack as Callaghan bids to strengthen the police-military forces of the capitalist state in readiness for further confrontations with the working class.

The Official Secrets Act—which in the ABC case could mean sentences of fourteen years each for two journalists and ex-soldier John Berry—



Aubrey-Berry-Campbell march in February of this year.

repeal and replace with a 'freedom of information' act.

But it is clear that unless trade unionists and Labour Party activists step up the fight for the breaking of the

prepare strike action to defend Aubrey, Berry and Campbell the current court cases will herald a new era of intensified state of surveillance and repression of





# Southall bid to oust racist Bidwell

"The biggest blow we could strike against racialism would be to get rid of Syd Bidwell as MP who has done so much to make racialism respectable".

This was the uncompromising conclusion of one of the platform speeches at a public Labour Party meeting last week in Syd Bidwell's constituency of Southall.

### Unanimous

And this conclusion met with the virtually unanimous support of a meeting, largely of Southall Labour Party members, which had been called by two Southall wards.

The meeting proceeded even in the face of attempts

to sabotage it by what one member called the "racist clique" which dominate the Southall party.

Bidwell, of course, has been for years one of the loudest of left-talking Labour MPs, even boasting when it suits him of a "Trotskyist past".

### Signatory

Doubtful as that may be there is no denying his racistist present as a signatory to the racist proposals of the recent Commons Select Committee on Immigration.

It is that which has been the last straw for many Labour Party members in Bidwell's constituency.

But it is by no means the first sign of capitulation to racism.

Bidwell, it was stated by several members at the meeting, remains a member of Southall's notorious colour-bar Labour Club from which the Labour Party has officially dissociated itself.

Bidwell and the local party leadership had scandalously set themselves against the calling of an anti-racist public meeting by the Southall Labour Party.

It would, they said, 'damage the party' at election time and be broken up by the National Front.

No argument, it seems, was too bare or opportunist to drag up.

### Alternative

As an alternative they have proposed a joint meeting on race relations with the Tories and Liberals!

The fact that members of the Labour Party were prepared under this kind of assault to go ahead with their meeting (boycotted by Bidwell and the local Labour racists and compromisers) is an important step.

The fake nature of Bidwell's 'left' talk, apparent for some time in Southall, has now become plain for all to see.

These first moves to get rid of him deserve the support of the whole labour movement.

### Racist cronies

Bidwell and his racist cronies can be expected to



Bidwell

resist their removal by the most unscrupulous means.

That is why those Labour Party members in Southall who have shown themselves prepared to put up a principled fight should be given every possible support.

As a first move resolutions demanding the immediate removal from office of all the five MPs who signed the Select Committee report could be passed by constituency Labour Party GMC's and sent to the Southall Party.

## ORDER IN THE FAMILY

"I've never seen the difference between the community and the police", declared Prime Minister Callaghan at a West London rally last Wednesday.

"More police is only part of the answer", he went on, boasting of the £250 million extra expenditure on "law and order" brought about by the Lib-Lab coalition.

A "proper sense of values" in the family and at home is essential to a happy society, continued Callaghan—making it clear that an escalation of state repression is linked in government thinking with an intensification of the domestic oppression of women, youth and male workers within the confines of the family unit.

On "law and order" as on every other question Callaghan struggled to find some difference between pro-capitalist policies of the Lib-Lab government and the policies of the Tories. But he only succeeded in emphasising the essential similarities.

Also on the platform were other advocates of managing capitalism—Bill Molloy, MP for East North; Syd Bidwell, racistist Tribunit MP; Russell Kerr MP and a cluster of right wing prospective candidates, each of whom defended the record of



Callaghan

the coalition government.

Though Bidwell was prudently not called to speak, his reactionary shadow was cast over the speakers, each of whom studiously avoided the question of racialism.

With leaders like these it is little wonder that workers are less and less inclined to turn out to vote Labour in local and by-elections.

Callaghan and his gang of supporters must be driven out and a principled socialist leadership in conflict with the existing right wing leaders constructed in the Labour Party.

## MAYDAY BAR

Coventry Trades Council decided last week that William Wilson (Labour MP for Coventry SE) should be barred from the platform of their May Day meeting.

Wilson, a member of the Tribune Group was, with Bidwell and three other Labourites, a signatory of the Commons Select Committee Report on Race Relations which recommended a pass law system of controlling immigrants, and a racistist quota system for Indian immigrants.

The Trades Council had invited speakers from a South African liberation organisation and from Spain as well as local labour and ethnic minority organisations.

It considered that Wilson's presence would be an insult to the other speakers.

It has recommended branches

to consider whether they should support Wilson continuing as an MP.

Two other Coventry Labour MPs—Park and Robinson—have withdrawn from the meeting in sympathy with Wilson, but a fourth, Audrey Wise, already had another engagement and was therefore able to avoid a decision.

More support for Wilson came from the Stalinists of the Coventry Communist Party.

Secretary Tony McNally told the *Morning Star*:

"We deplore the sharpness of the attack on him,

To suggest he should resign, we feel, is far too drastic in the light of his other many positive contributions".

## LETTER: Revolutionaries in elections

Comrade Editor,  
As a member of the Labour Party and a supporter of *Socialist Press* I would like to briefly take up two points concerning articles in SP 95.

In a report on the Lambeth by-election (published prior to the voting) you mentioned the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Unity, etc.

The only point made, however, is the tactical observation that there is little to be gained from standing 'revolutionary' candidates against the Labour Party at this stage of the class struggle.

While agreeing with this (and I feel that this view was richly confirmed by the Lambeth result) I think that the article left out a central political question and therefore left an ambiguous impression.

### Correct programme

If the Socialist Workers Party and other centrist groups were capable of fighting elections on a correct programme, that would be a different kettle of fish.

But as John Plant—a Labour candidate standing on a principled programme in the Newham local elections—pointed out in SP 96,

organisations standing against Labour in Lambeth is a hotch-potch of 'revolutionary' phrasemongering, stunt politics, reformist practice and studious avoidance of the central tasks posed by the coalitionist betrayals of the Labour leaders.

In this situation the working class does not see any serious alternative.

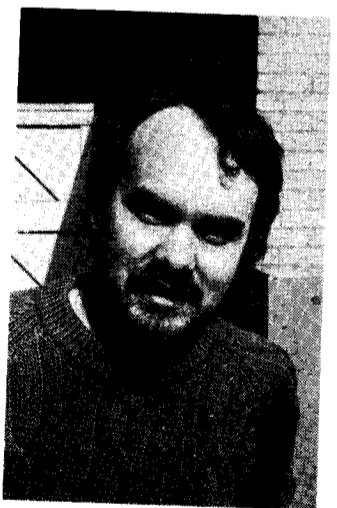
Labour has the advantage of being the mass party of the workers' movement. The lessons of Labour in power hold far greater importance for the working class than protest votes for ersatz 'substitutes'.

Surely this is a more important question to explain than the tactical 'advisability' of standing against Labour at this time?

It is a question of the programme and leadership necessary to expose and ditch traitors like Callaghan and the scoundrels on the 'left' who cover up for them.

Secondly, and more briefly, I wish to add something to the coverage of the local elections and John Plant's campaign in Newham.

Plant's fellow candidate Ray Massey is standing on the same programme—which, as *Socialist Press* readers will know, calls for the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition, a fight against the Labour right wing and puts forward a programme of



John Plant—standing on a principled programme

dates had played a role in the fight against Prentice.

This is true—but only Plant has a consistent record of principled struggle.

Massey's political evolution is of considerable interest, however for he began as a defender of Prentice.

Shaken by the exposure of the right-wing conspiracy—backed by sinister financial sources—to smash up the Newham labour movement, he broke with the right wing and subsequently supported resolutions for the expulsion of key right wingers from the Labour Party.

He readily signed the branch manifesto and stands pledged to the policies contained in it.

It is my view that all this provides a small but significant example of the shifts that can take place in the labour movement in the course of a hard struggle.

The main question, naturally, remains the need for the labour and trade union movement to watch all leaders who pledge themselves to socialist policies and mobilise to make sure they

## PRESS GANG Forces' favourites

The campaign for Forces' pay which has dominated the pages of the Tory press for the past several weeks, has given the sharpest possible illustration of the tactical divisions within the ruling class.

The savage onslaught on democratic rights, the first steps for the next phase of wage control and memories of the struggles that broke out over Phase 3 perhaps more to the point, the struggles that have broken out) all raise questions in the minds of the working class as to whether the open confrontation between the working class and the state might not be a case for comfort.

The case for higher pay for the troops has been based on arguments: the threat posed by "foreign intervention" which in turn is based solely on anti-imperialist witchhunting (in the Soviet Union); the danger faced by troops in Northern Ireland; and the possibility that the

breakers.

The *Sun* in particular, stressed that the fact that the soldiers had contributed to the 'anti inflation programme' through helping to break the firemen's strike is in itself sufficient qualification for a 30% pay rise (which, of course, would have no effect on inflation!).

But the *Daily Telegraph* has a far more developed position. Less than two weeks ago the paper was arguing that those MPs who were prepared to name Colonel Johnstone were not fit to be trusted with the security of the state, and should therefore be removed from Parliament.

Now the *Telegraph* has compared the high ranking servicemen who are providing the paper with its leaks to the civil servants and military who kept Churchill armed with statistics in the 1930s.

Such leaks undoubtedly made mischief for Ministers who were anxious to convince the public that the nation's defences were in good hands.

On the whole, however, historians have concluded

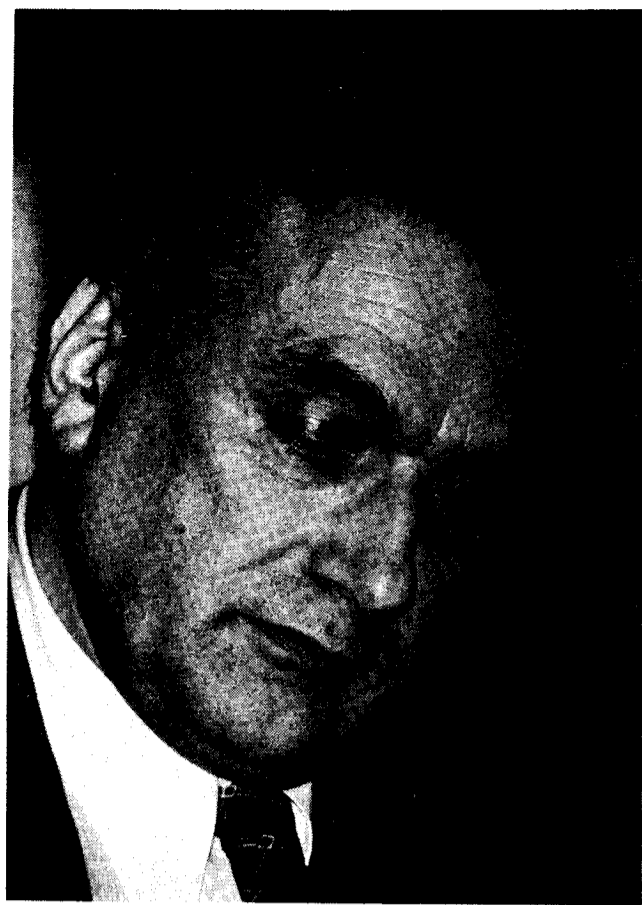
every reason to be grateful to those who had risked their careers to ensure that those who were campaigning for rearmament in the 1930s knew what they were talking about.

So it is today.

With a somnolent Defence Minister and a Cabinet which is split between those who think of the Armed Forces as a barrier to good relations with cuddly Mr. Brezhnev and those who reckon that low pay is the appropriate regard for professions such as the armed forces which do not belong to the TUC, the national defences are dangerously at risk.

The *Telegraph's* assessment of the Cabinet is of course ludicrous, and they know it.

By raising the question of the organs of the state acting independently of Parliament and the Government—and if necessary dispensing with both—The *Telegraph* hopes to push the Lib-Lab Coalition to further concessions of building up the army and police with one aim in mind: the forcible suppression of the



Socialist Press views of Mandel

# 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' AFTER IMG CONFERENCE

## USFI speakers hit only sour notes

In a polite four-day conference the leadership of the International Marxist Group, British Tendency of the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International succeeded in rallying 75% of the membership behind their policy of opportunist titillation to the whims of the British Socialist Workers Party.

This consolidation of the leadership under Alan Jones clarified the factional division within the IMG, the variegated opposition which sprang up between 1972 and 1974 have now dissolved into the party faction.

This has been facilitated by adaptation by the leadership to opposition tactics—in particular the electoral intervention.

### Opposition

From the pre-conference the opposition was opened therefore, there was only one opposition tendency the "Trotskyist Opposition"—a programmatic stance which was supposed to have similarities with that of the WSL. But they did not stay the course to the end of the conference.

The supporters of the Workers Socialist Workers Party had already closed their ranks, and in the pre-conference discussion they intervened around a number of their leaders—Alan Harris,

conference the Strawson tendency was the focus for opposition to the leadership.

The SWP (USA) supporters blocked with Strawson and, after certain amendments from Harris were accepted, voted for the Strawson resolution.

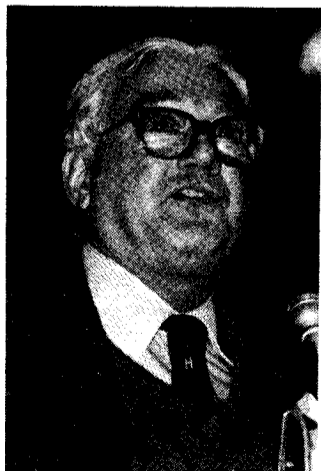
The "Trotskyist Opposition" in an extremely weak position due to the fact that they had come to the conference with no resolution for voting eventually announced the closure of their tendency on Sunday evening and called on their supporters to join the Strawson tendency.

The IMG majority however remain firmly attached to the bankrupt notion of the "New Mass Vanguard" which has been handed down from Michel Pablo to current USFI leader Ernest Mandel, and from Mandel to his protegee Jones.

### Concept

The "new mass vanguard" concept envisages a broad, ready-made leftward moving layer as the essential milieu for revolutionary work.

For Pablo in the early 1950s this layer was supposedly to be found in the mass Communist Parties of Europe—and he proposed liquidating the Trotskyist movement into 'deep entry' work into the Stalinist parties in order to



Leading SWP member Novack

'fuse' with these layers.

For the Pabloites in the late 1950s and the 1960s the 'new mass vanguard' shifted ground and became the petty bourgeois nationalist forces in the colonial world engaged in guerrilla struggles against imperialism and dictatorship.

By the late 1960s this 'vanguard' had been broadened to include radicalised students in anti-war movements and mass struggles in the wake of the 1968 events in France. Since then the label has been applied to strikers in various sectors.

Now in 1978 the IMG majority has decided that the 'vanguard' is located in and around the left groups.

For this reason the central thrust of the IMG's recent work has been the building of Socialist Unity as part of a drive for a 'unified revolutionary organisation' to embrace these groups.

This has centred on an orientation towards the British Socialist Workers Party.

### Regroupment

On 6 October last year *Socialist Challenge* printed the article 'Our Common Ground' as the proposed basis for regroupment.

This document systematically adapts to the forces the IMG would like to see in its unified revolutionary organisation—the SWP, Big Flame, Workers League, etc.

All of them are hostile to the Trotskyist Transitional Programme—both its principles and its method.

'Our Common Ground', therefore, avoids spelling out transitional demands, avoids political characterisation of the degenerated and deformed workers states, avoids a clear demand for their defence against imperialism, and even avoids any mention of the Fourth International!

### Defence

At the conference the leadership stood in defence of

its orientation to the SWP and its policy of building a "class struggle left wing" in the trade unions.

In his introductory remarks at the Saturday session Alan Jones was quite frank about the novel nature of the Socialist Unity orientation and blithely waved aside the formally correct 'orthodox' attitudes of the SWP (USA) to the Labour Party as "revisionist".

### Summing up

Summing up the debate on Sunday Tariq Ali outlined the hope which lies behind the Socialist Unity project.

"It's not just us and the SWP. If we unify we can build an organisation of 20,000-30,000 members. A unified organisation would draw in large numbers of independent workers".

For those IMG members who were worried about the lack of fight taken up against the SWP Ali claimed that "We've fought them on programme".

However the only example he could give was on the united front—which to the IMG leadership has always meant 'lowest common denominator' co-operation and the abandonment of the struggle for programme and leadership.

The sort of forces which the IMG is attracting in its regroupment campaign are typified by the Workers League.

### Hostility

The speaker from the International Socialist Alliance, a Workers League member, spelled out the hostility there is to the Transitional Programme.

"We are not against transitional politics as such, but we think the demands have to flow from the struggle", he said.

This opportunist approach has nothing in common with the struggle by Trotskyists to

apply the transitional programme in a living way and raise those engaged in the struggle to the political level of the programme. Such a struggle is carried out only by the Workers Socialist League.

The IMG leadership promised a campaign around the sliding scale of wages over the next period.

The WSL will continue to co-operate on this issue with any forces which take up the fight.

But more than a propaganda campaign for a demand is needed. A clear understanding of a specific line of march is required for the working class to combat the particular way in which the bureaucracy is manoeuvring.

### Phase 2

In last year's battle to end wage control under Phase 2, for instance, only the WSL had a clear understanding of the need to oppose the 'unity' manoeuvres of the Communist Party.

While the IMG majority claim to understand this, in practice they were caught by every CP trick. In particular, IMG vacillation over the April 1977 Leyland Stewards conference—which was worked for and supported by the CP to sabotage the struggle against Phase 2—gave credibility to the conference and indicated the weakness of the IMG's analysis.

But at the IMG conference nobody even questioned the way in which the leadership impressionistically concentrated solely on the protest campaign against the cuts (without spelling out a clear case for strike action) while the WSL was correctly arguing the need for preparation against wage control and continually drawing out the beginnings of workers action against it.

### Rumbling

There were, however, some rumblings against the

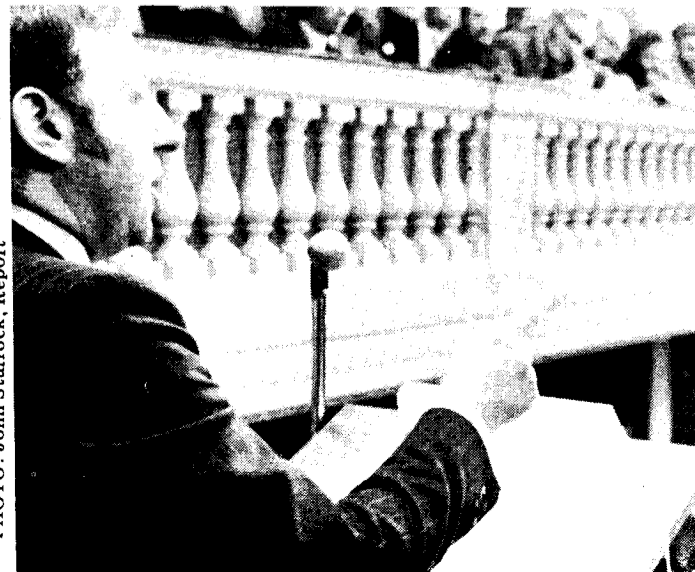


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

The April Conference given credibility by the IMG



Mandel urges "unity"

IMG leadership's 'sectarian' attitude to the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

Despite the attacks and snide remarks about the WSL as 'programme fetishists' that were heard in the trade union debate at the conference, IMG members should consider carefully the fact that it was the WSL which prepared the fight for the sliding scale of wages at the TGWU conference—not the IMG.



Pablo

And it was the IMG's would-be allies, the SWP, who voted against the policy at the NUJ conference!

Another central thrust of proposed IMG trade union work is 'solidarity work' around key struggles. The emphasis on support and solidarity is typical.

For example, the IMG's main intervention around Grunwicks has been mass picketing and the building of support committees.

A speaker at the conference confessed that the IMG had been 'slow' on policies such as blacking, and that the amazing IMG 'nationalisation' policy adopted later on in the struggle was never clearly understood.

The IMG intervention at all points completely lacked any clear understanding of the role of forces such as Jack Dromey who directed the strike committee away from policies which could win the struggle.

When the Scarman Tribunal report appeared it was welcomed by the IMG, who even continued to publish interviews with Dromey.

**Avoidance**

Crucial to all these weaknesses is the IMG's complete avoidance of the central question of the construction of revolutionary leadership, which requires detailed assessment of the moves of the bureaucracy and patient work to introduce a revolutionary perspective into workers' struggles.

Throughout the reams of the conference material, and

the speeches at the conference, the dominant themes were general descriptions of the situation which failed to touch significantly on the key political questions and consistently returned to the 'defeat' which is supposed to have been imposed at some point on the working class, abstract schemas for building a "class struggle left wing", and programmatic fuzziness.

The central themes of the unified opposition bloc were rejection of the "new mass vanguard"/Socialist Unity orientation in favour of a 'proletarian orientation' to the Labour Party and the trade unions; regroupment on a principled programmatic basis with forces such as the WSL, ICL, Chartists, LSA and Bulletin group; the building of a youth movement; and redirection of *Socialist Challenge* as a "popular workers' paper".

**Practical results**

Speakers for the opposition bloc were able to draw out some practical results of the majority's record and make a few correct points about the SWP.

A delegate from Brixton showed how the IMG had not only capitulated to non-Trotskyist forces around the West Indian Block but also how the work of the party organisation in that area was suspended for the period of the election!

A speaker from Oxford pointed out the vacillating role of the Oxford SWP in relation to Stalinism. He went on to show how the IMG majority were divided amongst themselves over the nature of the SWP.

Within the 'proletarian orientation' the opposition platform allowed for electoral intervention but argued that this should be on the basis of the IMG's programme and should be directed to building the IMG.

**Failed**

Despite making some formally correct points and much talk of training IMG members as 'mass leaders', 'steeled' in a clear understanding of programme and party building, the opposition failed themselves to lay down the basis for a real proletarian orientation around the transitional programme.

As one supporter of Strawson catalogued the sort of content required for a revolutionary paper, the *Socialist Press* reporter got the distinct impression that his own paper was being described.

However, a similar thought was obviously running through the speaker's head and in order to clear up any misunderstanding he rounded off his speech by specifying

rejecting *Socialist Press* as a model and instead held out the very different papers *Rouge* (paper of the French LCR) and *Militant* (SWP/USA) as the ideals to imitate.

This admiration for the SWP is quite crucial to understanding the politics of the IMG opposition bloc, as there is more than a suggestion of the SWP/USA about the 'alternative' being presented to the IMG membership.

**Greetings**

In his greetings to the conference SWP leader Barry Shepherd reported a recent decision by the American Pabloites to make a 'turn to the working class'.

"We are seeking to get the majority of our comrades into the big mass industrial unions in the USA", he said.

Lest anyone thinks that this heralds a fundamental change in political line, Shepherd went on to explain that the campaigns of the SWP would not change politically but would simply be carried out within the working class rather than among radicalising petty-bourgeois layers.

So it is with the orientation of the Strawson/SWP bloc. After making many correct points the Strawson resolution outlines six key campaigns for the IMG over the coming year.

**Compatible**

Each of these are compatible with the politics of the majority, but the difference is the proposal that they be carried into the main organisations of the labour movement: anti-racism and anti-fascism, abortion, withdrawal of troops from Ireland, against unemployment, for defence of dissidents within the bureaucratized workers states, for democracy in the labour movement.

It remains to be seen whether Strawson — an all-time political tourist — will be completely absorbed into the alternative Pabloite politics of the SWP, or turn perhaps in a more healthy political direction.

At the last IMG conference the "Trotskyist Opposition" hailed the emergence of the WSL as an important gain for the building of the Trotskyist movement.

**Intact**

What we have seen in *Socialist Challenge* and in a short unfinished document presented by a member of the Trotskyist Opposition indicates that some programmatic strengths of this tendency remain intact, even in the hostile environment of the IMG.

Trotskyist Opposition to present a political resolution for voting made their intervention weak and marginal.

Some of the points they made were correct, but with no real perspective all the Trotskyist Opposition were left with at the end of the Sunday session was to praise the growth of the Strawson tendency as posing the important questions of the vanguard and programme before the IMG membership and indicating that increasing numbers of IMG members were beginning to think about these things.

Whether these people also begin to capitulate to the SWP or try to fight to turn the Strawson tendency towards a real fight in the USFI against all the Pabloite leadership factions remains to be seen.

**Interesting**

In the context of the USFI the fraternal greetings from the LCR, (French section of the USFI), and from the international leadership itself were a particularly interesting feature of the conference.

The LCR speaker—in sharp contrast to the line pushed by the IMG in public meetings held to discuss the situation following the left's defeat in the French elections—argued that the workers would resist the attacks being prepared by the French ruling class and that real opportunities were opening up for revolutionaries to fight for the breaking of workers from the main reformist organisations.

Referring to methods of achieving regroupment, the LCR delegate stressed that programme was central to unity.

This theme was continued by the USFI speaker who surprisingly stressed the importance of the Transitional Programme and the need to take advantage of the crisis in the reformist and centrist organisations through 'hard, programmatic struggle'.

**Principles**

Referring to principles to be used in fusion with other groups he again stressed programme (the first four congresses of the Communist International and the Transitional Programme), democratic centralism and a line of march for the present situation to change the balance of class forces.

On the Fourth International, he argued that "belonging to the Fourth International is an absolute principle in any fusion".

He went on to say that in the light of this there were some problems with the IMG leadership's approach to regroupment.

The response of Alan Jones to this intervention (which stands in sharp contrast to the practice of the USFI internationally) was a characteristic one.

**"Bloody disgrace"**

Outside the conference hall he referred to the speech as a "bloody disgrace"—particularly as the IMG leadership had not been informed of the contents of the USFI greetings!

Jones had good reason to be annoyed. Not only is the transitional programme missing from the IMG's basis for regrouping with the British SWP, but he knows full well that if the regroupment were to take place it would have to be outside the USFI, for which the SWP has nothing but contempt.

Following objections to his intervention the USFI delegate returned to the platform to explain that the content of his speech had been agreed by the International Bureau alone and that discussion with the IMG leadership would have to proceed on the leading bodies of the International.

It is quite typical of the USFI to leave its intervention

conference.

Whatever they may argue to the contrary there has been ample time to challenge the IMG's orientation to the SWP.

**Rumours**

'Our Common Ground' was published in October and rumours to the effect that the USFI and the LCR regard *Socialist Challenge* as a centrist paper have been circulating in the pubs and meetings frequented by the gossip circles of the British left for some time.

If the USFI really do disagree with the IMG then the pre-conference period would have been an ideal time for a vigorous intervention—not one confined to the greetings section of the agenda.

But in view of the record of its sections, particularly in Spain and Portugal, over the last few years, the USFI leadership should also make a thorough examination of the way the "fight for programme" is being waged by its members.

It is certainly hard to take seriously the pretence of the USFI leadership — whose whole history has consisted of revising the most basic conceptions of the Transitional Programme — to stand today as staunch defenders of Trotskyist 'orthodoxy'.

It is worth asking at what point the USFI leaders decided that the Transitional Programme had become a matter of principle.

**Discuss**

The WSL has expressed its wish to discuss these questions with the USFI leadership and members.

It would also be interesting to know where the USFI stands in the Party and Faction debate, in which the IMG leaders have set out to falsify the history of the

Bolshevik Party in order to justify their 'regroupment' policy.

In rounding off this report we should refer to the areas of trade union work where the IMG claims some success — NUT, CPSA, NALGO, COHSE and CLASH.

What can be said is that the IMG is obviously beginning to sink some roots in one or two white collar unions.

With the mounting crisis of British capitalism, many organisations on the left have the potential for growth. The key question remains on what basis is this growth taking place?

**Bleak**

With three-quarters of the movement openly arrayed behind Jones' liquidationist capitulation to the British SWP centrists, and the other quarter swinging towards the Pabloite US SWP, the future looks pretty bleak for serious forces within the IMG.

All the signs confirm our long-held view that no amount of numerical growth or temporary adaptation to critics within or outside the movement can resolve the political crisis within the IMG.

And the political collapse of the various oppositions indicates that there is no prospect of a turn in the coming period towards a fight for the demands and principles of the Transitional Programme.

Those who are turning away from Jones must not be taken in by the SWP/USA but must turn to serious examination of the record of the WSL—the only organisation in Britain fighting for the programme and method of the Fourth International.

# 'Star': Let it bleed!

The *Socialist Challenge* 'Open Forum' of 24 April was devoted to an article by Tariq Ali entitled 'A Plan to Save the Morning Star'.

Reporting the difficulties which Stalinism in crisis has provided for the *Morning Star*, Ali spends much of his offering wailing about the "setback to the working class" which he feels the collapse of the *Star* would represent.

"CP members are faced with the possibility that they might have to cease publication of a daily. This would leave us without a single daily working class paper.

True there is always the *Newsline*, but it reflects the bizarre politics of the Workers Revolutionary Party...

"... so in effect the death of the *Star* would leave us without a paper in which one can occasionally read the views of shop stewards engaged in struggles

and their calls for national solidarity".

It would also be one less daily paper reflecting the views of counter-revolutionary Stalinism.

**Regular coverage**

Far be it from us to defend the *Newsline* but the fact of the matter is that those who care to read it will find regular coverage of industrial disputes, views of shop stewards engaged in struggles and their calls for national solidarity.

They will of course search in vain, (as they would in *Socialist Challenge*) for the method and principles of the Transitional Programme.

Revolutionaries can have only one attitude to the CP—bitter hostility.

The collapse of the *Morning Star* would be a clear indication that its counter-revolutionary policies were bringing it to a severe crisis.

It is not our job to give advice to the enemies of the workers movement on how they could avoid the just deserts of their treachery.

This does not mean that we take a sectarian attitude to the rank and file of the CP.

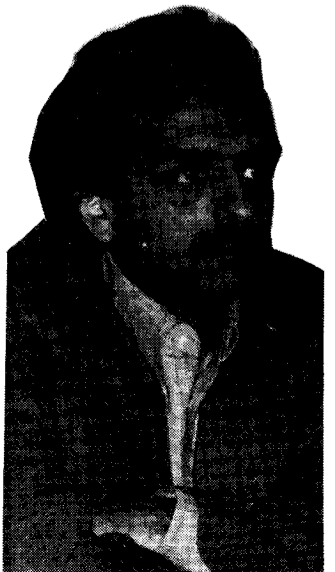
But even a fool could see that if the healthy elements in the CP suddenly found themselves without a daily paper, then the political crisis this would spark off within the Stalinist movement would create great opportunities for revolutionaries.

**Circulation**

Circulation of papers to the left of the CP would almost certainly rise—and the possibilities of fighting for a genuine revolutionary paper would be greatly increased.

If the *Morning Star* is in crisis then the best thing Trotskyists can do is to help that crisis along.

In the now famous words of Robin Blackburn, "Let it bleed!"



Ali



# POPES AND PLOUGHBOYS

Adam Westoby looks at the social conditions behind a historic ideological split

The next three issues of *Socialist Press* will feature a series of articles on the English Revolution of 1640 which, in the most violent and dramatic way brought the ostensibly 'peaceful' and 'democratic' capitalist class to power. This article sketches some of the material and ideological developments that preceded that Revolution.

'Ambition is a weed of quick and early vegetation in the vineyards of Christ'—thus wrote Edward Gibbon, the monumental obituarist of the Catholic Church's claims to either virtue or divine authority.

April of this year marks the six hundredth anniversary of the 'Great Schism' (between the papacies of Rome and Avignon) in that much and scandalously divided organisation.

The contending cardinals were divided by not one shred of moral or theological principle, but by numerous conflicting ambitions.

And to celebrate their reunification, thirty seven years later, they burnt at the stake one of the most principled and popular of reformers, John Hus of Prague.

## First translation

1378 was also (though more approximately) the time when the first translation of the whole Bible into a popular tongue—English—began to be widely disseminated.

In that year came the first attempt to bring to trial for heresy the scholar of Oxford University who promoted the translation, John Wycliffe—one of rather few men ever to have extracted revolutionary ideas from the Latin quarter of Cowley.

It was no accident that all of these events coincided. Rather the opposite, as the actions of the Church leaders testified.

The same Council of Constance (near Zurich) which in 1415 executed Hus and reassembled behind a single, compromise Pope, also found Wycliffe, the populariser of the Bible and Hus's inspirer, guilty of no less than two hundred and sixty heretical assertions!

## Ordered

The assembled prelates accordingly ordered (Wycliffe having died of natural causes more than thirty years before) that his bones be dug up and burned.

'His vile corpse,' said a bigot who witnessed the scene, 'they consigned to hell, and the river absorbed his ashes.'

But not his memory. And it is instructive to ask why, in 1378, as the Church was splitting apart, it was such an inflammatory matter to make the Bible accessible to that



The burning of John Hus and the scattering of his ashes

women who could neither read nor write, and who understood not a word of Latin.

The answer lies as much in economics as in theology. In the previous two hundred and more years medieval society had experienced a process of creeping disintegration.

## Unwieldy

The laborious, unwieldy apparatus of production and exploitation found it more and more difficult to extract a sufficient surplus from the multitude of peasants, each tied to their petty plot.

And the Church, as both the biggest exploiter and the chief justifier of exploitation, was at the centre of the crisis.

Orthodox Christian doctrine was by this time a complex contradictory and delicate construction.

The work of generations of disputatious theologians, it had only the most fragile connexion with the ideas preached by the Jewish nationalist Jesus of Nazareth and his first followers, who had composed the gospel narratives.

## Egalitarianism

Christianity had shed its early egalitarianism. Church

had thickly overlaid the scriptures on which they were supposedly based.

Certain gospel teachings—such as that of Matthew 19:xxiv

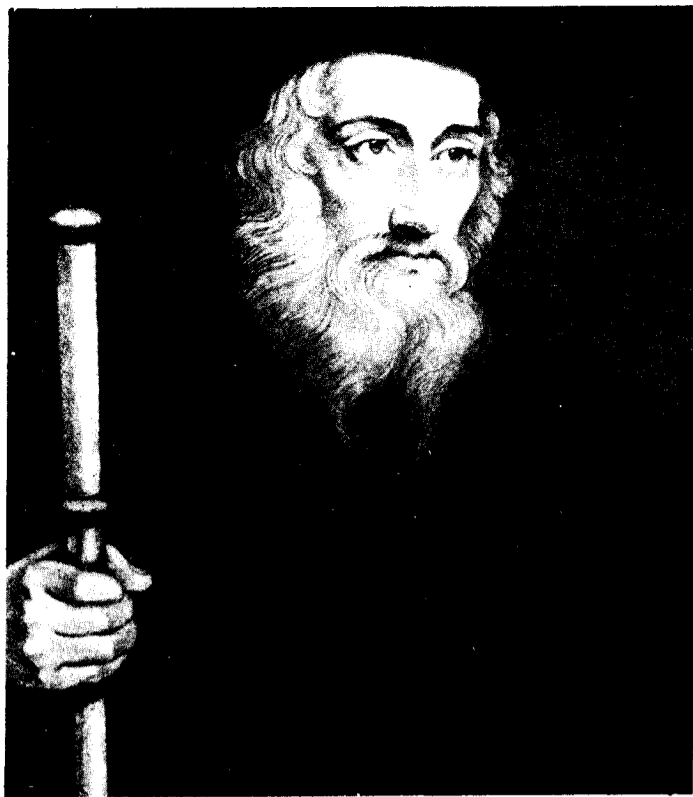
"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"—had, evidently, to be taught to the populace cautiously, and with many qualifications.

Much of the splendid Church art of the late Middle Ages had its origins in the need to provide, in tandem with the sermons, a suitably embellished and edited version of the Bible stories to an illiterate congregation.

## Erupted

And conversely, the numerous movements of reform and rebellion which erupted from the eleventh century onwards tended to find their spokesmen and their leading ideas in that tiny minority of churchmen who, being able to read the scriptures in Latin, took them literally and used them in criticism of the Church as it actually existed.

Such intellectuals were very few, but they were among the most learned and clear-sighted of their age and



Wycliffe

all proportion to their numbers.

To the twin dangers of dissent and organised resistance the medieval Church replied with a two-pronged reaction: drives against 'heresy', and force of arms.

In 1155 Arnold of Brescia was burnt in Rome. Basing himself on the gospels, he had preached to considerable crowds, that priests were not necessary to confession, and that clergy who accumulated wealth would never achieve salvation.

The most energetic of the crusades of the thirteenth century was the one organised against the 'Albigenses' in southwest France, near the town of Albi.

## Justification

They taught, also finding their justification in scripture, that salvation could be had without the expensive ministrations of the clergy, but by a simple act of repentance before death.

Faith and prosperity alike summoned the Church to wipe out such a heresy and (the property of heretics being forfeit) there was no shortage of loyal recruits.

The Church for its part was determined on results, regardless of cost. When the crusaders were entering Beziers, where the Albigenses were powerful, they asked how they should tell heretics from the faithful in the general slaughter.

'Kill them all' replied the representative of the Pope (the misnamed Innocent III). 'God will recognise his own'.

It was in this carnage that Simon de Montfort, the godfather of English parliamentarism, baptised his reputation.

## Liquidation

The final liquidation of the French heretical sects was entrusted to an arm of the Church bureaucracy specially created to root out heresy: the 'Inquisition'.

By the fourteenth century, therefore, the Western Church was an organisation seasoned in both high politics and base repression.

It was the violent quarrels between the oligarchs of Rome that drove the Papal court to the French town of Avignon, near the south of the Rhone, in 1305.

But its exile from Rome did little to make the Papacy a less extravagant or profitable institution.

Feudal economy was static: the surplus was not reinvested to increase productivity, but spent directly.

## Indulgences

Much of it went on repression, ceremonies and works of art. But no small proportion went on sheer indulgences: in 1330 Pope John XXII held a feast at

(doubtless with God's assistance) eight oxen, fifty five sheep, four boars, eight pigs, six hundred and ninety fowl, five hundred and eighty partridges and three thousand eggs!

## Emphatic

Wycliffe's views on the Papacy were emphatic:

"If anyone saith, here at Avignon is the Christ, believe them not, for the deeds shall show who is the antichrist".

The merchants of the Italian cities, however, anxious to have such lucrative custom back, sent a series of emissaries to Avignon.

But only in 1376 did the beautiful young mystic Catherine Benincasa (later canonised as Saint Catherine of Siena\*) persuade Pope Gregory XI to return to Italy.

Not long after arriving in Rome, however, he died.

The majority of cardinals were French. However, they were intimidated by the Roman crowd into electing an Italian, the obsessive Church functionary, Urban VI.

He took office in April 1378. But shortly after retreating from Rome, the French cardinals convened again and elected one of their own number, Clement VII.

He was in effect the creature of the King of France (who gleefully commented, on his election, 'now I am Pope!').

## Recognised

England, France's enemy, automatically recognised Urban. For over thirty years the division into two papacies was maintained by national rivalries.

Clement, failing to take Rome, retreated to Avignon. Urban remained in Italy seeking, with sacraments and sword, to enforce his mission throughout the peninsula.

A contemporary account describes him, besieged near Naples, excommunicating an entire army thrice a day, while they showered his citadel with arrows.

Meanwhile, from the



relative sanity of Oxford, Wycliffe proposed a radical answer to the religious confusion:

"If there were a hundred popes, and if all the friars were turned into cardinals, their opinion on matters of faith ought not to be believed except insofar as they have been founded upon Scripture".

To this opinion Wycliffe added others, still more unsettling: the clergy ought—quite literally—to live in that poverty and with that humility which (the gospels clearly indicated) Christ had prescribed for himself and his disciples.

'Transubstantiation' (the transformation of the bread and wine of the Mass into the body and blood of Christ, and the consequent salvation of the communicants) was not caused by the clergy; they merely celebrated it.

The highest duty of priests therefore was lively preaching to rescue people from sin.

Wycliffe accordingly helped recruit and train 'Poor Preachers', who travelled through the countryside, spreading these ideas.

## Agitational

His translation of the Bible was intended as their chief help. It was, in a very real sense, an agitational document.

And, in a period which saw the eruption and the bloody suppression of the Peasants' Revolt (1381), it was judged extremely dangerous.

"Thus", wrote a worried reactionary, "the pearl of the gospel is scattered abroad and trodden under foot of swine".

It is probable that Wycliffe himself was only saved from violence at the hands of Richard II by his doctrine that the English monarchy owed obedience and taxes to the Pope only insofar as this was prescribed by Scripture (which, conveniently, had nothing explicit to say on the subject).

Harsher steps were, however, taken against Wycliffe's expanding movement soon after his death.

In 1401 Parliament passed an Act with the candid title *De Haeretico Comburendo*—On the Desirability of Burning Heretics.

These early 'reformers' of the Church were the forerunners of the Lutheran reformation, which successfully challenged Papal supremacy and irreversibly split the western Church.

The struggle to wrest the Bible from the hands of the priesthood was an essential element in undermining the dictatorship of the feudal church, and thereby in preparing the social revolution which overthrew feudalism.

With the development of printing (which reached England about 1474) the struggle intensified again.

Translation of the Bible became a capital offence. The publication of the first English printed Bible (in 1525) was the work of another scholar from Oxford, William Tyndale.

He also was burned for his efforts (as were many copies of his Bible).

## Irony

Few men can have done more for the revolutionary education of England. By a bitter irony it was in the London primary school named after William Tyndale that the education authorities recently chose to stage a witch-hunt of left-wing teachers for trying to teach in a way accessible to working class children.

The learned bureaucrats who sacked the Tyndale teachers would do well to recall Tyndale's own words:

"Ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the



# THESE BETRAYALS HALTED HOTEL UNIONISATION FOR 30 YEARS!

At the meeting held in support of the Garners' Steak House strikers on April 13, in Transport House, Reg Taylor said that when he was on strike over 30 years ago the most important thing he learnt was: 'Don't trust the gravy train officers at the top'.

Brother Taylor was one of well over 1,000 London hotel workers who struck during 1946 and 1947.

Not only were they systematically stabbed in the back by the then leadership of the General and Municipal Workers Union and viciously attacked by police and courts but they were also attacked by a Court of Inquiry, the Industrial Court and other equivalents of today's ACAS.

These forces between them ensured that the fight for basic trade union rights was pushed back for a whole generation until it has had to be taken up again now by the workers at Garners, Claridges and the other battles that inevitably lie ahead.

## Claims

A number of press reports have claimed that the Claridge's strike last month was the first ever at the hotel. This is by no means the case.

Immediately after the war, many hotel and catering workers in London were recruited into the General and Municipal Workers Union.

The GMWU's local catering officer was Arthur Lewis who was at the time and still is, MP for the Upton area of East London.

During 1946 about 500 of the 800 workers at the Savoy Hotel joined the GMWU. The management consistently refused to deal with the union, and at 6 am on 8 October picket lines were out at the Savoy on the demand for recognition.

What is particularly significant about what happened next, in the light of more recent events, is that the next day, 9 October, workers throughout the Savoy chain came out on strike in sympathy with the recognition demand.

## Black supplies

These included waiters, chambermaids and cooks from Claridges, others from the Berkley and Dorchester Hotel and from Simson's Restaurant in the Strand.

Other unions called their members out in the hotels—electricians and carpenters included, and meat porters at Smithfield promised to



Atlee—his government together with the TUC knifed post-war workers struggles

This support was a decisive factor in the success of this particular strike. Strikers began to come out in the following days at the Russell and Piccadilly Hotels, and other managements announced their recognition of the GMWU, at a number of big restaurants, including the Princess and La Maison de France.

The *Times* wrote on 10 October that there was 'no justification' in the refusal of the Savoy management to grant recognition.

At first the management was intransigent. Just as at Claridges and Garners recently, they published claims that everything was proceeding normally.

They took out a court injunction against Lewis and two leaders of the Branch, Arturo Ravera and Francesco Piazza, to try to prevent them leading the picketing.

## Statement

They even issued a statement which said:

"The strike is simply a method of recruiting for the union and is part of a general scheme for an all-powerful position of trade unionism in this country".

For all this bravado, the Savoy management was nevertheless compelled to capitulate.

On 15 October they met Charles Dukes, GMWU General Secretary, Tom Cochrane, National Catering Officer and Wavering, the London District Secretary, as well as Arthur Lewis. Recognition was agreed.

The management, however, had left themselves an important loophole. The

fully worked-out agreement.

Furthermore, the involvement of the national leadership of the GMWU, active supporters of the austerity policies of the then Labour government, ensured that any further moves by the hotel workers would be stabbed in the back

## Balance

The new balance of forces showed itself early in the following year, 1947.

On 3 February a meeting at Lincoln's Inn Fields run by the Savoy workers union branch, protested about the delay of the management in signing the recognition agreement and called for strike action if this was not soon agreed.

The response of the union leadership to this was to issue a joint statement with the management a week later, attacking the irresponsible element which had run the Lincoln's Inn Fields meeting, and asserting that a 'most cordial atmosphere' had developed between the bureaucrats and the employers.

This cordiality, however, was not extended to the Savoy workers themselves.

## Threat

In March, the management felt able, at the same time as eventually signing the recognition agreement to threaten the dismissal of Francesco Piazza, one of the main militants, against whom they had previously served an injunction.

This threat was immediately followed, on 13 March 1947, by a walk-out

Within the next few days, sympathy strikes followed at the Berkley and Piccadilly Hotels, and also at Claridges, Simson's and even Lyons Corner House.

More workers would undoubtedly have come out had it not been for the strenuous efforts of the GMWU leadership to confine it to the Savoy chain alone.

The GMWU leadership



Cooper—stepped into Lewis' vacant position

went further in their sabotage.

On 22 March they actually agreed with the employers through the new negotiating machinery to Piazza's suspension for 14 days.

They next persuaded the strikers to return, and it was then found that the management would not have Piazza back even after the suspension.

Each time the GMWU officials took a step back, it strengthened the Savoy management, and weakened those workers who had

Further action was delayed during the summer and autumn of 1947 by the submission of the case to the Industrial Court and then the National Arbitration Tribunal.

This was the machinery which existed at the time because the Labour government had retained wartime legal restrictions on the right to strike.

## Institutions

Such institutions did no more than their modern day equivalents to serve the cause of the workers.

Thus, in an interesting parallel to events of our own day, the National Arbitration Tribunal actually reported on 30 July in favour of the reinstatement of Piazza.

By this time, the Savoy management felt in a strong enough position to do a George Ward and refuse to carry out the reinstatement.

A recent decision in the ordinary courts had only just made it possible for them to defy the 'advice' of the Arbitration Tribunal.

Once again, the Union leadership dallied. Instead of calling the inevitable strike they insisted on a ballot first.

After this had been passed, they then tried to postpone further action when the Minister of Labour announced a Court of Inquiry on 4 November.

The union members were not to be held back any longer. They walked out at the Savoy on 6 November, and were soon joined by others at Claridges, the Berkley and Simson's—in all, over 1000.

This struggle, which continued during the sittings of the Court of Inquiry in the rest of November 1947, proved much more bitter and violent than the two previous strikes.

On 11 November lorries were stopped from delivering supplies by a mass picket of over 200, some of whom sat in the road. Others shouted "Squeeze the rich! Support the strikers!"

It was said that a number of strikers were reluctant to be identified on the picket line so supporters came in large numbers from other unions.

In contrast to its later stance, the Electrical Trades Union called out its members in support. Three Labour MPs appeared on the picket line on 12 November.

## Violence

It was after this that violence started. At 6am on 16 November three petrol tankers appeared at the Savoy and the 100 or so pickets who were on duty at the time were violently attacked by the police.

On the following day there were further violent scenes. Over 20 people were arrested, including Arthur Lewis.

Many protests against the police action followed, including statements in Parliament from the late Marcus Lipton.

More effective opposition was mounted by Smithfield meat market porters, who struck for one hour each morning.

Ship repair workers in the port of London stopped work on 25 vessels in another gesture of solidarity.

Meanwhile, the Court of Inquiry had been proceeding with its work, and issued its report on 24 November.

It again recommended the reinstatement of Piazza. This time, however, it was not necessarily to be to his old job, but "on terms reasonably equivalent to that which he had in the service of the Savoy".

## Strike ballot

The Court also attacked the strike ballot and called on the union leaders to

district or local officials should be permitted to undertake the leadership of strikes which the National Executive has not thought proper to recognise as official".

These statements provided the GMWU leaders with a pretext to go for a settlement on any terms, and to move in against the local leaders, including their own full-time officials who continued to support the strikes.

On 2 December the new GMWU General Secretary Tom Williamson announced the settlement terms—employment for Piazza outside the Savoy group and reinstatement of the strikers "as soon as possible".

Arthur Lewis was excluded from the meeting at which the strikers were told—without apparently being allowed even to vote—that they had to go back on these terms.

He was soon afterwards relieved of his responsibilities in acting for the unions in the catering industry.

This was by no means the end of what Williamson and the GMWU national leadership had in store, however.

## Interest

The only interest they now took in local militants, some of whom were still suspended by management, was to take disciplinary action against them within the union.

On 3 December the London District Committee of the union expressed its full confidence in Arthur Lewis and passed a resolution 'disapproving of the action of the National Executive and expressing profound disgust at the terms of the settlement'.

Two days later this committee was suspended, as were the officers of the catering branch covering the Savoy.

The action against the branch was allegedly because of talk there of setting up a break-away union, a hardly surprising, if incorrect, reaction in the face of what had already happened.

Soon afterwards district chairman J. Leslie and secretary V. Fox were suspended from office, as also was J. Blair, another prominent member of the branch.

Lewis, who at first wrongly fought his suspension through the courts, was later not only kicked out of his full-time position, but expelled from the union altogether for circulating a leaflet to the conference which put forward his case.

It is also of interest to notice that the bureaucrat who was put in charge of running the London district was none other than Jack Cooper, later Basnett's immediate predecessor as GMWU General Secretary and eventually elevated to the House of Lords.

## Diabolical

The diabolical actions of the GMWU bureaucracy played an important role in holding back unionisation in the hotel and catering industry until the present generation.

There are obvious parallels with the present situation in the disastrous use of the courts, and the reactionary role of union officials.

It is important, however, not to push the parallels too far. Though the unsuccessful Claridges struggle of April 1978 was kept isolated and weak, the bureaucracy is not in a position now to move in with the same viciousness.

Furthermore, the working class is stronger and more confident now than it was following a long period of depression and war.

Now through the construction of a principled leadership in 1978, the laws of history and of class struggle can prove stronger than any bureaucratic apparatus or in-



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INDUSTRIAL NEWS



PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

EGA faces new threat

The decision to close the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital has now been made.

At its meeting last Monday the North-East Thames Regional Health Authority decided unanimously to recommend to David Ennals, Secretary of State for the Social Services that the hospital should be closed "as soon as possible".

Thus the work-in which has kept the hospital open for the past 18 months now faces its most difficult moments.

The scene for Monday's decision was set weeks ago when the Camden and Islington AHA washed their hands of the task of closing the hospital and referred the decision to Ennals.

That move by the AHA was viewed by the capitalist press, many of the EGA workers and by the left press as a victory for the work-in.

Socialist Press alone warned that no victory had yet been won and that the fight to keep the hospital open was just reaching its most difficult stage.

We wrote that the fight was no longer against the petty bureaucrats and tin pot politicians of the AHA but was not with the DHSS

and the Lib-Lab coalition itself.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the RHA has made this decision.

Nor are we surprised that the four labour movement representatives on the RHA went along with the decision.

F.V. Hencher, from the SE Region TUC, Tessa Jowell from Camden's Labour Council, D.B. Hoodles from Islington's Labour Council and L.H. Lipson of Haringey's Labour Council all failed to dissent from the decision to close the hospital.

We are not surprised by these performances. But we do say that these people must be disciplined by their organisations, which in any case should refuse to send their members to give credence to this bosses' committee.

The important question, now, however, is the preparation for the inevitable moves by the DHSS to physically close the hospital.

The 24-hour picket which has been run down over the past few months must now be re-established.

Pledges by union branches and shop stewards committees to call strikes in defence of the EGA must be sought.

Demands must be placed on the executive members of NUPE, ASTMS, COHSE and NALGO to call London-wide strike action as soon as Ennals rubber-stamps the RHA decision.

Inside the EGA the workers must be prepared to implement real control of the hospital.

Mass meetings of union members separate from the consultants and hospital management must be called urgently to plan these actions.

A well-planned and determined defence of the EGA at this stage around its original demands—for the repair of the lift and upgrading of the hospital on its Euston Road site—will have incalculable importance in the fight against the cuts as a whole.

FBU members fight cuts in manning

Amidst a growing mood of militancy, firemen in many regions of the FBU are pressing for further industrial action in order to defend their working conditions.

With increasing bitterness, they are realising that the scandalous deal which the FBU executive hailed as a "victory" after nine weeks of solid strike action is in fact an open invitation to management to launch a blatant

attack on working conditions and reduce the effectiveness of a vital emergency service.

Action is most imminent in the London region (which voted unanimously against the deal and for continuing the strike in January) where these attacks are already well under way.

The most dangerous threat is to manning levels, which management are proposing to reduce drastically in order to pay for the agreed reduction in working hours (from a 48 hour week to a 42 hour week).

Increase

Coupled with this, they have more plans to increase the workload of a reduced number of workers, which include a scheme for making firemen do various tasks in between calls—such as cleaning out the station—and a proposed change in rota arrangement.

If any one of these proposals are implemented, it will mean that firemen are actually worse off after nine weeks of strike action.

and firemen must be wary of their leaders attempting any partial acceptance or compromise solution.

Generalised drive

These attacks are part of a generalised drive towards speed-up and rationalisation, which attempts to maintain the profitability of capitalism by increasing the rate of exploitation of workers and this drive makes no distinction between the production of motor cars and the maintenance of an emergency service.

Firemen must realise that the only reason why management are in a position to launch these attacks is because of the scandalous betrayals of their own leadership in selling out the strike.

The fight must be resumed with a new, revolutionary leadership, the only leadership that can utilise the strength and solidarity shown during the nine-week strike.

The proposals must be totally rejected by decisive industrial action, and this

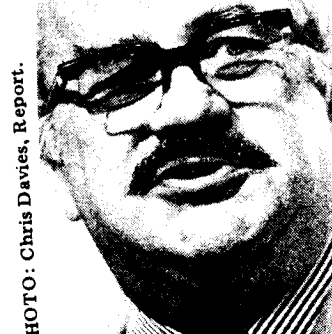


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report.

Strike call to papers

All out strikes in Thomson Regional Newspapers have been called from May 9 in support of journalists at Hemel Hempstead who have been sacked for working to rule.

The dispute is the second major confrontation to blow up this year between provincial newspaper managements and the NUJ, and reflects the frustration and agitation over pay rates in that section of the working class.

The strike has been called by the emergency committee of the National Executive after a one day strike last week throughout the group.

Thomson responded to the one day strikes by sacking journalists at Reading, Cardiff and Middlesbrough. The dispute is over extra payments promised by the company above the national 10% agreement of £7.09p.

Strike

Meanwhile three small chapels in Westminster Press have been called out on strike—although its beginning was delayed to allow talks with management to go ahead.

The chapels—at Hendon, Watford and Acton—are the last three Westminster Press papers not to have been given backdating of the national pay settlement.

Immediately following the decision at the annual conference of the NUJ to call strikes in those chapels that were left, management made new offers at Slough and Oxford, both of which were accepted.

If the strikes go ahead the dispute has the capability of being blown wide open once again.

BAN ON BRANCH

The National Executive of the 4,800 strong National Association of Probation Officers may have a small membership than other union leaderships—but determined to prove itself less bureaucratic.

The entire London branch of the Association has been suspended by the NEC following the Branch's determined stand in support of the Grunwick strikers.

Last September the Branch passed a resolution supporting a strike—and appeared on a picket carrying a NAPO banner. They were immediately ordered by the NEC to stop picketing.

The London Branch conceals that their banner could be read as a national rather than a branch banner, but insisted their right to join the picket.

Union Chairman M. Bruggen then proceeded to vote out of order any motion on Grunwick dispute at the February NEC meeting. And the London Branch was called upon to give assurance they would obey future NEC commands.

This was thrown out by 33 to 3 by the London Branch, which declared it would be bound by this issue only by the May General Meeting. But the NEC ruled the London AGM on the matter "ultra vires".

On April 14 the NEC voted a majority of 48 votes to suspend the London Branch. The right wing NAPO has clearly embarked on a collision course with its members.

And in this too they are much in common with the leadership of the TUC unions—to



# BUSMEN IN STRIKES TO STOP CUTBACKS

# Rolls Royce 0.1% victory

Virtually all London bus garages were involved in one-hour lightning strike action last week. At Holloway garage all runs stopped from 8.30 to 9.30 on Monday.

This action has been organised unofficially by London branch representatives in response to the Tory GLC's plans to drastically reduce schedules, both immediately and again in the autumn.

Although the plans have been in the air for some time, no official action has been prepared. There have been no negotiations with management.

This week's lightning action was intended to force the initial step of talks with management, which have now been agreed for Tuesday.

The management presents the cuts as an "improvement in service".

They maintain that by formalising the effective cut of 10% understaffing, transferring to one man operation buses and reducing runs and the length of route the service will be more 'reliable'.

Transport workers fear that the package will include reduction of overtime, an end to rest day working—both of which will cut their already miserable take home wages and mean a reduction in future availability of jobs.

The danger now comes from within the union itself.

TGWU bureaucrat Larry Smith is already preparing to betray through talks on 'productivity deals' with management.

The task facing bus workers is the preparation of an all-out struggle which will

go beyond one day protests and leaflets aimed at winning 'public sympathy', and lead to the complete shut down of

all London Transport around a programme to defend jobs and improve services.

## Leeds out for three weeks

The three week strike by Leeds bus workers in defence of a written mutuality agreement has now been made official.

The strike was sparked off by management moves to cut services in west Leeds and impose new schedules without prior agreement of union leaders.

### Conceded

Though union representatives have conceded that the

Workers at the Rolls Royce plants at Parkside and Ansty in Coventry returned to work on Monday after voting to accept a deal worked out by ACAS.

Under the deal the management agreed to pay a 9.8% increase and drop strings they had attached to their original 9.7% offer.

They had been insisting that a 12-month freeze should be imposed on

upgrading claims but these can now be pursued.

During the dispute management attempted to reintroduce the issue of piecework into the wage negotiations.

### Changeover

Some 300 workers at Parkside have yet to go over to Measured Day Work, and management were claiming that the gap between the 9.7% offer and the 10% claim should be held back to finance the changeover.

Under the deal now worked out, ACAS officials will hold the 0.2% (approximately £40,000) and "ensure its use for the ending of piecework".

The 0.1% won during the dispute will be paid out at Christmas in the form of a £5 lump sum for each worker.

It is clear from the way Rolls Royce workers stuck to their 10% claim that the willingness to fight management is there.

Besides the battles over pay for work done during the dispute in the work-ins at both plants, the key issue coming up will be negotiations to end piecework.

### Partial gain

Union leaders are reported as willing to end piecework if earnings can be guaranteed.

In securing an agreement through the intervention of ACAS, management, although forced to back down on piecework and the freeze on upgrading claims, have won a partial gain in their struggle to direct workers towards conciliation and arbitration through a state body (ACAS).

The workers at Rolls Royce will rapidly come up against the fact that 9.8% will not do a great deal to compete with price rises.

The failure of the leadership to confront the wage-cutting Lib-Lab coalition by going for only 10% did not mean that management would suspend attacks on wages and conditions.

### Open the books

The demands by management for MDW are part of an all-out attack on the shop floor.

Workers should fight now for the opening of the company books as an important weapon in the coming struggles to defend wages, conditions and jobs.

## The real tin-pot bosses

Workers at two Cornish tin mines now face the threat of redundancy.

The Swiss-based multinational company which owns Mount Wellington recently announced the imminent closure of the mine.

This was followed by a similar announcement last week from the South African owners of the Wheal Jane mine, on the grounds that mining would become 'uneconomical' with the increased flooding that would result from Mount Wellington's closure.

The Cornish mining industry was wrecked in the last century as imperialism gained access to far cheaper supplies.

But a world shortage of tin meant that extraction once again became a profitable proposition in this area, and these two mines were re-opened in the 1970s.

Now with the international slump in production, demand has fallen sharply. For capitalists, tin-mining in Cornwall is no longer a viable investment.

Shutting down Wheal Jane and Mount Wellington would add 800 workers to the dole queues in an area where unemployment is already running at 14%.

Predictably avoiding the necessary task of setting up a workers' inquiry to investigate the levels and effects of the flooding as part of the central fight for the nationalisation of these mines, local union officials have attempted to divert the militant opposition of the workers and sabotage their struggle against redundancy.

Harry Stephens, West Cornwall district-secretary of the TGWU, has pointed to the massive government loans to Mount Wellington's owners.

But he has used this as the basis for a call on Moss Evans to suggest that the government seize the mine's shaft and pumps—and then hand them over to Consolidated Gold Mines so that this enormous capitalist enterprise could run Wheal Jane profitably!



## Garners: fight for levy

A glowing tribute to TGWU full-time catering officer George Abrahams appears in the latest issue of the employers' trade journal *The Caterer*.

Abraham's co-operation and support for the company's handling of staff grievances in the period leading up to the strike is praised by John Owen, who until recently was the General Manager of Garners' Steak Houses.

From this article it is possible to see the legacy of class collaboration that has burdened the leadership of the strike since the beginning.

However, since it became clear to a section of the strikers that to mobilise the membership of the TGWU around policies that would win the strike would inevitably

involve conflict with Abrahams, a consistent fight has been waged to wrest control from the paralysing grip of the bureaucracy and their spokesmen within the strike committee.

The latest gain in this fight came with the adoption of a resolution in the 1/647 branch of the TGWU on Monday 24 April.

Moved by members of the Garners strike committee it called on the Regional Committee of the TGWU to pay the hard-pressed strikers £36 a week by means of a Regional levy or any other means it may consider.

### Precedent

They will want to avoid, as a matter of principle, setting a precedent on the levy which could force them into sustaining major strikes in strategic

industries in the future.

This is, of course, the last thing this rotten leadership, committed to the defence of capitalism wants to do.

### Opposition

The passing of this resolution despite the opposition of Abrahams (who had blocked it at the last branch meeting) and strike committee chairman Rachman, demonstrates the degree of support within the strike for those who have opposed Abraham's policies of isolation and betrayal.

That this represents further proof that the bureaucracy are losing control of the strike was reflected in the appearance of National Organiser and Regional Secretary Ron Todd on the picket lines on Thursday.

Despite the assurances of Todd and Cooke (Food, Drink and Tobacco Trade Group secretary), that everything would now be done to win this strike, the strikers are determined to force their leaders to mobilise support around all their policies of secondary blacking, mass picketing and the raising of strike pay to £36.

To this end they picketed the Regional Committee meeting on Tuesday 2 May with a leaflet demanding support for these policies.

### Grunwick

The Garners strikers had a float on the May Day march within the Region 1 TGWU contingent. On last year's demonstration the Grunwick strikers had a similar float following the Region 1 Committee; by their fight to mobilise the TGWU membership around policies that can win the strike but that conflict with the interests of the bureaucracy, the Garners strikers demonstrate their determination not to follow the same path of betrayal as the Grunwick strikers.

## 14% pay fight

White collar workers at Shell Mex tanker depots went on strike last week over a claim for a 14½% across-the-board increase.

Even non-unionised staff came out in a 100% response. Management had offered between 10% for the lower grades and 18% for the highest grade, but this had not succeeded in splitting the workforce.

The tanker drivers' Midlands Committee met and decided that picket lines would be respected in spite of management threats of immediate suspension.

However, confusion reigned about whether the strike was to be made official. Of the two unions involved, ASTMS said it was official, but did nothing, while ACTSS said it was unofficial but made preliminary moves to arrange strike pay.

In that confused situation some depots have returned to work whereas others are still on strike.

What is needed to win the dispute is above all an effective national rank and file leadership, politically equipped to counter the demoralisation and confusion spread by the full time officials.



Our cartoonist Tim was completely tied up this weekend producing the above May Day float. Official returns next week.





## SPECIAL FUND

After an excellent start the Special Fund has fallen back this week with only £32.50 arriving in the office in the last seven days, making a total to date of £745.27.

If we are going to reach the £2,000 target by the end of July we need to raise an average of £100 a week over the next three months.

Readers and supporters who have pledged money to this fund should therefore begin sending this money in as soon as possible

and fundraising activities should be planned in each area to make sure the full amount is raised in good time.

All readers and supporters are invited to help in the raising of this fund which is intended to lay a sound financial basis for a series of publications over the next three months by sending a donation to:

WSL Special Fund  
31, Dartmouth Park Hill  
London NW5 1HR

# BAILIFFS SMASH UP NURSERY OCCUPATION

A squad of over fifty police and bailiffs finally evicted the occupiers of the South Oxford Nursery at 11.30 am last Friday.

Twenty parents, trade unionists and campaign supporters along with fourteen nursery children left the building singing after bailiffs brutally smashed their way in by two separate entrances, showering broken glass over the nursery.

Earlier the same day, at 7.30 am, a much smaller contingent of police and bailiffs had failed to implement a County Court possession Order when no one from the Council hierarchy turned up to give them the authority to break down the doors.

### Possession order

The previous day Judge Verney had granted the Council's application for the possession Order and, in a display of predictable vindictiveness, had awarded costs against five named respondents including Ted Eames, an unemployed teacher and parent who had been helping to run the class, Ann-Marie Sweeney a parent and NUPE vice-chairman, and NUPE Divisional Officer George Anderson.

The extensive national coverage given to the eviction in all the media reflects the impact the six week occupation has had as the only principled direct fight against the cuts outside the London hospital occupations.

What the bourgeois press and television omits of course is any reference to the effect of the campaign on the labour movement.

### Strike action

The need now is to take this campaign to the next stage and to step up demands for strike action from NUPE leaders who must be forced to turn recent 'left' words into action and by striking to save this nursery, fight to defend the jobs of all caretakers, kitchen staff, dinner helpers and cleaners.

The local NUPE bureaucrats, Anderson and Millar, are clearly rattled by the growing militancy of their membership and are desperately looking for ways to quietly ditch the nursery campaign.

### Eroded

While they duck and run their members' rights are being steadily eroded by local authorities who gleefully seize on the Lib-Lab coalition's cuts policy and every retreat by union leaders as an excuse to make the working class pay for the crisis of capital.

The right-wing bureaucracy in the Oxford NUT has



Police and bailiffs barge in to the nursery class

also been doing its share of running as the fight over the nursery has reopened the cuts question in the teachers' union.

Jack Steadman, Divisional Secretary, clearly thought he had buried all opposition to the cuts in education last January when he masterminded an abject sell-out which ended the teachers' nine-month dispute over staffing levels.

However Steadman himself was nearly defeated in his own branch when he barely managed to manoeuvre through a derisory amendment to a motion tabled by members of the nursery Occupation Committee.

Steadman was forced to use the last resort of a frightened bureaucrat to maintain his position—and launched a witch-hunt against the nursery campaign leaders.

NUT members must decide now whether they want a trade union or a debating society. If they want a union, they must build an alternative leadership that is prepared to fight the cuts instead of merely mouthing 'concern' about them.

The actual occupation of South Oxford Nursery Class may have ended, but the class itself will continue in a nearby building whilst the campaign is stepped up to demand the immediate reinstatement of the 30 places

and the lost jobs.

As reported in last week's *Socialist Press*, the County Council refused to see a Trades Council delegation to discuss the nursery.

Trades Council officers, who on this issue can call on the clear backing of wide layers of the workers movement must insist that the negotiations go ahead as planned.

The continuing struggle around the South Oxford Nursery has shown the vital role of principled leadership in giving a determined direction to the fight for basic rights.

The Workers Socialist League takes up Trotsky's call in the Transitional Pro-

gramme to "Turn to the Woman Worker!" For this to be anything more than an empty cry the labour movement must not only fight to maintain existing nursery provision but also ensure that such inadequate provision as exists is improved and extended.

This means carrying on the fight to break the Lib-Lab coalition at every level.

Action against the cuts will be the theme of a nursery campaign rally in Oxford on Saturday May 27.

Details from Ted Eames, 7, East Street, Osney, Oxford.

## Drivers strike shuts down Cowley

350 cartransporter voted overwhelmingly Friday to continue strike in defence of Preston, chairman of Branch and senior steward Cartransport Ltd.

Preston was sacked months ago accused of by management. Now been cleared of the and drivers from all of companies moving £5,000 per week production the showrooms are for his reinstatement imbursement.

The dispute closed Cowley plants last week they became congested cars. Leyland intend to run production for a few this week having reorganised storage space.

### Sell-out Bid

Friday's mass meeting strongly urged to resign by David Buck of Oxford District Secretary the TGWU.

Buckle urged that accept management's offer to accept the outcome of industrial tribunal. Preston elect to resign on complaint of unfair dismissal.

Buckle said there was no official support for strike since the strikers not given the comparison days notice more agreed to ACAS.

Fortunately he failed to convince the meeting correctly decided in defence of their victim senior steward could be delayed further more still more legal wrangling strike goes on.

# WHICH WAY FROM THE CARNIVAL?



In the biggest display of anti-fascist feeling since the 1930's, 50,000 people, mainly youth, marched from Trafalgar Square to Victoria Park, Hackney in the Anti Nazi League's "Carnival Against the Nazis".

Predictably, 'left' MPs Audrey Wise and Ian Mikardo were among the platform speakers at the rally in Trafalgar Square, ostentatiously parading their anti-fascist credentials, but naturally declining to explain their failure to lift a finger in the struggle against the anti-working class Lib-Lab coalition and the class collaboratorist betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy.

The huge turnout for the march is a clear indication of the tremendous growth of feeling against racism and fascism amongst working class youth.

But the ANL is quite unable to give the direction and leadership necessary to these youth.

The apolitical nature of the carnival summed up in the slogan "NF=No Fun" is inadequate in the present situation where this strength of feeling amongst youth has to be directed back into the organised working class.

The task posed to those seeking to organise these youth is to explain the material causes of the

growth of racism and fascism. Central to this is the inability of the Labour movement and the Lib-Lab coalition to backers among the trade union bureaucracy for the solution of homelessness and unemployment which the fascists a hearing ready made "solution" of "immigrants".

The ANL, however, the prominence within of the SWP, is unable to answer these questions because Liberal Lord Avebury and of the other celebrity would disassociate from campaign.

The ANL is therefore to advance the programme to mobilise the workers against their treachery and for the building of defence squads against fascists.

The Workers Socialist League though having considerable modest resources at its disposal than the ANL, will continue to struggle for such political knowledge that there is a way in which the threat of the extreme right can be