

# SOCIALIST ACTION

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## IMMIGRATION : RACIST THREAT MOUNTS

R. Munro

Over the past month, the press has indulged in an almost unparalleled witch-hunt against immigrant workers. Hardly a day has gone by without cases such as the Asians from Malawi hitting the headlines in a deliberate attempt to whip up racist feeling.

Enoch Powell, sensing the new mood, has not been slow to take advantage of it. In his most recent outburst, he once again accused the government of 'covering up' the fact that they have wildly exceeded immigration quotas. He followed this up, at a meeting of the police federation, by suggesting that 'mugging' was a direct result of the numbers of Blacks being allowed into the country.

Sheltering behind this racist offensive, the National Front has begun to translate the verbal attacks into more physical ones. Last month, they organised two deliberately provocative marches in Bradford and Birmingham calling for an end to immigration. The demonstrations were arranged to pass through high immigrant areas.

### Labour

The response of the Labour government to this campaign has been spineless. Instead of challenging it, they meekly admitted that a mistake had been made in immigration quotas and leading Labour figures (such as Bob Mellish) pointed out the need to take much firmer action by 'tightening' up on the present law.

The back-down of the Labour government before this offensive can also be measured from the fact that Callaghan only recently sacked Alex Lyons (Minister for State at the Home Office) who, while no radical, has been calling for more fair treatment for Blacks. Lyons' response—that Callaghan has never had 'much time for the Blacks'—is indicative of Labour's intention of introducing severer laws soon.

### Diversion

The fact that a racist offensive is being mounted at present is not, of course, accidental. Even though the labour movement has, up to now, acquiesced in the government wage freeze and record 'jobless' total, there is a growing opposition developing as shown recently in the May 26th demonstration. In order to 'head off' this development, the

'right' are quite consciously beginning to wield the racist card to confuse and divide the labour movement.

The fact that the Labour leaders have not responded to this challenge is highly dangerous. By backing down before the racists, they are only helping create a climate in which the demagoguery of figures like Powell finds a growing response. They are, in a very real sense, helping to pave the way for a racist backlash as blacks are blamed for the high unemployment, worsening social services & low wages.

The concrete results of the Labour leaders' spineless attitude has already been seen in the local election results. Whereas the labour vote plummeted, racist groups like the National Front received record figures (as high as 30% in an area like Bradford). While this vote is, in large measure a 'protest vote', it does indicate racist moods developing among layers of the workers' movement and is a clear warning signal.

### Responsibility

The fact that such an attitude is beginning to spread in the labour movement means that socialists are faced with a heavy responsibility. Unless it can meet such a challenge, unless it can turn its verbally anti-racist stance into a concrete and effective campaign to root out racism, the prejudices built up over centuries of imperialist rule will become ever-more inflamed.

It is this which makes the campaign launched by CRIA (Campaign to Repeal the 1971 Immigration Act) so vital. A serious struggle to repeal that Act—around which the right-wing are mobilising—can provide a powerful focal point for struggling inside the labour movement against racist attitudes in general.

The 1971 Act not only excludes Blacks entering the country on the basis of colour but ensures that the few who do manage to 'get in' are treated as cheap labour in menial jobs and denied basic rights. Building mass action to demand the labour leaders repeal the Act is the most effective way, at this stage, of challenging head-on the racist demagoguery of figures such as Powell.

Continued on back page.

## SAY NO TO WAGE CUTS



Day of Action march on 26th May.

"This budget must be one of the most reactionary ever produced by a Labour Chancellor". The Tribune group's comment is not far off the mark. The latest stage in the Social Contract, accepted without so much as a whimper by the TUC, pledges itself to savagely curb wages while allowing prices to rise unchecked.

Already, under the 10% norm that limited wage increases to £6, real living standards have plummeted by 6%. Tightening this further to 4½%, which the TUC was able to 'wring' out of Healey, will mean ever-deeper inroads into living standards at a time when inflation is soaring at over 15% a year. On present trends, they will drop by about 5% by the end of 1977.

As usual, it will be those least able to bear it who will be 'asked' to carry the main burden of the freeze and the savage social service cuts made earlier this year. Despite the 'red herring' of tax concessions, the deal accepted by the TUC means that the least able will suffer the most. While those earning £50 a week can only get £2, those earning £200 can get up to £8.

### Jobless

One of Healey's justifications for extending the freeze is the need to curb the rapidly-rising jobless total. Driving down living standards to cut unemployment (which was the argument used to 'ram home' the Social Contract back in 1974) is just nonsense. Far from cutting unemployment, the latest deal can (and will) only add to the dole queues, already estimated to reach the one and a half million mark by the end of the year.

Freezing wages while allowing prices to rise unchecked has one aim: to push up the profit margins of British industry which has found itself increasingly unable to compete in overseas markets due to its 'antiquated techniques'. Increasing profit margins is seen as vital to providing the capital to 'modernise' industry first begun by the Wilson government in 1964 with its series of mergers and of 'productivity deals'.

Modernising British industry will not mean more jobs, however, as Healey pretends, but throwing yet more on the dole. The attempt by the National Enterprise Board to pour massive funds into Chrysler or British Leyland has not been to save jobs but to create a more efficient firm at the direct expense of thousands. In Chrysler, alone, the 'bailing-out' operation led to the loss of over 10,000 jobs.

### Connivance

The 4½% wage freeze agreed to by Healey is, in this sense, only

half of the picture. Workers are expected to take drastic cuts in living standards to finance 'rationalisation schemes' which will lead to thousands more joining the dole queues. The government's declared aim of reducing the unemployment total to about 750,000 by 1979 is pure fiction.

### Action Programme

Fortunately, ever-wider layers are beginning to see through the 'blackmail' attempts by the TUC leaders. The growing opposition to the 'pay deal' in unions such as the NUM or AEUW is a clear indication of the mood building up for a real challenge to the pro-capitalist policies of the present government. This opposition has already begun to assume a more central focus in the mass action launched last month by Scottish workers against the savage social service cuts and, more recently, that launched on May 26 against the high jobless total.

For this growing opposition to be effective, however, these actions cannot be allowed to remain at the level of mere 'protests'. No doubt, the Communist Party & its allies among the left Labour MPs would like. They must act as a springboard for carrying the fight into the labour movement into the trade unions & Labour Party branches—for a programme based on the interests of working people. The labour leaders must be forced to challenge head-on the government's pro-Tory policies and demand it implement those in the interests of working people who put it into office back in 1974.

The policies put forward by the CP and Labour 'lefts' are not just inadequate in this respect. Calling for 'import controls' and, in some cases, for 'reduced work permits' at a time of rapidly-rising unemployment can be positively dangerous by helping to foment division in the workforce. What is needed is a programme which will unite that workforce and not divide it one that can bring together both the employed and unemployed in a single struggle to force the government to abandon its pro-Tory policies or else replace it with one that will.

Such a programme, fought boldly in the labour movement can offer a real perspective for thousands at present demoralised by the government's policies. It can also ensure that the Tories defeated by the miners' resolute action in 1974, are kept out of office for good.

#### NO TO THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Reject all wage curbs in favour of a return to free collective bargaining. For a cost-of-living clause inbuilt into all wage agreements to safeguard against inflation.

#### FOR A 35-HOUR WEEK

Reject all lay-offs. For the existing amount of work to be divided among the existing workforce with no loss of pay.

#### OPEN THE BOOKS

No business secrets. Open the secret accounts of firms who refuse wage increases or work-sharing to workers' representatives.

#### NATIONALISE UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL

Unlike the TUC proposal of increased subsidies for firms threatening mass lay-offs, nationalise them as part of a workers' plan for production.

#### PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

In order to absorb the unemployed, oppose all cuts in public spending and demand the labour and materials standing idly by be used to improve housing, hospitals and schools.



CRIA demonstration against the 1971 Immigration Act, April 11th. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report).

Articles on Abortion, Education, Fascism, Ireland, Labour Party, Racism, Students, S. Africa, Portugal, Spain, Zimbabwe.

# ZIMBABWE: GUERRILLA ACTION MOUNTS

by  
Peter Marais



As guerrilla activity mounts in Zimbabwe against the white racist regime, increased diplomatic pressure is being mounted from Whitehall to force Smith to come to a deal. The main aim of this pressure is to force him to make concessions to the moderate wing of the ANC (led by Joshua Nkomo\*) in an attempt to head off the threat of a race war which could sweep through the whole of Southern Africa.

The most recent diplomatic manoeuvres followed the breakdown of the talks between Prime Minister Smith and the Zimbabwean nationalist leader Nkomo last March as the guerrilla action in Eastern Zimbabwe started to mount. The British government is only too aware that the 'stalling tactic' employed by Smith since that time - advocating token participation of a few black leaders in the government - is quite inadequate to hold back the ever growing mass pressure for majority rule.

On March 22nd, the then Foreign Secretary Callaghan outlined a set of proposals to the House of Commons to lease the situation. Their main aim was to pressurise Smith to make concessions to the Black nationalist leaders by accepting 'in principle' the idea of majority rule and to hold 'democratic elections' within 18 months to 2 years.

## Appeal

Callaghan's statement included an appeal to the white settlers to dump Smith if he was unwilling to accept the proposals. 'As things are', he pointed out, 'Mr. Smith is leading the country on the path of death and destruction. Even at this late stage, I ask the European population of Rhodesia to believe that there is an alternative path...'. If the 'alternative path' was accepted, Callaghan suggested, the British government would participate in the talks to help work out 'election procedures' for the

new government.

Callaghan coupled this pressure with financial inducements to the white settlers. The government would, he said, be willing to consider 'financial & other means' to assist those 'Europeans who are prepared to put their faith in Rhodesia' by remaining after a Black government is installed. The aid would include direct grants and loans, as well as an attempt to lift the United Nations economic sanctions against the country.

Callaghan also expressed one of the prime concerns of the British government - out to protect its interests not only in Zimbabwe but also in South Africa which a wide-scale race war would threaten - that the settlement should be such that 'guerrilla activity should soon cease'.

## Interests

Although Callaghan did not spell it out, the real aim of the British government is precisely to arrange an 'orderly' transfer to majority rule which is, after the Angolan experience, seen as inevitable.



Joshua Nkomo and James Callaghan.

Platform' Campaign is to be seen as 'opposing democratic rights is nonsense. The labour movement has never been - as Cde Michelson seems to be - in favour of 'free speech' for fascists.

F.R. (Oxford)

## We Reply

Cde JB's letter represents an argument that is widespread on the left today. It is full of flaws.

Although Cde JB never actually spells it out, his letter infers that the NF is an immediate threat. This is patently incorrect. Fascism, as a mass movement, can only develop out of the demoralisation of the workers' movement following resounding defeats. The entire experience of the 'thirties confirms this. To pose the NF as a serious threat today is not only to adopt the pessimistic conclusion that the labour movement has already been defeated (or is bound to suffer defeat in the coming period), it is to turn the whole perspective of struggle away from the real danger - the attack made by the Labour government - onto a possible future fascist menace.

Cde JB might reply that stopping the NF 'in its tracks' today is the sole way of ensuring this threat doesn't get off the ground. This is naive. The recent provocations of the NF in Birmingham and Bradford - marching through immigrant areas - show that the 'punch up' policy of left groups such as the IMG over the years has been worthless. What these groups have not grasped is that a few

confrontations with the NF today will

# BLACKS TORTURED

Many hundreds of Africans in north-east Zimbabwe, an area of fertile guerrilla activity, have been routinely tortured, according to a report released by Amnesty International in London recently.

According to Amnesty International, the torture techniques used by the racist Smith regime include "...beating on the body with fists and sticks, beating on the soles of the feet with sticks and the application of electric shocks by means of electrodes or cattle goads. In addition, torture victims have been threatened with castration or immersed headfirst in barrels of water until unconscious".

Amnesty International also estimated that more than 700 blacks are being detained without trial. Some of them have already spent ten years in prison. More than 500 additional political prisoners have been convicted on charges of belonging to a banned political organisation or allegedly carrying out guerrilla actions. Moreover, more than 60 people have already been hanged (sometimes after secret trials) since the white Rhodesian settlers unilaterally declared UDI in 1965. The death penalty is mandatory for conviction on charges of treason, arsen or participation in guerrilla attacks.

Amnesty International examined another technique of repression becoming ever more widely used by the white racist regime in its struggle against the liberation fighters: the forced resettlement of entire villages into barbed-wire enclosed 'protected villages'. The civil rights group estimated that between 100,000 and 300,000 blacks have already been herded into compounds.

What the Labour government (as its counterpart in South Africa) fears above all is that Smith's intransigence could lead to a major race war in Zimbabwe which could overspill into neighbouring countries and threaten Imperialism's massive investment there.

The Economist was more open. It pointed out last month that if the British government participated in the negotiations between the white settlers and Zimbabweans, it would '...have something to say on the scope of the franchise which will help to decide what sort of men will lead the first majority-rule government. What the Economist was stressing was, of course, the hope that British intervention could create a 'moderate majority rule government' which was not hostile to imperialism's interests.

Washington has been quick to come to the support of the Labour government's intervention. The New York Times, reflecting thinking in US ruling circles, pointed out that 'the stakes are so great in Southern Africa and the cost of failure is likely to be so catastrophic that Britain deserves support in this latest desperate effort'.

## Negative

Despite the carrot and stick treatment from London, however, the Smith regime has so far rejected the proposals. Prime Minister Smith went so far as to call them 'no less extreme than those of the African National Council', a wing of which Smith had held discussions with previously. For the Rhodesian settlers, the loss of political power to a Black government would mean an end to their privileged social and economic position which exists solely through dominance over the black majority.

While Smith continues with a few token reforms (such as calling for a few Black Ministers to participate in the government), in reality he is intensifying the anti-guerrilla campaign. Over the past months, the regime has clearly expanded its programme of forced resettlement of the Black population in rural areas so as to 'isolate' the guerrillas from any base. At the same time, wide-scale terror is

being conducted among the black population (particularly farm workers) who are accused of being accomplices of the guerrillas. It is clear that the Smith regime, despite its token concessions, is grimly determined to retain majority rule in Zimbabwe and is preparing to face the gathering storm arms in hands.

## Britain

Despite the fact that the British government has condemned Smith's intransigence in refusing to make concessions, it is clear that its main concern is not the principle of 'majority rule' (which it has turned a blind eye to in the past). Knowing that they cannot any longer hold back the tide of liberation in Zimbabwe, they would like to see an 'orderly' transfer of power to men loyal to Britain's interests.

At the same time as pressurising the Smith regime, however, both the British and US governments have attempted to warn the freedom fighters not to go 'too far'. In late March, Kissinger stated the USA would not tolerate the use of Cuban troops (previously involved in Angola) anywhere else, even against the white minority regimes. He also warned Mozambique that Washington would not support those 'who rely on Cuban troops'.

Callaghan was even more direct. On March 23rd, he told visiting Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko that any Cuban intervention in Zimbabwe, even indirect, would be construed as a direct attack against Britain itself. Such warnings, in themselves, are sufficient to expose the hypocritical concern of the Labour government for 'majority rule'.

Far from opposing those who are against racism in Zimbabwe, the Labour government should be called on to demand immediate majority rule & to deny the minority any assistance militarily and economically. At the same time, it should equally be called on to condemn the racist regime in South Africa (about which it has kept curiously mute) and deny it any assistance in terms of arms or investment by which that government continues to spread its control over the vast areas of southern Africa.

# FASCISM

## THE DEBATE CONTINUES

Dear Cdes,

In your last issue, Cde Michelson takes up what she considers the wrong tactics adopted by the left in dealing with the NF. She therefore reveals an inability to grasp what lies behind these tactics.

The whole point about the NF - which she, herself, draws attention to - is that it concentrates on extra-parliamentary activity. This is how a fascist movement always develops. It is by participating in mass actions like SPUC or the Stop the Immigration Campaign - as well as marching behind its own banners - that it poses as an attractive force for those frustrated by the 'traditional' 'right'.

The aim of the 'No Platform for Fascists' campaign is to stop this development in its tracks. By preventing the NF using the streets ('by any means necessary'), the left can seriously undermine its key appeal to the disillusioned and frustrated: its activism. The recent break-up of the NF only goes to show how correct these tactics have been.

Cde Michelson hides her refusal to take up the challenge of the NF by talk about the need to fight them 'politically' and not just 'organisationally'. This is double-talk. Socialists continually fight against 'racism' or 'chauvinism' but this general

ist threat tomorrow: chauvinism and racism. While the left gets involved in 'heroic' confrontations, they have done nothing to burn out these prejudices in the labour movement which continue to provide the NF with support.

While the IMG, following the Bradford demonstration, called for building the 'anti-fascist committees', it and others on the left have consistently refused to build in any serious way against racism by supporting campaigns such as CRIA which launched its first national demonstration in April. Sending a few NFers home with a bloody nose has become a substitute for a serious attempt to root racism out of the labour movement by the building of serious campaigns. There is no doubt that the potential of a fascist menace is undermined a hundred times more securely by building mass action against the Immigration Act than by small, 'isolated' conflicts with the NF.

This is not, as Cde JB might infer, to be against using force against NF thugs to defend democratic rights. The anti-black demonstrations in Bradford and Birmingham show the real need, today, to begin organising defence committees against a racist backlash. There is a major difference, however, in building such ctees involving members of the labour movement and black community and the small 'confrontations' developed by groups such as IS or IMG in their 'No Platform for Fascists' campaign.

The first involves wide layers of people in defence of their rights and shows the NF to be the racist thugs which they are. The second, by calling for small 'confrontations' which leave the masses as pure spectators, allow the NF to pose as de-

necessary - but force in defence of democratic rights and not to suppress these rights.



March for Britain. Typical of the demonstrations held by the ultra-right focused on black immigration.

In the coming period, we can be sure that racism is going to be one of the 'trump cards' used by the right to divide & confuse the workers' movement. The NF demonstrations last month are only one aspect of this 'whipping up' of racist feeling (particularly around the immigration issue). Taking up this issue - and the left must take it up - involves a twofold tactic. First, it means boldly building CRIA as a mass campaign rooted in the unions to fight against racist prejudice. And, secondly, it means supporting the creation of defence ctees against any sign of right-wing violence. It is by the use of these tactics - and not the infantile heroism of some 'left groups' - that shows the way forward.

# ABORTION: THE WAY FORWARD



On April 3rd, over 15,000 marched through London protesting any moves by the government to further restrict women's abortion rights. The demonstration, the first since last June 21st, was well timed since, at that very moment, a government - appointed Select Cttee was discussing various ways of restricting the 1967 Act. It can report at any time.

The April 3rd demonstration must, however, only be the starting point in rallying mass support against anti-abortion threats. The Select Cttee, set up originally last year to investigate James White's Bill, has already come forward with certain restrictions that have been implemented. Its new report, due any time, can only further erode the limited rights women have won under the 1967 Act.

It is going to take serious opposition from the National Abortion Campaign to stem this tide. The fact that the Cttee exists at all - let us recall - is due to a mass anti-abortion campaign (SPUC) which has led a vigorous fight over the years to repeal the 1967 Act. The decision by the Labour government to re-convene the Cttee, over-riding the decision of the Labour Party & TUC conferences who had come out for 'free abortion on request', represents a major concession to this reactionary lobby.

## Debate

In order to stem the tide, however, it is vital for NAC to use the political debate it is now developing to set its priorities straight. Only recently, in an open letter to Red Weekly (the journal of the IMG), a member of the NAC Steering Cttee correctly asked: "Is the IMG for the political dissolution of NAC into the campaign against the NHS cuts...".

The question posed is a serious one because it pinpoints the major confusion that has existed in NAC for some time over: what exactly is the struggle about? At present we (and all women) are facing a serious attack on the right to abortion. This attack - represented in the Select Cttee's attempt to curb the 1967 Act - is primarily an ideological offensive launched by the 'right' against the deepening challenge by women against discrimination in this society.

The main priority of NAC in the period ahead is to win that battle because it is only when women have won the right to abortion that they can then ensure that facilities are available to make the right a 'concrete' and not an 'abstract' one. To pose the fight against the NHS cuts as a central focus for NAC in the period ahead is to avoid the issue. What is the point, after all, in struggling for NHS abortion facilities if women are denied the right to use them?

Mobilising the broadest possible support against the threat of the 1967 Act remains, therefore, the central task before NAC today. Even though NAC may, itself, stand for 'free abortion on demand', it should at this stage be prepared to unite with all forces who are prepared to stand firm in a united defence of those rights already won. Only by winning this fight will it be possible to extend our demands.

## Orientation

It is not enough, however, to suggest that the main task before us is defence of the 1967 Act. Concretely flowing from this is: what is the best way of organising that defence? There would appear to be a great deal of confusion among the various tendencies in NAC on this vital question.

At one stage in her polemic with the IMG, T. Gorton suggests that the key to NAC's growth in the coming period lies in its 'attitude towards Parliament'. Certainly, it is true to say that a clear orientation to Parliament is central if the campaign is to draw in wide support and achieve its aims. It is, after all, Parliament which has launched the offensive against women's rights and - in the eyes of millions - it is only Parliament at this stage which can reverse the trend.

The fact that the campaign has not had a serious orientation towards Parliament - calling upon the Labour government to abide by the democratic decision of the Labour Party Conference - has seriously undercut its potential for growth. Groups such as the IMG have consistently downplayed building mass action to call upon the government to support a woman's right to choose in favour of local, fragmented work around NHS cuts in hospitals.

While Toni Gorton is correct in criticising the IMG's mistake, however, she herself falls into an almost equally bad one of viewing NAC as a mere 'appendage' of the Parliamentary struggle, as a mere 'lobby' with no real mass action perspective.

## Mass Action

NAC's inability, over the past year, to draw in wider support than it has gained is not only due to its lack of a clear orientation towards Parliament. It is also due to the refusal of the majority of the Steering Cttee to attempt to move outwards and build a 'mass action' campaign. For over six months, the majority of the Steering Cttee (including Toni Gorton) vigorously opposed any form of mass demonstration and were, initially, opposed to the April 3rd call.

While NAC must see its central thrust as towards Parliament - placing demands on the Labour government to oppose any anti-abortion moves - that opposition must be rooted in the independent action of hundreds of thousands outside of Parliament. The MPs will not move against anti-abortion threats out of 'peaceful lobbies' or 'letters' but only because they feel forced into action by thousands breathing down their necks and demanding that they take action.

It is only by building NAC as a mass action campaign, drawing in ever-wider layers, that it will be possible to show MPs that SPUC does not speak for the majority of women but a small unrepresentative minority intent on thrusting their views on all women. While it is correct to criticise groups such as the IMG for refusing to direct mass action towards Parliament, it is equally correct to criticise those who subordinate mass action to Parliamentary moves.

It is only by linking the struggle in Parliament with that on the streets - seeing the former as stemming out of the latter - that it will be possible to build a really effective opposition to the present anti-abortion threat of the Select Cttee. This means, in particular, drawing the labour movement into action and demanding that it call upon the government to abide by the democratic wish of party conference.

## Perspective

This general orientation has, in the

## ROUGE QUOTIDIEN

On March 15th, the first issue of Rouge Quotidien came off the press. The new paper represents the conversion of Rouge (weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire) into a 'daily'.

The ability of the Ligue to 'put out' a daily paper (with an estimated 15,000 circulation) is the fruit of a massive financial campaign which brought in over 2.4 million francs. The money has been used to buy new offices & the technical equipment necessary to put out a 'daily' - including the financing of a large staff of reporters.

The paper will be brought out six times a week & will obviously continue to represent the political views of the Ligue. It will, at the same time however, open its columns to other left tendencies in order to encourage a permanent debate on the left. Already the group Lutte Ouvriere has agreed to contribute to the columns of the new paper.

'Rouge Quotidien' will, obviously, face stiff competition on the left. Nevertheless, its launching clearly marks a step forward for the Fourth International in France where this is the first time - in over 50 years - that its section has been able to put out a 'daily'.

coming months, to be concretely applied. With the threat of the Select Committee reporting back any day with new restrictions, it is vital that NAC sets itself a serious objective of calling for mass action in the early Autumn. The idea of a 'Tribunal', collecting evidence in support of abortion rights, should be used to help publicise the need to mount such a vigorous action in the Autumn.

The aim of such action must be to force the government to 'abide' by the democratic decisions of the Labour Party and TUC conferences and oppose any further restrictions. The government has to be shown that the 'abortion' issue is not a question of individual MPs being allowed to vote according to their 'conscience' but a class question on which the labour movement has made a decision it wants its leaders to abide by.

The struggle to make the government abide by this decision is not just a question of drawing masses onto the streets from the women's, student and labour movement (although this is a pre-requisite for it). This mass action must be used as a 'springboard' for carrying the fight into the Labour Party itself. The MPs who 'opted' off the Select Cttee earlier this year should be given every support in their decision to wage a campaign in the party against any further restrictions. Part of this campaign should, of course, be to raise the question at the coming Labour Party conference.

If, in the period ahead, NAC is able to adopt a real mass action perspective - using this as a real 'tool' to build up support inside the Labour Party against the government's anti-abortion stance - there is every reason to believe that the present reactionary trend can be stopped.

Sabina Roberts

# LABOUR IN PERSPECTIVE

Concluding the series of articles on the Labour Party.

Writing in International Socialism 43, just prior to the 1970 General Election, Peter Sedgewick was to unhesitatingly describe the Labour Party as an 'open agency of capitalist rule'. Sedgewick's position, whose widespread acceptance by the left resulted in an 'abstentionist' line, was not new. It was merely the continuation of the one-sided and simplistic notions of the marxist left which can be traced back to the origins of the Labour Party over 75 years ago.

It is, of course, true that the Labour Party does not represent a 'socialist party' despite the adoption, in 1918, of Clause 4 which has been the source of many inter-party feuds since that time. It is, and always has been, dominated by an anti-working class leadership imbued with the ideology of reformism: i. e. of accepting the status quo and merely seeking reforms within it.

In this sense, the Labour Party is an 'agency of capitalist rule' since refusal to challenge the system forces the leadership, at times of economic downturn, to call upon the workers' movement to collaborate in making it 'work' again. Reforms are continually dependent on sacrifices as was most clear in Mac - Donald's decision to cut the dole in 1929 at a time when there were over 2 million unemployed.

## Dual Nature

Recognition of this fact in no way, however, makes the Labour Party identical with the Tories any more than the TUC, at present collaborating in a voluntary

identification, as groups like the IMG & IS tended to do during the 1970 election, is to divorce the Labour Party from its social roots. Despite its limitations, that make it clearly an obstacle on the path to socialism, the Labour Party was born out of profound struggles and advances in consciousness and is thus, at the same time, a gain towards an independent political voice.

It is this duality of the Labour Party - what Lenin summarised in the phrase 'a bourgeois Labour Party' - which has never sensitively been grasped by the marxist movement in Britain. It is a failure to grasp the party's dual nature (as a gain as well as an obstacle in the struggle for socialism) which is the reason why, over 75 years after its creation, the marxist left remains marginal to political life while the Labour Party has grown in both size and influence.

Without such a rounded understanding, it has proved impossible to effectively intervene in the labour movement and implement a strategy for breaking the grip of the labour bureaucrats over ever-wider layers. Sectarianism, a fear of succumbing to the 'reformist' ideology of the labour movement, has been the major impediment. Such an attitude has, historically, let the labour bureaucrats off the hook since it has isolated the marxists from the ranks of the labour movement which are still loyal to the Labour Party and which still regard it as their party.

## Lenin

Democratic Federation\* which split from the LRC\*\* only a few years after its creation. It came under heavy fire for its sectarian leanings from both Marx & Engels who pointed out, in a letter to Florence Kelly in 1886: '...a million or two workingmen's votes for a bone fide workingmen's party is worth more, at present, than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform'.

The sectarian tradition set by the SDF was to find a 'reflection' in the early British Communist Party (one of whose components, the British Socialist Party, had emerged from the SDF). Willie Gallagher's dismissal of the Labour Party as coming more and more 'under the influence of middle-class liberals' was to set the tone for the party's orientation in the early years. It was Lenin in particular who had to polemicise with such an infantile attitude (which went so far as to refuse voting Labour in elections), by pointing out that the Labour Party was a 'peculiar party' which may be led by the 'worst reactionaries' but which is also made up of '...all the trade unions which now have a membership of over 4 million'.

He stressed, in numerous speeches and articles, that support for the Labour Party was a pre-requisite for beginning to show those millions who still voted for it that it was insufficient to achieve their aims: '...We must first', he said, 'help Snowden and Henderson to beat Lloyd George' in order that 'on the basis of their own experience the majority of the working class will be convinced that we are right: i. e. that the Hendersons and Snowdens are absolutely good for

Lenin's grasp of the importance of a sensitive orientation to the Labour Party was such that he advised the Communist Party to affiliate to the Labour Party and 'split' with those sectarians in their midst who refused to agree. Unfortunately, the Communist Party did not follow Lenin's advice and when, in 1927, they did apply for affiliation, it was in terms designed to provoke a refusal.

## Struggle

Lenin's advice, grounded in a grasp of the party's dual character, is as applicable today as it was over 50 years ago since the Labour Party has not in any fundamental way changed. It is particularly applicable to the left which, reacting impressionistically to Wilson's period of office from 1964-70, repeated the same errors of the past. Blackburn's comparison of Labour to the Democratic Party in the USA or Sedgewick's description of it as an 'open agency of capitalist rule' were merely crude repetitions of Gallagher's earlier mistakes.

Such mistakes, which over-simplified the Labour Party and saw only its negative side, disarmed the left as it has traditionally been disarmed in its ability to intervene in the ongoing radicalisation and put forward a strategy, based on the understanding of the majority of workers, to struggle against the reformist leadership.

These latter will not be removed by ignoring the Labour Party, by shouting abuse at it from the sidelines or hoping that struggles will 'bypass' it. History has proved the opposite since figures like Callaghan and Jenkins continue to saddle the labour movement. They will only be removed by correctly grasping the party's dual character, by supporting the Labour Party as a step forward in class consciousness in order to

In our opinion

# RACIST THREAT

Over the past months a dangerous and vicious campaign against black immigrants has been launched in this country. Powell's much-publicised outburst that the government has 'exceeded' immigration quotas together with the barrage in the popular press against Asian families arriving from Malawi have one aim and one aim only; to build up a racist climate in which black immigrants can be blamed for the high unemployment and worsening living standards in the period ahead.

The concrete results of this campaign have not only been the provocations of the National Front in Birmingham or Bradford but also a series of violent assaults on immigrants nationally which led last month to the murder of two Asian students in London.

It is, of course, no accident that a racist campaign should be promoted at this point in time. There is growing fear in ruling circles that the latest stage of the 'pay deal' agreed between Healey and the TUC will not last too long in the face of growing opposition in the unions. In order to head off such opposition, in order to divide the ranks of the workers' movement, a conscious attempt is now being made to whip up racist feeling among more backward layers.

The reaction of Labour leaders has been worse than spineless. Far from challenging Powell and his ilk, leading figures have admitted that immigration can be a problem and supported the call to 'tighten up' on the present Act. By admitting that Blacks may be the cause of social problems, they play right into the hands of racist demagogues and open up the ranks of the Labour movement to a racist backlash. Such a spineless attitude can also be detected in the TUC which has made the call for less 'work permits' part of its 'fight' against unemployment.

Such an attitude cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. The socialist left, which has ignored this issue for so long, must now unite in calling on Labour leaders to answer the racist offensive by repealing the present Immigration Act which already discriminates against Blacks. At the same time as demanding the Labour leaders repeal such racist legislation, socialists should call on the labour movement to support the formation of self-defence committees by the black community against any form of racist attacks.

The question is not an incidental one; it is vital. It is not enough for the left to call in their press against racist moves. It is necessary for them to turn such a stance into concrete action by supporting now the campaign launched by CRIA\* over a year ago. Actions count more than fine words.

# NEW MAGAZINE

During the past few years, the British left grew dramatically. In no other country in the world (bar Argentina and, possibly, France) does there exist so many radicals claiming to be Trotskyist. It is ironic, however, that at precisely that time when a strong and united Trotskyist party is required, these forces should be more divided than at any time in the past 50 years.

The cause of this fragmentation - naturally demoralising for those who have begun to see the need for an alternative to the left of the Labour and Communist Parties - is partly due to the present 'ebb' in the class struggle. The temporary retreat of the labour movement in the face of recent attacks has thrown the left groups into a confused 'inner debate' which has often led to splits and expulsions.

It would be a mistake, however, to see the fragmentation as stemming merely from the current retreat of the mass movement. This 'retreat' has acted no more than as a catalyst in forcing the left to face up to its lack of political clarity over the past years. The recent splits and divisions stem, precisely, from the fact that growing numbers realise the inability of groups such as IS or the IMG to relate to the real dynamics of the class struggle.

This is not only shown in their narrow 'economism', their inability to grasp the different and complex struggles thrown up such as that of women for their liberation or more recently that of the Scottish people for self-determination. It is also shown in their inability to integrate these issues in an overall strategy of struggle within the labour movement against the reformist leaders.

It is because of this fragmentation - which reflects, above all, political confusion - that the LSA has decided to change Socialist Action from a monthly paper into a quarterly magazine. Such a magazine is seen, at this stage, as the most fruitful way of contributing to the theoretical debate at present taking place on the left.

The only way the existing disunity can lead to regroupment - which must be the aim of all serious marxists - is on the basis of programmatic clarity. While trying to obtain united action around burning issues in the class struggle, it is vital at the same time to attempt to clarify those broader political issues which the left is presently debating.

The new magazine (which will be called Socialist Action) will take up, as now, issues of topical importance. Its priority, however, will be to present a clear position on key theoretical questions facing marxists today - including the tradition of the Trotskyist movement - which a newspaper is unsuitable for.

If you would like further details about the magazine - or would like to subscribe to it - please contact the address on the back page.

## LSA PAMPHLETS

Prices include post and packing.

### What We Stand For 10p

An analysis of the current radicalisation and a strategy for taking it - in all its diverse forms - forward.

### The Labour Party - Which Way? 30p

A marxist evaluation of the Labour Party and the problem it has posed, historically, before the 'left'.

### Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation 25p

A marxist analysis of the roots of women's oppression and the struggle for liberation that has grown up, world-wide, over the past decade.

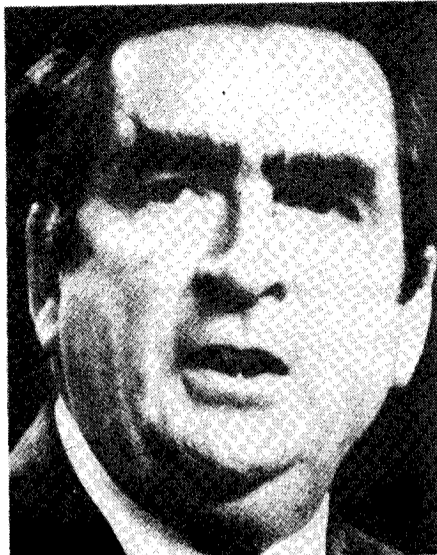
### Abortion - A Woman's Right 15p

The key nature of abortion rights, in the struggle by women for their liberation, and defence of the mass-action perspective of NAC in winning them.

### The EEC - Does it matter? 10p

An analysis of the EEC and the ongoing debate it has provoked within the labour movement.

# LABOUR & T



Healey: Making us pay more, so the bosses don't...

The present Labour government was returned to office on the backs of the miners' strike. That strike, provoked by the Tories, led to the downfall of the Heath government and plunged it into a 'leadership crisis' from which it hasn't, as yet, fully recovered.

Labour's return to office represented, in this sense, a dramatic shift in the relation of class forces since the Tories were defeated in what was widely regarded as a 'trial of strength' between the government and unions. It signified the latest (and most important) set-back in a whole series of attempts to 'curb' the unions that had led Heath into the realms of incomes policy, the Industrial Relations Act and deliberately promoting unemployment.

Labour may have been returned on the basis of mass action in which ruling circles - disturbed at the combativity of the miners - retained deep scepticism about its ability to 'impose' the social contract. Within two years, however, the deal cooked up with the TUC has enabled Labour to impose on a combative and undefeated movement what the Tories were quite unable to achieve through confrontation: a draconian pay freeze, record social service cuts and a jobless total well over the million mark.

## TUC Connivance

The government has, of course, only been able to ram home these policies through collaboration with the TUC leaders (a fact it has frequently waved in the face of the left of the party to 'mute' opposition). The same union leaders who were previously giving token support to strike action against the Tories' Industrial Relations Act have rushed to defend government policy before their own members.

Despite the fact that the Social Contract was soon proved a fraud - the jobless total soaring even though wages 'towed' the norm - at no stage has the T.U.C. worked out alternative policies and sought to mobilise the rank-and-file in support of them. This was most graphically shown at last year's Labour Party Conference where hardly a breath of opposition met Healey's call for 'drastic cuts' in living standards. Figures like Jack Jones were to the forefront in denouncing even the lukewarm criticism of his erstwhile allies in the Tribune group as indeed, more recently, he rebuked them publicly for daring to oppose the government's savage social service cuts.

This refusal by Labour leaders to mount even token opposition explains why the broad ranks of the labour movement - prepared to 'topple' Heath shortly before - have been paralysed in the face of the Wilson offensive. Such a 'paralysis' does not stem from an unwillingness to struggle; it stems from the fact that, as was

revealed at Chrysler, no alternative can yet be seen to the policies of their leaders that can give their militancy a political perspective. The TUC have been quick to seize on this to suggest that any opposition to the Social Contract can only bring down the government and return a hard-line Tory one.

## Allegiance

This 'retreat' by the labour movement over the past period has undoubtedly disoriented the left which had earlier interpreted the mass struggles (such as the miners' strike) as a sign that layers in the unions were moving to the left outside the grip of the Labour Party. Such a short-sighted position was at the root of the call by IS and by the IMG for virtual abstention in the 1970 election.

The error made by these groups (and still continued today in the case of the IS) was simple. They confused the militancy of the class, its willingness to struggle in defence of gains won, with a political evolution to the left of the Labour Party. This was a major mistake. The rash of strikes that took place against the Tories - and which led to Heath's downfall - was merely the instinctive reaction of the class to defend the gains made during the post-war boom years. While engaged in defence (on a sectoral basis) of these gains, it hadn't yet seriously begun to translate that militancy at an industrial level into a fighting programme that could pose a real challenge to that of the Labour leaders. This is why, despite the disillusion with Wilson, millions continued to vote Labour and in 1974 return a minority Labour government.

While willing to down tools in their thousands, while militant and prepared to struggle, the vast majority of the labour movement continued to retain their allegiance to the Labour Party - the party they built - and to support its actions. That is why they remained paralysed in the face of the offensive Wilson launched against their living standards and actually 'abided' by the norms laid out in the Social Contract, with a few exceptions.

## Discontent

Understanding this allegiance is central to grasping the dynamic that will open up in the coming period. The present paralysis is not, of course, permanent but is already beginning to change as the real implications of the Social Contract bite home. The large scale opposition building up in unions such as the NUM or the UCA-TT to the latest stage in the 'pay deal' are clear indications of discontent that can, in the coming months and years, lead to mass conflicts.

Precisely because, however, the mass of workers still retain their allegiance to the Labour Party, this growing discontent will more and more find a reflection inside the party in a series of struggles & conflicts with the 'right-wing'. Such a trend will be a major step forward since it is only by translating this militancy at an industrial level into a political opposition in the Labour Party that a really effective challenge can be made to present government policies.

Such a challenge cannot be mounted by ignoring the Labour Party as IS advocates (thereby holding workers back to mere defensive struggles). It can only be made by building opposition in the Labour Party to put the Labour leaders on the spot and make them answerable to a party which was built by the unions to protect its interests.

Despite the syndicalist notions of groups such as IS, such a trend has already begun to take place. The large vote for Foot and Benn in the recent leadership elections, the abstention by the Tribune group on the government's social service cuts



# THE LEFT

by A. Scott

and the sponsoring of the May 26th rally against unemployment by 40 MPs are part of this process at work. Of course, such actions are still 'contained' by centrist forces which deliberately give them a confused and limited expression. They represent, however, the first steps in a process that will grow over the coming period as ever-wider layers begin to demand that their party - the party they built and vote for - implement policies in their interests.

## Socialist Policies

Understanding the continued allegiance of the Labour movement to the Labour Party is key to elaborating the main thrust socialists should be fighting for to structure the wide-scale opposition building up. It is only by correctly gauging the continued illusions wide layers still retain in their party that it will be possible to get a hearing for class struggle policies that can challenge those of the right-wing.

Those groups that make 'Kick out the government!' their main thrust commit, in this sense, a major error. For the mass of workers, to call for kicking out the Labour government is to replace it with the only viable alternative today: a Tory or, possibly, coalition government. Such a position (argued by groups such as the WRP) alienates socialists from the broad mass of labour supporters - for whom the present government is preferable to one of the class enemies - and plays into the hands of the TUC leaders who point out unceasingly that opposition to the Social Contract can only lead to a return of the Tories.

Socialists do not call for 'kicking out' the present government insofar as that government is preferable to one of the Tories or a coalition government. What they do call for is that the labour movement should insist that this government implement policies in the interests of working people who put it there. It is by calling on the present government to implement policies in the interest of its mass base - and not those pro-Tory ones which alienate its base and create the possibility of a Tory come-back - that socialists can gain a hearing in the ranks of the labour movement.

Demanding the Labour leaders act in the interests of their members will make it possible to draw ever-wider layers into struggle. It is in the course of this struggle - taking place both in the streets and factories and reflected inside the Labour Party itself - that more and more people will begin to see the inadequacy of the leadership of the Callaghans (and Benns) and the need for a clear alternative based on socialist policies.

## Mass Action

Building such an opposition is not, in this sense, to confine oneself to passing pious resolutions in ward meetings (as in the case of the Militant group) often unrelated to the real struggles taking place outside. Calling on the Labour leaders to implement clear policies in the interests of working people has to have its roots in the independent action of wide layers involved in struggle around demands socialists consciously fight for in the mass movement.

Such struggles should include those stemming from the fight by women for their liberation (as that recently pioneered by the National Abortion Campaign), those by Black people against racism and anti-imperialist struggles such as that launched by TOM to withdraw the troops from Ireland. They should also include, of course, those in defence of the democratic rights and living standards of the labour movement which are being increasingly threatened.

'A sliding scale of wages' should be raised to fight inflation, a 'Bold Public works programme' coupled with a 'Sliding Scale of hours' to meet growing unemployment. Closures and redundancies should be met with calls for 'Nationalisation under Workers' Control' (particularly by workers occupying the plants). Attacks upon the unions' independence should be met by 'Hands off the Unions' and attacks on the freedom of collective bargaining by 'No Wage Freeze'.

It is by participating in and building mass actions around clear anti-capitalist demands, and directing these towards the Labour Party, that increasing layers will be confronted on the basis of struggle with the limitations of the Labour leaders and begin to see the need for a clear soc-



Barbara Castle, hard faced.

gles towards the Labour Party, which allows them to gain a 'focal point', does not mean a subordination to 'parliamentary procedure'. On the contrary, it is by encouraging at all times independent action and demanding that the Labour leaders implement demands stemming from this action, that ever-wider layers will see through the reformists whose allegiance is more to a system based on private property than to the interests of the workers' movement.

## Struggle

It is only on the basis of mass action outside the party that the struggle against the Labour leaders in the party can assume any 'weight'. The error made by groups such as Militant - and which is, itself, a sign of their adaptation to the sterile tradition of the labour bureaucrats who fear independent action like the plague - is precisely the fact that their pious resolution passing is quite unconnected with any real living struggle.

It is one thing to call upon the Labour leaders to withdraw the troops from Ireland from the relative isolation of a ward meeting; it is quite another to do so on the basis of mass action in the streets which can serve as the basis for such calls in the party. The growing opposition in the party must be a live opposition, one struggling for policies actively concerning tens of thousands outside which not only reflects the actions in the streets but actually helps, in turn, to promote them. It is through the inter-action of mass action outside and a tendency programmatically reflecting that action inside that the hegemony of the Labour leaders can be successfully challenged.

One of the main tasks of such a struggle inside the party must be consciously to avoid the mass opposition building up being 'headed' away by the centrist currents such as that at present developing between the 'left' Labour MPs and the Communist Party which called for the action on May 26th against unemployment. It is, of course, perfectly correct to gain the maximum unity on concrete issues against the right-wing (such as that recently obtained when certain Labour MPs supported the demand for 'Troops out of Ireland now!'). While correct to get unity on given issues, it is quite wrong, however, to subordinate political positions for the sake of gaining a 'false alliance' or unity.

Certain left groups, such as the IMG in particular, recovering from the 'ultra-left' errors on the Labour Party, made a grave mistake in this sense recently when calling for support for Benn in the leadership stakes despite the fact that Benn's programme was totally opposed to the interests of the mass of working people. Subordinating politics to gain such alliances with centrist forces is to create illusions in such forces in the eyes of thousands. The fact that the I.M.G. was supported in this by the ICL, who itself had an ultra-left position on the Labour Party earlier, is an indication of the opportunist dangers that can arise in the period ahead.

## Democracy

Building mass opposition outside and inside the party against the government's present policies, almost naturally, pose the question of democracy in the Party. That issue has already been concretely raised recently in the notorious case of Newham where the local CLP decided to remove its MP Reg Prentice for refusing to abide by the Manifesto. Such an issue will become increasingly important in the period ahead since the labour movement has the right not only to call upon its leadership to implement demands in its interests but also to hold those leaders to account if they refuse to abide by democratic decisions of conference.

Concretely, this means carrying the struggle for democracy in the unions into the party by demanding that the Parliamentary Labour Party be answerable to party conference - where the bloc union vote dominates. In calling upon the government to abide by conference decisions there must also be the fullest possible democratic discussion at conference which means, concretely, the removal of the 'bans and proscriptions' Act so that all political tendencies in the labour movement have the right to express their point of view.

# Dave Macleod argues the importance of: TROOPS OUT NOW

● Wasn't the entry of troops into N Ireland, in 1969, to protect the Catholics against the threat of imminent pogroms?

While the Labour government certainly posed it this way, protection of the 'minority' was their last concern. Late in 1969, they were faced with a situation where the struggle for civil rights had unleashed forces threatening the whole stability of Ulster (the 'state' that was created, back in 1921 against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people). Civil rights marches were being attacked by the Orange mobs. 'No go' areas were being set up in the Catholic ghettos. Mass discontent was building up in the South. The aim of sending in British troops was clear: it was not to prevent 'pog rams' (as Callaghan pretended) but to restore the 'status quo' in 'Ulster' which was fast disintegrating and to crush the nationalist revolt.

● But didn't the Catholic ghettos in the early stages (despite the IRA) welcome the troops as a peace-keeping force to defend them?

It's true that, in the early stages, the Catholic ghettos did look upon the troops as a peace-keeping force to 'defend' them against the Orange mob. It didn't take them long, however, to discover the army's real role: to restore the 'status quo' based on the systematic discrimination against them in jobs, housing, education and even voting rights.

The dismantling of the barricades around the Catholic 'No Go' areas was the first step. It was followed by wholesale intimidation of these areas in which, over the years, hundreds have been interned in concentration camps, thousands put behind bars and others - as on Bloody Sunday - murdered in cold blood. While the troops have systematically brutalised the nationalist minority (who have merely been demanding basic democratic rights), they have turned a 'blind eye' to the sectarian acts of violence performed by the Loyalists para military groups against the Catholics.

It is not up to us to speculate on what could happen if the troops are withdrawn. The facts are that the army has no right to be in Ireland & never has had such a right. The soldiers at present 'patrolling' the streets of Derry or Belfast are there to prop up a bigoted, reactionary regime imposed on the mass of the Irish people (against their will) over 50 years ago. They are there to continue to deny the Irish people the right to determine their own future - a future which they alone have the right to determine.

While we have no right to speculate about what could happen if the troops are withdrawn, of one thing we can be certain. The continued presence of these troops (encouraging the Loyalists to adopt ever more intransigent position in defence of their privileges) is even now preparing the way for a right-wing backlash. The recent refusal of Loyalist hard-liners (such as Paisley) to even consider 'power-sharing' and the growth in sectarian violence by the Loyalist para military groups confirms this.

● Wouldn't it be better to 'phase out' the withdrawal of troops over a period of time to allow the existing tensions to calm down?

This position has, indeed, been advocated by the Communist Party (among others) who hold up their hands in 'horror' at the atrocities in N. Ireland. They also call for a 'Bill of Rights' to protect the nationalist minority.

Such concern is sheer hypocrisy since it recognises the 'right' of the troops to be in Ireland in the first place and the 'right' of a British Parliament to decide when it should withdraw them. Such a position 'overlooks' the fact that British MPs have no right whatever to dictate what takes place in Ireland since that right belongs to the Irish people alone.

● But why exactly is it in the interests of the British labour movement to fight



Chris Davies (Report)

● Isn't it true that only the presence of the troops has prevented, over the past seven years, virtual civil war breaking out in N. Ireland?

The opposite is true. The troops are in Ireland to 'prop up' a sectarian system which, for the past 50 years, has treated the Catholics as second class citizens. Their repressive role not only alienates the nationalist minority but, at the same time, re-inforces the idea among the Loyalists that their problems can be 'solved' at the expense of the Catholics. Confident that the troops will protect them, the Loyalists are encouraged to press ever more firmly for defence of their caste privileges. The refusal of the Loyalist bloc over the years to countenance any form of 'power-sharing' and the growth of 'para military' groups indulging in sectarian violence is proof of this.

In this sense, the role of the army, alienating the nationalist minority & encouraging the Loyalist majority to press for defence of its privileges, creates a growing tension that can easily 'overspill' into a blood-bath. Far from being a 'peace-keeping' force (as Rees would suggest) the army is the most important threat to peace in the Six Counties.

● But surely if the troops were withdrawn, the sectarian violence would increase and possibly result in a

for the withdrawal of troops from N. Ireland?

In the first place, of course, calling for the withdrawal of the troops is an elementary act of solidarity with an oppressed people denied basic rights by 'our' government. More than this, however, campaigning for their withdrawal can help strengthen and unify the labour movement in the face of growing attempts to 'divide' it by playing on centuries-old prejudices.

Only last year, the government whipped up mass anti-Irish feeling around the Birmingham bombings. It used this to violently split the labour movement & push through the Anti-Terrorism Act which violates the rights of the entire workers' movement. The demonstrations in the Midlands were some of the most reactionary seen since those in support of Powell in the middle sixties.

Campaigning to withdraw the troops would not only, in this sense, directly contribute to the freedom struggle of the Irish people but would be an integral part of defending (and extending) democratic rights in Britain. Of course, such a campaign will have to struggle against the centuries of anti-Irish prejudice that has been built up. Failure to do so will, however, be used by the right (as they use racism and sexism) to divide the labour movement and turn it away from the real cause of their social problems.

# RACISM

## ITS ROOTS

by Bob Swart

Speaking to a large black audience on Afro-American history back in 1965, the prominent black revolutionary Malcolm X made the point: "It's impossible for you and me to have a balanced mind in this society without going into the past because, in this society, we're such an underdog, we're trampled upon, we're looked upon as almost nothing. Now, if we don't go into the past and find out how we got this way, we'll think we were always this way..".

Malcolm was, of course, trying to explode the myth that the Jim Crow system under which Blacks had been persecuted for 200 years - ever since the mass slave trade at the end of the eighteenth century - was in some way a 'natural' existence. It is a vital starting point since the racism to which Blacks are constantly subjected - either in the USA or Britain - rests upon the carefully - built assumption that they are 'naturally' inferior and that this inferiority has always existed.

Shattering this myth was, as Malcolm X knew, only too easy. Racism - by which is meant the systematic oppression of a race on the grounds that they are sub-human or inferior - is a relatively modern phenomenon which only came into being with the development of capitalist society. The indignity and humiliation to which black people are subjected today in the ghettos of London or New York did not exist in pre-capitalist times.

### Precedent

George Brietman, a leading Black Marxist, stresses this point in his pamphlet 'Anti-Negro Prejudice' when suggesting that 'race prejudice' is a 'uniquely capitalist phenomenon'. This is not to deny that early slave-owning societies up to feudal times were based on many diverse forms of oppression - cultural, class & religious - but that this oppression was never that of a race considered 'naturally' inferior.

Brietman gives numerous examples of race relations in pre-feudal slave societies to prove his point. He quotes the prominent anthropologist Oliver Cox on the early Egyptians who 'looked down on the Negroes to the south of them. They enslaved them and spoke scornfully of them but', Cox adds, 'they were just as scornful of the Asiatic sand-dwellers or Troglodytes who were lighter than the Egyptians!..\*\*

That it was a cultural discrimination in Egypt can be seen, Cox continues, by the fact that many of the Negroes, once captured in battle, were allowed to penetrate Egyptian society once they 'accepted' its values and became Pharaohs themselves. The cultural discrimination found here can equally be detected in other slave-owning societies such as the Greeks or Romans where Ina Brown points out that the former '...had a cultural and not a racial standard of belonging so that the basic division in the world was between Greeks and Barbarians...'. Brown continues that '...the slave and master in Greece were usually of the same race and there was no occasion to associate physical type with slave status!..\*\*\*

The same picture is true of all different societies from the Roman Empire down to the discovery of America - in the barbarian invasion of Europe, in the reign of the Moslems, in the era of political domination by the Catholic church. There were divisions, discrimination and antagonism of class, culture and of religion but none along race or colour lines. As late as the 15th century, when the West African 'slave trade' to Portugal began, the 'rationalisation' for enslavement of Blacks was not that they were 'black' but because they were not Christians.

### Racial Roots

Racism - the idea that Black people were, in themselves, naturally 'inferior'

began to develop at a later stage of social development. Cox points out that the concept of 'natural' or biological races differing from one another mentally as well as physically 'only began to grow at the time of the French revolution. If firmly established by this time, its roots can in fact be traced back to the pillage and rape of Africa and India over a hundred years before by the newly emerging 'trading nations' of Britain and Holland.

These new trading nations found in the under-developed world enormous profits not only in the exploitation of natural resources but also of human beings whom they shipped as slaves, in their millions, to work on the vast cotton plantations of Carolina or sugar plantations in the West Indies. It was out of the vast profits gathered particularly in the 'slave trade' that the new capitalist class was able to 'finance' its industrialisation process in the 19th century.

The process was simple. Manufactured goods were taken to Africa and traded for slaves; the slaves were shipped in their millions to the West Indies and Southern States of America where they were sold to the sugar and cotton plantations and the ships returned to Britain loaded with sugar or cotton (for the manufacturing industry). The triangular trade reaped in enormous profits for manufacturers, plantation owners and shippers alike. It is estimated that the exact number of Africans who crossed the Atlantic in chains stands in the region of fifty million.

### Contradiction

This barbaric trade in slaves created, however, a certain contradiction for the new trading nations that had broken out of the 'feudal stranglehold'. The break with feudalism had taken place under the banner of 'the rights of man' in which no human being was the property of another. It was difficult to reconcile the 'rights of man' with the pillage of Africa and Asia and the transportation of millions of slaves to America to be sold, like cattle, to the highest bidder.

The growth of racism has its roots in the attempt to defend this barbaric system. Slavery and the rape of Africa was 'justified' on the grounds that black people were 'subhuman' or 'uncivilised'; their denial of elementary rights was 'justified' on the grounds that they were 'naturally inferior!'. Dramatic evidence of this new ideology can be found in a court case of 1873 where a captain had been accused of throwing overboard 132 slaves through shortage of water. The judge ruled that '...the case of the slaves was the same as if horses had been thrown overboard!.

It was on the basis of this ideology that countries such as Britain not only continued to reap profits out of the 'slave trade' for many years but to extend their pillage of the 'Third World' over the centuries that went into the creation of the British Empire. A moral support for this ideology was found in pseudo-scientific trappings and Biblical quotations, many of which are still with us today.

### Indoctrination

The anti-black virus took some time in taking hold of the working population... During the American Civil War, for example, Lancashire cotton workers organised massive protests against slavery

in the Southern States despite the fact that it jeopardised their jobs. Over the years, however, the myth of black inferiority created to justify enormous profiteering began to seep into all layers of society.

This was facilitated by the fact that the British workers' movement was able to enjoy, even in the worst periods of recession, a relatively privileged position due to the enormous profits made by the ruling class out of the exploitation of the 'colonies'. The fact that British workers tended to benefit out of this exploitation opened them up increasingly to racist ideas and enabled them to identify with the myth of the 'British Empire' & against the independence struggles of colonial workers and peasants.

This backward attitude on the part of the labour movement was pinpointed by both Marx and Engels, the latter noting in a letter of 1882 that '...the workers merrily devour alongside them (i.e. the ruling class) the fruits of the British colonial monopoly!'. 300 years of colonial rule have imprinted racism more on the British working class than perhaps on that of any other country.

This is not to say, of course, that the mass of workers go round insulting or attacking black people. It is to indicate that many of them are still prey to a host of misconceptions about blacks which can be detected in the idea that 'we civilised them' or 'before we went to Africa, they were swinging in the trees!'. This type of comment is only a popular version of the idea advanced by scientific quacks such as Eysank that Blacks are innately less intelligent than whites.

The poisonous feedback of racism into the workers' movement continued this century mainly through the young conscript armies (made up of young workers) who fought in the colonial wars of Malaysia and Kenya. These soldiers had to be indoctrinated with typical imperialist contempt in the same way as the American GIs fighting in Vietnam who referred to the liberation fighters as 'gooks!.



### Feedback

This feedback has been particularly dangerous, however, because of the heavy influx of blacks into Britain after the war, encouraged by Tory Ministers, to fill the 'labour shortage' that was developing. Blacks were urged to emigrate to Britain particularly to fill the large 'gaps' growing in the service industries such as transport, health and catering.

The influx of Black immigrants (now 2% of the population) has tended to create a more explosive situation than in pre-war years. The innate racism of British society, created over 300 years of colonial rule, is no longer merely directed at the 'colonies' but at thousands of Black people who have been forced to settle in this country. This innate racism (implicit in the very immigration laws that discriminate against those trying to enter on the basis of colour) affects the majority of black people at every level of their lives.

In the first place, they are discriminated against in employment, being limited generally to the most menial jobs on low pay and denied almost all chances of real promotion. Secondly, they are forced by 'private racketeering' into the worst slum housing & the worst schools where there is an inbuilt bias against equal opportunities for black children (as the high percentage in ESN schools shows).

The general situation in which Blacks find themselves in Britain is one of being second-class citizens denied those same rights as white workers. The recently passed 1971 Immigration Act ensures, at the same time, that enough power is placed in the hands of the police to 'rob' them of even elementary rights. They can be arrested without a warrant (if suspected of being an illegal immigrant) and those who entered after 1971 deported without right of appeal.

### Labour

The generalised (almost legalised) racism confronting black people has, up to now, received no real attack from the broad ranks of the labour movement. Although many trade unions proclaim, on

stand up for their rights at work or more generally in society. Indeed, the latest attitude by TUC leaders - calling for a reduction in 'work permits' - quite openly blames Blacks for being at the root of unemployment.

Up until the present, apart from the sporadic race riots in Notting Hill in the 1960s, there has been little popular action based on race hatred. This was no doubt due to the fact that full employment and rising living standards continued to grow. This situation is rapidly changing. With what seems a permanent jobless pool, worsening living standards and deteriorating social services, the centuries of racial prejudice could take a more ugly form. Certainly, that race hatred is being fanned by demagogues such as Enoch Powell, and the refusal of the labour leaders to fight it - indeed to concede to it - can only fan it even faster.

## Vorster 'ups' repression

Faced with new signs of unrest among South Africa's more than twenty million Blacks, the racist Vorster regime is stepping up its repressive acts. Since March, more than 50 Black activists have been arrested, most of them under the Terrorism Act, in connection with an alleged "guerrilla network" that has been operating in South Africa for six years. Many were former members of the African National Congress, now outlawed.

Besides those charged with guerrilla activities, many other former members of the ANC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (which is linked to the ANC) have been detained. Some have been charged with carrying out activities of the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

The apartheid regime already has a large array of repressive laws which it can use against political dissidents, including the Suppression of Communism Act, the Terrorism Act and the Sabotage Act. Evidently, the Vorster regime considers these inadequate. On May 23rd, it promoted another 'new' Bill, the Promotion of State Security Bill. Under it anyone suspected of 'endangering state security' can be detained without a trial, bail or legal counsel for up to a year.

### UNREST

The stepped-up repression in South Africa comes at a time when the black masses are showing signs of greater unrest. The successful liberation struggles in Angola (and, more recently, in neighbouring Zimbabwe) have sent shock waves through South Africa. The prospect of majority rule no longer seems a pipe-dream of the future but a present reality.

An indication of the new mood among Blacks was the March 14th rally in Soweto (the all-black township outside Johannesburg). Drawing a crowd of 16,000 it was organised by the Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe (National Cultural Liberation Movement) & addressed by Chief Buthelezi of the Zulus.

Buthelezi had formerly supported the government's 'separate development' scheme of granting 'independence' to the various Black Bantustans scattered throughout South Africa. But at the rally he denounced the scheme, saying: "...those who are attempting to divide the land of our birth are attempting to stem the tide of history". After making reference to the struggle in Angola and Zimbabwe, he demanded that the entire country "move toward majority rule".

### PROTESTS

Within several days of the Soweto rally, a protest was staged in Johannesburg against the trial of the SASO 9. According to the May issue of the London monthly 'Africa', the protest "... developed into a four-hour long battle with the police and a white mob when Blacks going to catch trains after work joined the demonstration outside Johannesburg station..".

Similar protest actions have taken place elsewhere - as in the memorial service on March 21st for those who died in the Sharpsville massacre - and have become intertwined with growing militancy in the factories. On March 28th, for example, several hundred Black workers rallied outside the Heinmann factory in Germiston to protest the firing of the whole Black workforce after they had demanded joining a union.

Such actions are likely to increase in the future as Blacks become ever more inspired by the struggles which are occurring in the rest of Southern Africa. They can be supported in the fight against apartheid by socialists in this country calling upon the Labour government to live up to its anti-racist rhetoric by halting - now - all

## MALCOLM X

### His Writings:

By Any Means Necessary

Malcolm X Speaks

The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Malcolm X on Afro-American History

Malcolm X Talks to Young People

Two Speeches by Malcolm X

Malcolm X evolved, during his brief life, into the most prominent black freedom fighter in the USA. Gunned down in 1965, Malcolm had begun to show thousands of blacks the need to define their own history, to demand their rights and to stand up and fight for them. In his evolution as a black freedom fighter, Malcolm became convinced that this struggle would have to be related (though never sacrificed) to a broader struggle by all the oppressed against capitalism. His writings are those of a revolutionary - one of the greatest of our period.



# UNION LEADERS BACK DOWN

This year's conference met in the shadow of Healey's massive social services cuts. The impact of these cuts (lopping £618 million off the educational budget in the years ahead) is beyond dispute. Class sizes will climb upwards. The school building programme will grind to a halt and many school leavers, returning due to poor job prospects, will face inadequate resources.

Worse than this, the cuts will have an immediate impact on teachers' job prospects. It is already estimated that the jobless total stands at 5,000. The cut-backs will ensure that this figure jumps to 15,000 by September as newly qualified teachers cannot get a post and older teachers are 'phased out' under the new 'redundancy' scheme (discussed at Conference).

Faced with this large-scale attack by the government, the major task before the Conference was clear: to work out a real strategy that could begin to challenge the government's priorities by calling on the labour movement as a whole to help defend educational standards.

## Jobless Figure

What was startlingly obvious, however, was that teacher leaders such as Fred Jarvis had no coherent policy at all in fighting the cuts that are looming ahead. While deploring them verbally (as has done the TUC), their main role at Conference was to stifle any potential opposition among the rank-and-file & threaten them with new 'disciplinary' procedures.

This was most clearly seen on the issue of teacher unemployment which, with many newly-qualified teachers unable to find a post, is assuming quite serious

proportions. While aware that the present figure will escalate beyond 15,000 in the years to come, teacher leaders did their utmost to stifle any concrete action that would jeopardise their working 'relation' with Education Minister Fred Mulley.

At present, in only 3 out of 104 LEAs does the NUT operate its policy of refusing to 'cover' for members absent more than 3 days. Union leaders refused even to support the minimal action of extending this nationally which would have helped to 'soak up' many young teachers at present on the dole queues. Certainly, there was not even a mention of fighting for smaller classes as the only way of ensuring that all teachers are guaranteed of a job.

Rather than challenge government policy, the Executive was, it seemed, looking for every way of applying it against their own members. This was revealed in its attempt to smuggle through Conference schemes for 'compulsory redundancy' of teachers over 50. At first, they tried to suggest that this was merely a question of 'early retirement' not worthy of a debate. Only when the left managed to gain the suspension of standing orders did the Executive admit that it would give the local authorities the right to dismiss teachers as they saw fit.

## Wages

Not content with bartering away teachers' jobs, the Executive stance on the proposed 3% wage norm (now 4½%) was even shabbier. They refused to debate it. Despite the fact that the left tried to raise the issue by calling for the suspension of standing orders, the Execut-

by  
**Dave Picton**



ive resisted the challenge and managed to pull a majority of delegates.

The refusal of the Executive to debate out this key issue was quite obvious. It was to avoid having to show that their wages' policy (calling for increases 'to at least maintain living standards') was nothing more than bluff that would be dropped as soon as Conference was over. We can be sure that they will, in reality, submit a claim within the 4½% norm cooked up by the TUC and government since Jarvis has been a foremost defender of TUC policy.

Such a position will, of course, leave teachers exposed in the months ahead to an ever-eroded pay packet as 'inflation' increases. They will, in many ways, be hit more than other workers since increases in social security payments have halved the £6 limit received last year. More than ever before, it was important to raise the issue of an 'escalator' clause (protecting wages automatically against price rises) which was posed in the Lambeth NUT resolution.

## Discipline

There can be no doubt that the Executive's ability to ram through these policies was due, above all, to the relative apathy existing among the majority of delegates. This apathy still exists partly because the education cuts have not yet begun to bite and partly because the recent Houghton award has partly cushioned many against the real effects of inflation, over the past year.

The Executive is obviously aware, however, that this apathy could easily begin to break down in the coming period as wage packets are further eroded and unemployment begins to escalate. In order to stifle growing opposition against their toothless policies, they launched at the same time a major attack against the democratic rights of union members. This was most clearly revealed in the new 'disciplinary' procedures outlined which were accompanied by a major attack on the left in the union (described by Jarvis as 'diversionary elements by minority & sectarian groups').

Under the new rules, union members can be suspended by officers if they consider there is a prime facie case against them. From that moment, they are barred from attending union meetings; are denied any legal representation at the 'hearing' and cannot call witnesses; and only have a right of appeal to the National Executive.

While this attack on democratic rights was opposed by the left as a whole (with the exception of CPer Max Morris), the new rulings were accepted by a large majority. They are sure to be used by the Executive in the coming months against militant members who attempt to take action in their school against the cuts without first securing 'official' union support.

## Tasks Ahead

The fact that the NUT leaders were able to ram these policies through Conference is an indication of the illusions still held by the majority of teachers. The 'left', which was isolated at Conference & only able to seriously challenge the Executive on a few issues such as the 'redundancy' agreement, is going to have to develop a far more serious and systematic approach in the future. They will, of course, be helped in this by the fact that many teachers, faced with the reality of 'cuts' and declining wage levels, will increasingly begin to challenge union policy.

In such a situation socialists can begin to vocalise this growing opposition around clear-cut, class struggle policies which can, while relating to the real consciousness of members, pose a real alternative to the policies of the existing leaders. Chief among these will be a struggle against the Executive's refusal to fight teacher unemployment, education cuts, the government's wage freeze and the anti-democratic practices in the union itself.

The time to be preparing for the struggle is now. It is only by attempting to build a real class struggle tendency now - that also takes up key issues besides wages and jobs - that it will be possible to ensure that next year the Union will

# FRANCE: STUDENT STRIKES

A major campaign of student strikes and demonstrations is taking place in France against the latest in a series of changes in university education undertaken by the government since 1968. The struggle began in February in some universities outside Paris. It soon spread to include a majority of universities in France as well as technical colleges.

In a demonstration that took place on April 23rd, 35,000 students marched in defiance of threats of police repression and an increasing campaign of government intimidation. Another 'high point' was reached when, on April 15, 100,000 university, high school and technical school students marched in more than 30 cities.

## Reform?

The protests began when the Ministry of Education published the 'guide lines' for the Soisson reform (named after the former Minister of Education). The government claims that the reform provides an answer to growing graduate unemployment by better preparing students for available jobs and cutting back on the number of graduates where there are no openings, particularly in teaching.

In fact, however, the reform is aimed at only better preparing the students for tedious work in industry at the expense of individual, human educational needs. The reform is also part of the French government's attempt to generally discipline the masses of radical students.

## Outburst

The outburst against the new 'reform' began in towns such as Amiens and Rennes, soon spread nation-wide. Locally elected strike committees elected a national 'strike committee' which, as early as March, had begun calling for student action. Made up of all the political tendencies, as well as many independent students, the committee was, over the months, able to rely on ever wider support for its calls.

The government has tried to 'contain' the movement by claiming that the students on strike are a minority dominated by the left, and French Secretary for the Universities Alice Saunier - Seïte has issued repeated calls for the 'silent majority' to organise to break the struggle. Some 'back to studies' committees and demonstrations have taken place mostly under the influence of fascist and right wing student groups, but these have mostly failed.

More important is the coercion and outright repression being used by the government. There have been threats to cancel examinations and not to issue diplomas at the end of the year. More serious, the use of direct repression against the demonstrations has been escalated. Virtually every demonstration has been attacked by the police.

## Union Of The Left

In addition to government repression, a further obstacle to the spread of the strike is the policies of the Communist and Socialist Parties. The CP, in particular, dominates UNEF\* and has a considerable influence in the SNESup teachers' union. It used this influence to try and undermine the growing strike and, when finally forced to support it to keep some credibility in the student movement, did its utmost to prevent the teachers from giving it any support.

This, along with the continued refusal of the CFDT and CGT\* to join in the demonstrations, is a formidable barrier for the students. Both these large trade union federations, dominated by the CP and SP, counterpose support for the Union of the Left electoral front to mass action by students and workers. They are seeking to 'head off' another May 1968 explosion, even at the expense of losing the battle.

In contrast, the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) has fought to extend the strike and obtain the biggest possible mobilisations. At the same time, it has fought against those, like the CP, who have refused to observe the democratic functioning of the strike committees. It is only such a perspective, which combines democratic discussion with bold resolute action, that will allow the student movement to broaden its support and go forward to win its demands.



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

# SCOTTISH TUC

P Brain

Last month's Scottish TUC saw a serious opposition emerge to union leaders' attempts to continue selling the Social Contract (tightened by the 4½% norm) to their members. The Congress was 'graced' by the presence of Jack Jones, original architect of the Social Contract. While prepared to tolerate criticism of the pay deal (as too low), his main aim was to win support for the TUC's position of negotiating greater flexibility from the Iron Chancellor.

Opposition to this position was not spearheaded by the Communist Party who have long had a firm base in the Scottish TUC (traditionally more 'militant' than its English counterpart). While calling for 'early reflation', 'import controls' and 'increased investment', CP leaders were quite willing to support the TUC position of seeking an 'early meeting with the Chancellor' to obtain a higher ceiling.

## STIRLING RESOLUTION

The real opposition to these class collaborationist policies came from the delegates of Stirling Trades Council who put forward a resolution calling for a clear class struggle alternative. The resolution advocated opposing all forms of wage controls, fighting inflation by a rising scale of wages and unemployment by a 35-hour week. It also called on union leaders to demand the 'opening of the books' of large companies & nationalising those threatening large-scale redundancies.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Jones, alongside other leaders of the GMWU and the AUEW, concentrated their fire not upon the ineffectual and divisive policies of the CP but upon those proposed by the Stirling Trades Council. In order to isolate the Stirling delegates, Jones indulged in a hysterical form of red-baiting, accusing the resolution of leading a "... clear attack on the TUC and the Labour government, a clear attack on millions of workers - Tory central office would be proud of its approach".

## STEP FORWARD

Jones' red-baiting tactics were not too successful, however. The Stirling resolution was able to pick up (on a card vote) the support of about one third of a million workers, being backed by delegates from NALGO, NUPE, NUM, AUEW/TASS, UCATT and the ASLEF. It was probably becoming increasingly clear to these - and the thousands of members they represent - that the real attack upon the labour movement was not being made by the Stirling delegates but by the Labour government (and their supporters in the TUC) who are trying to ram through pro-Tory policies.

The support won for clear class-struggle policies at the Scottish TUC is an important step forward. It is policies such as these - strengthened by others counteracting any attempt to discriminate against women or immigrant workers - which will have to be consciously fought for in the coming period in trade union and Labour Party branches. This is the only way that ever-wider layers can be drawn into struggle to build a real

## STUDENT TEACHERS OCCUPY

by  
A. Fox. Standards



Students meet to discuss the way forward in occupied Southlands College

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Throughout Britain, mass occupations of teacher training colleges are taking place. As we move towards summer, thousands of young teachers are having to face the grim reality of the Labour government's education cuts: that there are no jobs waiting for them at the end of their course.

Starting in Scotland, where over 60% of those leaving teacher training colleges this year expect to be unemployed, the occupations have spread like wildfire throughout the country. Southlands (South London) was the first to pick up the call south of the border and, in the days that followed, other colleges from Manchester to Bristol took similar action.

The prospects before young teachers are indeed grim. There are already an estimated 5,000 unable to get a job and this is expected to rise to 15,000 by September. The longer-term prospects are no better since the government has, for some time now, been pursuing plans

to cut drastically back on the teacher pupil ratios.

### Dole Queue

The present 'cut-backs' are, after all, only the latest in a whole series of cuts in teacher supply. In 1965, the National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers suggested that to reduced classes to 30 by 1981, teacher-pupil ratios should be 19.7:1 for primary schools and 16.3:1 for secondary schools.

These targets - which the unions have fought for - first came under attack by Mrs Thatcher when, in 1971, she cut back the number of teachers required by over 50,000. The present Labour government (returned on a pledge of creating smaller classes) accepted the Thatcher figures and began, in 1974, closing many colleges of education. By this year, the number of students entering college had dropped to 30,000.

Even these figures, it now appears, are too great and the latest government cut-backs mean that thousands of young, qualified teachers will have to face the bleak reality of the dole queue this September.

This continual erosion of the teacher pupil ratios does not just mean that young students will be faced, after 3 years' training, with no job. It also means reducing educational standards as pupils (particularly immigrants in high industrial areas) find themselves being taught in larger classes by overstretched staff, in out-of-date schools with inadequate facilities.

The Labour government (walking rough shod over its Manifesto promises) is quite willing to sacrifice both job prospects and educational standards by its policy of directing money away from the schools and into 'ailing' industries like Chrysler.

The struggle launched by the students is not, in this sense, merely a struggle for the right to work but also one on behalf of all pupils to maintain (& improve) educational standards. It deserves the support of the entire student and labour movements.

### Action

It is important, of course, that in the coming period the occupations be extended as widely as possible to show the government that its cut-backs are unacceptable. Such occupations can become real 'action centres' for gaining wider support for the struggle. In particular, they can be used to force the teaching unions (such as the NUT) to give real and not just token support for student teachers.

The NUS should, alongside teachers in the schools, demand that the NUT implement at once the 'no cover' proposals and fight seriously to reduce class sizes to 30 or less.

Such combined action between students & teachers would not only help the job prospects in the period ahead. It could also begin to pose a real fighting opposition to government policy and unleash a real struggle against the education cut-backs. More than this, such action could begin to pose as a spearhead against the general social service cut-backs and draw in ever-wider layers of the labour movement in concrete struggle.

## TUC GAGS OPPOSITION

The real meaning of the TUC's new 'Rule 14' became crystal clear, last month, at the annual conference of Trades Councils in Swansea. Rule 14 (recently adopted by the TUC) states that Trades Councils are denied the right to support any activities opposing TUC policy. Exercising such a right can lead to suspension.

This obvious attempt to 'gag' all opposition to their policies was revealed when the TUC leaders present refused to allow discussion on a motion (proposed by Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Councils) calling for the rejection of Healey's latest stage of the Social Contract.

Terry Perry (TUC General Council member chairing the session) ruled the motion out of order on the grounds it was against TUC policy.

### Nervous

The fact that the TUC is prepared to go to such lengths indicates just how nervous it is about carrying the Social Contract with the rank - and -file of the labour movement. Even the right to disagree is now seen as too dangerous a threat to allow.

Despite the antics of Perry, however, the 350 delegates present voted overwhelmingly in support of a watered-down resolution calling on the TUC to 're-examine its commitment to the Social Contract'. The fact that there was such unanimous feeling against the Social Contract should serve as a clear warning to the TUC of what it can expect in the months ahead.

As discontent with growing unemployment and plummeting wages rises, the feeling registered at Swansea is bound to grow and it will take more than bureaucratic gags to stifle it.

### Campaign

It is urgent now, however, to start a serious campaign against Rule 14 and for democratic rights within the labour movement. The rule, as it now stands, can be used by the TUC to prevent Trades Councils supporting any group of workers fighting for better wages against the 4% norm.

Recently, a Defence Cttee against Rule 14 was set up by Camden Trade Council. That Cttee deserves support from all trade unionists, since what is at stake is nothing less than the right to organise independently from the union bureaucrats.

J.L.

(Information of the Camden Defence Cttee can be obtained from: c/o 164b, Haverstock Hill, London, NW3).

## PORTUGAL: THE ELECTION RESULTS

Despite the disappointment and divisions created by the SP and CP over the past two years, the mass of Portuguese workers voted solidly in the recent elections for a workers' government. The combined vote of the CP and SP was in the region of 49%. Together with the 4.7% won by the smaller 'left groups', this brings the total for workers' parties up to 54.23%.

While giving the workers' parties a majority of the popular vote, however, the election results are less 'decisive' than those of May last year. The SP and CP may retain majority support but their votes fell (from 16 to 14% in the case of the CP, and from 38 to 35% in the case of the SP). Certainly, Soares' confident boast that the SP would gain an outright majority did not come true.

Moreover, the falling support for the workers' parties coincides with a marginal growth in the right-wing parties. The PPD retained its 24% of the vote (making it the second largest party) but the CDS doubled its share to over 16%. It no doubt picked up support both from the 800,000 refugees from Angola and Mozambique as well as from farmers in the North frustrated by the growing economic difficulties.

### Popular Front

The cause for the reduced support for

the workers' parties (which, nonetheless, could still form a majority government) can be laid squarely at the door of the leaders of the SP and CP. Instead of mobilising the workers independently of the military, they have sought, ever since the 1974 coup, to cling to the coat-tails of the AFM by participating in various popular front governments.

By competing among themselves for the chance of becoming the AFM's most privileged ally, they have been prepared to champion attacks on the economic gains & rights won by the mass movement ever since the anti-Caetano upsurge of 1974. Such an orientation has sown confusion in the workers' ranks and, at the same time, split it in the face of growing right wing attacks.

It is this policy of tail-ending the military (and providing a civilian cover for their anti-working class policies) which has also alienated these parties from the potential support of layers such as the poor farmers in the North. The CDS, in particular, has taken advantage of this to whip up popular support for its right-wing policies in these areas.

### United Front

During the election campaign, despite the fact that support for the 'right' was quite evidently growing, the CP and SP leaders

refused to present a united front based on a programme in the interests of the mass of workers & their allies. They continued to 'compete' with each other in pledging support for the 'pact' programme (drawn up in alliance with the military).

Even now, when the election results are known, neither party has shown itself to be ready to use the popular mandate they have received (54% of the popular vote) to form a workers' government based on the needs of the workers' movement. The SP, in particular, has maintained that it will not determine its final position until after the Presidential election this July. Until that time, it intends to continue in collaboration with the bourgeois PPD.

Uniting in opposition to the right-wing parties (who picked up in the elections) is more vital today, however, than at any time before. It is only a united working class government, based on a clear anti-capitalist programme, that can begin to pose a real perspective before a confused (if undefeated) labour movement and rally to it forces who are, at present, slowly being drawn to the rightist demagoguery of the CDS.

### Campaign

During the election itself, the LCI (the sympathising section of the Fourth International) correctly made its main thrust that of calling on the leaders of the CP and SP to unite on a given anti-capitalist program. To help develop their campaign (& explain their ideas), they stood 350 candidates in the election and received .3% of the vote. The impact of their campaign can be seen by the fact that, for eight days during the election run-up, the AFM tried to prevent them using the broadcasting rights which they were entitled to.

The thrust of the LCI should not end with the election results, of course. That thrust should be continued in the period ahead to explain to ever-more workers the need for the CP and SP leaders to break decisively with the bourgeois parties & form a workers' government. All attempts for 'united actions' at local level - in defence of the economic gains or democratic rights that have been won since 1974 - should be seen within this framework. It is the only way to halt any drift towards the right & to impose a real workers' solution on the deepening crisis.

T. Roberts

Editor: T. Roberts  
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## IMMIGRATION (continued from p 1)



Rally at Trafalgar Square April 11.  
Photo: Andrew Ward (Report).

Unfortunately, the left has virtually ignored this issue. Just two months ago, CRIA organised its first national demonstration which drew over 300. Groups such as IMG or IS - which are now up in arms about the need to combat a racist witch-hunt - were only too obvious by their 'abstention'!

It is not enough, however, to downplay the issue for months at a time and then, when Blacks are beaten up by National Front thugs, to scream about a 'racist threat'. The task is to concretely prepare against such threats by the systematic campaign work which CRIA has been doing over the past months.

In the period ahead, the importance of CRIA will be increased tenfold. We, in the LSA, would add our voice to that of the campaign in calling upon groups like the IS or IMG - as well as others in the labour and student movement - to affiliate to the campaign now & support

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