

# workers' ACTION

No.54

April 28th to May 5th

10p

## DEFEND JOHN DEASON!

Mass picket of the Old Bailey, 9.30am, Wednesday May 4th, when John Deason is on trial. John Deason is the last to be tried of the 43 Right to Work marchers arrested when the police attacked their march last Spring.

## HEATHROW, PORT TALBOT

THE STRUGGLES for higher wages — from the Leyland toolmakers, to Heathrow, to Port Talbot, where 500 electricians are still out — have made Phase 3 now a much more open question.

Official labour movement votes are one thing. Direct action is another, and weighs heavier in the scales. And since every worker in Britain has had a wage cut of over 5%, every section of the class has as much incentive to fight as those now on strike.

The trade union leaders have changed their tune. Jack Jones says a strict Phase 3 will be impossible. Lord Allen, the right-wing leader of the shopworkers' union, lays down a long list of conditions for Phase 3. Even James Callaghan says that Phases 1 and 2 were 'too crude'.

It means they feel that a subtler way of cutting working class living standards has to be found. Jones and Allen only talk like that, the better to keep in their own hands the power to help Callaghan secure Phase 3.

They know, and the ruling class knows, that now is the testing time that will determine whether Phase 3 will be born or aborted by a wave of wages struggles. Official conferences have said yes to Phase 3. But a rash of strikes even for sectional interests would mean a decisive 'No' to pay curbs if other workers follow the lead from Heathrow and Port Talbot.

The rank and file struggles continue. They need support. More than just support, they need other workers to follow their example, fighting now to restore and defend our living standards.

Militants must act on the principle that the needs of working people, and not the needs of profit, must come first. The only alternative is continued reductions in real wages, cuts, and unemployment.

# The way to axe the

# Contract

## Unions still backing airline bosses

WHEN REG BIRCH, the AUEW official responsible for the civil aviation industry, got onto the stage of a Southall cinema last Monday to address a mass meeting of striking Heathrow engineers, he was met with a barrage of booing.

Right from the start the AUEW has done all it can to sabotage the strike by engineering and maintenance workers. All Birch could answer was: "In all the booing and hooting going on, I don't hear anyone booing the bosses".

The 4,000 strikers don't need to boo the bosses — they are fighting them! At the end of his speech, Birch, who has tried time and again to get the men back to work without a penny, said that he believes the AUEW will now make the strike official.

The role of the other unions at Heathrow has been even more scandalous. A joint statement drawn up by the "trade union side of the National Joint Council" and signed by the TGWU, SMW, EEPTU, BALPA, APEX, ASTMS, and the Merchant Navy & Air Officers' Association, says:

"The trade union side declared that this is not a traditional employer/worker dispute. Every effort has been made by the AUEW members' fellow trade unionists to assist them. In view of this and the permanent damage it will do the airline including the threat to the membership's livelihood, the trade union side calls on all members to respond favourably and assist in plans to maintain the airline operation".

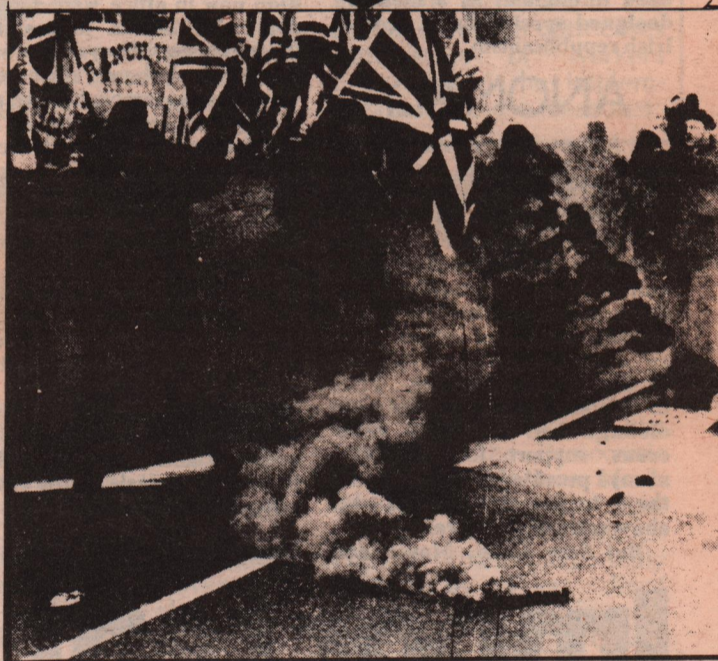
In other words, the "trade

union side of the NJC" asks fellow trade unionists to scab! And some of them have "responded favourably" and done just that. Yet despite this shameful strike breaking by the union leaders, there have been many indications of solidarity from Heathrow workers as well as workers elsewhere — including strikes at other airports and at the British airways plants at Treforest.

The Heathrow strikers' action is in support of a claim for increased shift allowances and the right to negotiate directly with management. The present shift allowance is £4.15 as against local rates for West London of between £9 and £17.

Cont'd. on back page

## 3,000 ON MILITANT ANTI-NAZI MOBILISATION



It took a hard afternoon's slog by 1,000 policemen to ensure "Free Speech" for the fascist National Front which marched through Haringey, North London, on Saturday April 23rd. And they only just managed to protect the 800 or so NF marchers from a vastly larger number of angry anti-fascists.

An avalanche of missiles, smoke bombs, and vegetables, knocked the swagger out of the marchers' steps. Like the biblical Jews coming out of Egypt, they marched in a red sea through which a path had to be cut for them! At more than one point the anti-fascists almost broke the police cordon.

The National Front's members' bulletin for February spelled out why they had chosen North London for this march:

"Originally when this [St. George's Day] march was instituted it was hoped to hold them always outside London, but in view of the vital importance to the party nationally of the GLC elections, it has been decided to hold it this year in North London ... we cannot over-emphasise the value to all units throughout the country of a big vote for the NF in Britain's capital city... This part of London is particularly inundated with Immigrants and Red groups of all kinds — but also very great numbers of patriotic Britons amongst whom anti-Immigration feelings run very high. This will be a very lively activity!"

Had the hard-core anti-fascists been better organised and coordinated, then we could have made it even more "lively" for them.

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# EUROPEAN COURT ACCUSES BRITAIN OVER INTERNMENT

The Strasbourg drama continues. Currently the main issue before the European Court of Human Rights is whether the introduction of internment with out trial in 1971 by the authorities in Northern Ireland amounted to discrimination against the Roman Catholic minority there.

The British Government's defence against this accusation is to point out that at the time when internment was introduced most anti-state violence stemmed from the IRA (whether Official or Provisional) and not from organizations like the UVF (which was also banned at that time). This objection is totally irrelevant. Internment was not introduced for the first time in 1971: it was similarly in force during the years 1922-24, 1938-45, and 1956-61. It was introduced initially because 40 per cent of the population of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland disagreed with the setting-up of the northern state and because Irish republicans were engaged in armed struggle against that state. Subsequent periods when internment has been used have also coincided with years in which the IRA has been active against Britain, or the Six County statelet, or both. Thus internment has been used throughout as a measure designed specifically to combat Irish republicanism.

## ANOMALY

It follows that all mention of the UVF is no more than a red herring. It is only since British imperialism trying to reestablish the Six Counties became committed to limited civil rights and to "power sharing" that Protestant organizations have carried out armed actions such as can be construed as opposed to the UK government. Prior to this such organizations were distinguished for their vociferous support for Britain - always provided Britain allowed them to run their own Ulster show without interference.

But Sam Silkin, Mason and

company have drawn attention to the anomaly of the Twentysix County government complaining about Britain's oppressive policy in the Six Counties while at the same time operating severely repressive policies against the very same Irish republicans in their own territory. Such repression is highlighted at this moment by the hunger strike called by the Provisionals protesting about the conditions at Portlaoise jail - in particular against the frequent strip searches carried out there.

## ORIGINS

The anomalous position of the Twentysix Counties government stems from the very origins of the southern regime itself. Born out of a revolution led not by the Irish working class but by a section of the Irish capitalist class which wanted its own "freedom" in relation to British imperialism, the successive governments of the so-called 'Republic of Ireland' have constantly worked for the defeat of genuine republicanism. Genuine Irish republicanism wants to rouse the Irish people to unite against British imperialism; the bogus republicans of Fianna Fáil or the even more collaborationist coalition now in office want to do a deal with Britain to maintain the status quo. They do not want a united Ireland since that would be too expensive and politically dangerous for them. The Strasbourg wrangle however gives them the chance to pose as good Irishmen anxious for the unity of their country and for the fate of the Catholic minority in the north.

Internment is therefore a good political target for the Twentysix County government; but it is only part of the whole picture, only one facet of the stranglehold which British imperialism maintains over the whole island, part of which, in the last analysis, is the southern government itself.

Chris Grey

# Labour Left and direct elections

## 'BETTER FACELESS IF IT'S FOREIGN'

WITH THE FRENCH Communist Party's decision to support direct elections to the European Parliament, Britain and Denmark are the only countries where these elections are in doubt. This holds true even if the Gaullist RPR's parliamentary group, meeting on 26th April, stands firm against direct elections, for at best they are a minority of the French Parliament.

In Britain, however, direct elections promise to be one of the major problems for the Government in the coming months. The Left of the Parliamentary Labour Party opposes direct elections on the grounds that they will prejudice the sovereignty of the British Parliament.

The argument is just the same as the right-wing Gaullists. It is false and narrowly nationalist.

Parliament is not sovereign anyway. The permanent state machine, and behind that the bankers and the bosses, control it in all essential matters; and if Parliament starts escaping from their control, as it did in Chile, they can and will push it aside.

As socialists, we fight to replace Parliament with the higher democracy of the rule of workers' councils. But we prefer Parliamentary democracy, in which the working class has freedom to organise and openly explain its ideas, to the direct rule of the permanent state machine. So *Workers' Action* is in favour of direct elections to the European Parliament.

Usually *Workers' Action's* criticism of the Parliamentary Labour Left is that they put too much faith in Parliament. Here the argument seems to be reversed: for it appears that what the anti-EEC left see as good in the British Parliament is, not that it is a Parliament, but that it is British; and what they see as bad about the EEC is, not that it is bureaucratic, but that it is foreign.

## MEAGRE

What they think they are doing is fighting to prevent the consolidation of EEC control over Britain. Their programme of import controls would of course mean a British break from the EEC. Thus their British nationalism leads them to oppose the meagre democratic reform of direct elections, and thus to favour continued untrammelled operation by the 'faceless bureaucrats of Brussels'!

Seeing the road to socialism through gradual reform of the existing state - that is, the national state - the outlook of the mainstream Left is nationalist even more than it is parliamentary. They see an elected European Parliament as a bigger threat to 'democracy' than the British monarchy!

In fact the elected European Parliament will have more powers than the nominated assembly that has existed since 1958; but they will still, regrettably, be very limited vis-à-vis the EEC Council of Ministers and the EEC Commission. In the current economic crisis, the vision of the EEC uniting into a single capitalist 'super-state' is further beyond the horizon than ever. It will be the task of the workers' revolution to create the Socialist United States of all Europe - West and East.

## DELAY

There is little doubt that the direct election will take place, with at most a small delay. All substantial capitalist opinion is in favour of them, and according to the *Economist* opinion polls show a 70% to 15% non-unionist vote against the EEC. The danger lies not in the direct elections, but in the confusion and nationalist disorientation spread in the labour movement by those on the Left who campaign against them: the Parliamentary Labour Left in Britain, *Democrazia Proletaria* in Italy, and the semi-Maoist left in France.

## Labour may go for proportional system

ELECTIONS TO the European Parliament are scheduled to take place simultaneously in all EEC countries except Denmark, in May or June 1978. They can be delayed, however, if just one country fails to agree in time.

The distribution of seats between countries has been worked out at EEC level, on a sliding scale on which the smaller countries have fewer voters per seat than the larger: 34,000 for Luxembourg, 138,000 for Ireland, and 538,000 for West Germany. The voting method, however, is to be decided country by country.

This is the current situation.

**Germany:** All the major parties are for direct elections, which will take place according to a proportional representation system excluding parties getting less than 5% of the vote.

**Belgium:** All the major parties are for direct elections, but there are disputes over what proportional representation system should be used: whether there should be a single national list, or different lists for Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels.

**Denmark:** has the strongest current of popular opposition to direct

elections. Because of this, it has been agreed that the European parliament elections be held at the same time as the Danish national elections, and that all Danish members of the European parliament also be members of the Danish parliament.

Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands all have large majorities in favour of direct elections, and will use various forms of proportional representation.

In Britain the problem of the method of election adds to the dispute over the principle of direct elections. The Tories want the elections to be by constituency majority vote, and so, originally, did the government. But with 81 big constituencies, most containing a fairly even mix of working-class traditionally pro-Labour areas, and middle-class pro-Tory areas, the results would tend to be massive landslides one way or the other: at present, for example, the Labour Party would stand to win only 8 to 12 seats. So proportional representation may be used, thus strengthening demands for proportional representation in Westminster elections, too.

# Important left gains in French elections

★ This article has been written for *Workers' Action* by a comrade from the French revolutionary newspaper *Lutte Ouvrière*, with which we have agreed to exchange reports on our respective countries. For previous articles on the French municipal elections and their background, see *WA* nos. 45 & 51.

THE RECENT municipal elections and, more so, the coming parliamentary elections, dominated French political life.

The municipal elections, which took place in two ballots on the 13th and 20th of March, were marked by an important electoral advance of the Left. After the second ballot, the town halls of several dozen big cities passed from the Right to the Union of the Left, which is composed of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Left Radicals.

Obviously, this advance of the Left expresses, on the electoral level, the discontent of the working class and of all the

other popular strata of society with the present right wing government as well as the policy of austerity imposed by this government.

In the context of this advance of the left, it is significant that the lists, "For socialism, for workers' power", put up jointly in 30 big cities by three revolutionary organisations, *Lutte Ouvrière*, *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* and *Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs*, gained a percentage of votes which was not negligible.

The average percentage was close to 3%, but it reached 12% in Orléans and 9 to 10% in working class cities like Montbéliard and Saint-Ouen. These results come from larger circles than those which are influenced by the revolutionaries.

Thus they are due neither to the direct influence of militants, nor the unitary nature of the revolutionaries' presence, but to the desire of a segment of the left wing electorate to vote

against the Right and at the same time to express its discontent with the Union of the Left.

This demonstration was all the more useful in that the major problem of the coming period will lie in the electoralist illusions of the working class and in the hopes raised by the possibility of the coming to power of the Union of the Left.

However, the workers can expect nothing from a left government. The Left is not even yet in government, but the leaders of the Socialist Party, and first of all Mitterand, already speak about the necessity of sacrifices, profitability, and austerity. The leaders of the Communist Party do not protest and propose nothing different.

As for the big trade union organisations, they propose no general plan of action against the austerity plans of the present Barre government, and clearly their chief concern is to prove their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie.

If the Left wins in the next parliamentary elections and takes over the reins of government, its aim will be to see through the crisis, and it will necessarily carry out an anti-working class policy. It will take advantage of its audience in the working class to push through austerity measures that the Right would not be able to impose. Then, as now, the workers will obtain only what they can impose through their own struggles.

It is indispensable for the revolutionaries to say all this right now. It is indispensable that they warn workers, that they point out to them that the conditions for the necessary struggle are not in the least more favourable when the ministers belong to the Union of the Left instead of to the Right. It is in that direction that the main axis of the revolutionary organisations' political intervention must be orientated.

GEORGES KALDY (L.O.)

THE Scottish TUC, usually to the left of the British TUC as a whole, has narrowly defeated a resolution for a return to free collective bargaining when Phase 2 ends. The Wales TUC also voted for another year of pay curbs. And shortly after, the shopworkers' union USDAW predictably backed another round of the Social Contract.

Added to these capitulations to the government's attacks on the working class came the votes at both the NUJ and NUT conferences. They too supported another year of pay "restraint". And Moss Evans' victory in the contest to succeed Jack Jones as the leader of the TGWU again was abject defeat for the anti-Social Contract forces.

But perhaps the biggest set-back for the struggle against the Social Contract, against the decline in real wages, and against the government's Tory-type policies was the very small turnout on the Day of Action on April 20th.

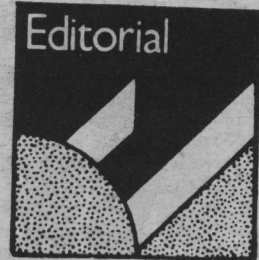
All this contrasts starkly with the fury and resentment expressed in the wave of protests against the Social Contract a month and more ago. Why? Is the working class movement in a state of ebb after the wave of protests culminating in the April 3rd conference? Or were those protests unrepresentative and the tip of an ice-berg of general indifference or contentedness.

The sections of workers who showed their resentment a month and two months ago were the more skilled and traditionally more self-assertive ones. For the most part the votes registered at the STUC against another round of wage curbs came from just those sections: from ASLEF (as against the NUR), from the ASTMS (as against APEX), from the miners and others. As usual USDAW, the GMWU, the EPTU and others so effectively gagged by their respective bureaucracies made up the solid pro-government bulwark.

But what of the Day of Action of April 20th? Here

# After April 20th demo: WHAT'S TO BE DONE NEXT?

Editorial



was an opportunity for the rank and file to express its rage at the Social Contract. Why was the opportunity not taken?

The simple fact is: there was no big campaign to make April 20th a real focus of the fight against government policy. With the April 3rd Leyland Shop Stewards Conference, the Communist Party had succeeded in taking the movement and giving it both the most reactionary political expression and the least militant practical outcome.

The workers who voted for the conference resolution because it was against the Social Contract were forced by the conference organisers to back the downright reactionary calls for "selective import controls [and] increased investment in manufacturing industry". Hundreds of militant trade unionists gather in a "rank and file TUC" to oppose the policies that are ravaging the standards of living of the working class, and come out with demands to... support ailing capitalists! The resolution dissociated the struggle against the future Phase 3 from the struggle against Phase 2 now. And the revolutionary left was not strong enough to turn the conference a different way.

The CP's Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions could have used the mobilisation for April 20th as a focus for generating the local committees it has finally agreed to set up. But while there were isolated attempts to get action on April 20th, the general picture was one of taking it easy after the token success of the Leyland conference. April 20th was a gesture, not a

step in a militant strategy.

Crucial to any really big movement being built up for April 20th was the support of the trade union officials. Yet that could be won only if the rank and file were organised and able to force the officials to give that support or be outflanked. The April 3rd Conference was noticeably barren of trade union officials, and there was not attempt from the platform to drag the officials into the fight and force them to lend weight to the movement from below.

But the strikes at Leyland, at Heathrow, and at Port Talbot reveal a working class whose shop floor power is still massive and which is prepared to struggle even when the unions line up clearly with the employers. The struggle against the Social Contract must begin with the struggle to support these battles.

We must campaign for support for the Heath-

row and Port Talbot strikes and all battles against Phase 2. We have to campaign at the same time for the development of a rank and file movement which can not only strengthen individual plant and union struggles, but also provide a pole of attraction for those workers searching for a working class solution to the crisis.

Such a movement must start off from the clear recognition of the necessity for the trade unions to be independent of the state and the employers. Concretely this means an all-out war against the agents of the state within the trade union movement, the trade union bureaucracy. It means, too, a fight for democracy in the unions to make them more responsive to the needs of every section of the working class.

Such a movement must oppose all those schemes, like workers' "participat-

ion", that erode the independent strength of the shop floor. We want to build strong shop stewards committees, combine committees, and international links.

For the double-barrelled blows of capitalism, unemployment and inflation, we need an answer which links today's battles with a socialist strategy: a fight for the sliding scale of hours and wages. That is, the available hours of work to be shared out between all those seeking work, and a struggle for wage agreements that guarantee wage rises in line with increases in the cost of living. In both cases committees of workers must control the implementation of these measures.

## SPAIN: LEGAL CP FLIES THE KING'S FLAG

The first phase of Spain after Franco is completed. There are accounts still to be settled and shocks yet to come — but a definite staging post has been reached.

The crowing move so far of the Juan Carlos regime's careful transition to 'strong' bourgeois democracy — the legalisation of the Communist Party — has gone through with the regime still secure on its right and its left flanks.

The Communist Party ran up the Spanish monarchist flag alongside the CP's red flag, while in the streets the police were arresting 160 militants in demonstrations celebrating the 46th anniversary of the declaration of the Republic. It is not the first time a 'Communist' Party has backed a monarchy in such an open way: the Italian CP supported the monarchy after the fall of Mussolini in 1943. But scarcely ever before has a CP been so brazen in its sevilite to monarchy.

On the Right, the Navy Minister and 5 members of the Francoist 'Parliament', the Cortes, resigned. But there were no other resignations, and the Supreme Army Council statement protesting against the legalisation of the CP committed itself to accept

the decision in a disciplined way. The Popular Alliance party gained the signature of only 115 out of 556 Cortes members for its petition demanding reconvening of the Cortes.

The formal dissolution of the Francoist 'Movement' on April 1st, also went through without explosive reaction. The general secretariat of the 'Movement' has been abolished, and its newspapers, radio stations, and buildings will be taken over by the government.

The parties to the left of the CP are still illegal, and may remain so. The trade union organisations — the Workers' Commissions, the Socialist UGT, the anarchist CNT, and the USO, which is politically close to the French CFDT — are also still illegal, but their legalisation is clearly on the agenda. Barring surprises, the 15th June parliamentary elections will serve their purpose of furnishing adequate sanction to a new post-Francoist regime.

Prime Minister Suarez has hinted that he will aim for a 'centre-left' solution; and Communist Party general secretary Santiago Carrilo responded by declaring that he was "not only not anti-Suarez, but pro-Suarez". The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) is, however, a more likely candidate for inclusion

in such a centre left formula than the CP. The major party of the 'centre' is the Democratic Centre, led by Jose Maria de Areilza; to its right stands the neo-Francoist Popular Alliance, reportedly backed by Franz Josef Strauss and Germany's Christian Social Union.

'Democracy' is coming to Spain: not through some suddenly-found goodwill, but under the pressure of the class struggle both in Spain (3.6 million workers were involved in strikes last year, for a total of 110 million working hours) and internationally (the fall of the Caetano regime in Portugal, the weakening of presidential power in France since 1968, the shaky position of Christian Democracy in Italy). But the democracy being prepared is strictly limited, regulated by the monarchy and the police, and, above all, a capitalist democracy, designed to serve the ruling class. It will not solve the problems of 20% inflation, 7½% unemployment, exploitation and police brutality. The Spanish working class still needs to fight for its own democratic rights and for its own power, despite and against the alliance of the CP and the PSOE with the ruling class.

## NO DEALS WITH SMITH

"IN THE END", declared the "Financial Times", the cause of white supremacy in Rhodesia cannot win."

With the downfall of Portuguese colonialism and with South Africa evidently willing to sacrifice them, the 250,000 whites in Rhodesia (of whom 15,000 emigrated last year) are facing up to the choice of negotiating a transition which will preserve as much as they can of their privileges, or being overthrown by the armed struggle of the black majority. After the failure of Ivor Richard's attempt at a settlement it was predictable that Britain would try again. The involvement of the USA, too is logical: they have massive

economic interests to protect in Southern Africa.

Owen's initiative is aimed at finding a settlement for the Rhodesian situation that will protect imperialist economic interests, preserve as much as possible of the whites' privileges, and forestall the possibility of a revolutionary struggle which might spill over into South Africa or the neighbouring black bourgeois states.

The labour movement should oppose the initiative and call for:

- No deals with Smith;
- No imperialist intervention in Zimbabwe;
- Full support for the struggle of the black majority.

# M.I.5 — 'THE SECURITY SERVICE'

AT THE current stage of the class struggle in Britain, the lynch-pin of the State's counter-revolutionary apparatus is M.I.5. Known also as the 'Security Service', it is the largest intelligence and counter-subversion agency, with a staff in the region of 5,000.

M.I.5 was founded in 1909, and throughout its existence it has had an ambiguous status in relation to the law and to other organs of the State. It was not established by statute and has no legal existence whatsoever.

It is supposed to be responsible to the Home Secretary, but, not being part of the Home Office, it is effectively autonomous. Members of Parliament do not know the size of its budget and have no right to know about its activities. Nor, in effect, do the Home Secretary or the Prime Minister.

M.I.5 operates on the principle of the 'need to know'. It has access to all the information gathered by the Special Branch and other sources, but tells them in return only what it regards as essential for them to know. The same principle applies to the Home Secretary, who will be contacted when it is necessary to initiate deportation proceedings, for example, but not before.

## M.I.6

The same is true of the other intelligence agencies: M.I.6, which is responsible for gathering intelligence and for espionage activities outside of the United Kingdom and its remaining colonies (which fall within the domain of M.I.5); the Defence Intelligence Staff, which keeps a large number of British people under surveillance on behalf of the military arm of the State; and the service agencies responsible for work on behalf of the various ministries. In 1968 a former naval intelligence officer wrote in the *Daily*

Telegraph that he had discovered "from a former Foreign Secretary and from a former head of the Foreign Office, that they know next to nothing of the organisation and assessment of secret intelligence for which... they had been responsible". There is no reason to suppose that the Home Secretary is any wiser about M.I.5.

## 'Subversive'

Its activities are entirely undercover. If M.I.5 wish to have someone arrested and charged, they instruct the Special Branch to do the job — as was done in the Aubrey - Berry - Campbell case. Their task is defined as "the defence of the Realm as a whole, from external and internal dangers arising from attempts at espionage and sabotage, or from actions of persons and organisations whether directed from within or without the country, which may be judged to be subversive of the State".

M.I.5 themselves decide what is 'subversive' — and the fact that they keep a number of MPs under surveillance shows that their idea of subversion is a very wide one indeed. They are involved in uncovering the activities of espionage agents from other countries, but the main danger is now deemed to come from within this country, and their attention is focused accordingly.

One of the major tasks of M.I.5 is the screening of civil servants, to determine whether or not they will be reliable employees of the State. For example, in 1952, by agreement between Britain, the United States and France, the system of Positive Vetting was introduced into the civil service: for many State posts, in addition to suspected communist sympathies, "failings such as drunkenness, addiction to drugs, homosexuality, or

any loose living" are grounds for disqualification. It is M.I.5 which undertakes to discover whether candidates do or do not show these traits. This has involved them in compiling lists of members and sympathisers of communist and revolutionary organisations. Beyond this, deeper individual investigation may be undertaken by means of the interception of mail, telephone tapping, direct surveillance and so on.



In the middle of a demo, police seize a militant singled out by Special Branch agents from the files they keep on all those in the forefront of political and trade union battles

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In intelligence gathering can be divided into two general categories, though there is obviously some overlap. **Political intelligence** is not collected to obtain foreknowledge of particular events, but to achieve a general understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of dissident groups. This involves cultivating informants (usually through the Special Branch), as well as direct infiltration, together with the collection of a large quantity of 'low-grade' information through the filming of demonstrations (there are fixed TV cameras overlooking Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and Grosvenor Square specifically for crowd monitoring and control, as

well as perhaps 200 more in the London area ostensibly for traffic control), opening mail, tapping, and so on.

All of these methods are labour intensive, since they involve someone collecting and sifting the information. Directly bugging political centres, homes etc. suffers the same drawback. Therefore they are unlikely to be used continuously. And much of the information relevant for the purposes of political intelligence can be culled directly from the open presses of political organisations — names, activities and so on.

crets Act. Silkin has been occupied with another embarrassing affair recently — in the Human Rights Court at Strasbourg — so it is quite likely that he has not yet made up his mind on this problem.

A difficult problem he will find it, too. The Labour manifesto at the last election pledged the party to the repeal of Section 2. Home Sec-

etary Merlyn Rees was a member of the Frank Committee charged with investigating revision of the Act: its recommendation published in 1972, was the Section 2 should be abolished. Even the presiding Judge at the last Section 2 trial declared that it should be 'pensioned off'. An apart from the political embarrassment, prosecution under the Act have not been

# BRIT SEC PO

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## Covert action

**Operational intelligence**, on the other hand, is needed by the State for planning counter-actions to moves by its enemies, or for pre-emptive strikes to stop them happening. This requires much larger quantities of information, and it is

therefore much more like that tapping, burglaries, etc. will be employed. What happened to the Age Hosenball Defence Committee is a case in point.

It is important to remember that M.I.5 does not merely concern itself with intelligence-gathering, but also with covert action against enemies. Very little is known about this aspect of their activities, so that it is necessary to proceed by comparison with the CIA, for example, but there can be no doubt that such activity does take place.

Philip Agee described in his book, *CIA Diary*, the gamut of activities of the CIA agency, ranging from the cultivation and bribing of political and union leaders through manipulation of the media, black propaganda harassment and so on, outright provocation and murder. We know that Whitehall employs 1,600 civil servants of the 'Information Officer' class, who



From left: Berry, Aubrey, Campbell

very successful.

All the indications are that the decision to arrest the three under the Official Secrets Act was taken hurriedly, and without reference to the Government. The hand behind the arrests was that of the MIS, attempting to crush opposition to the deportations of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. These deportations had also been ordered at their request.

Aubrey, Berry and Campbell had all been working to assist the Agee/Hosenball defence campaign. Prior to the arrests (as well as subsequently) members of the Agee/Hosenball Defence Committee had been the victims of a sustained covert action operation, including telephone taps, interception of mail, theft of contact and address books, intimidation, and the intervention of

agents provocateurs.

Clearly the State Security agency is keen to dissuade those who want to let the British working class know what they are up to. So who are the British secret police? What are they doing, and what are their plans? **Workers' Action** looks at two of the hidden agencies of the State — the Special Branch and MIS.

# THE SPECIAL IRISH BRANCH

WE HAVE already noted a large degree of overlap, and of division of labour, between the Special Branch and MIS. Of the two, the Special Branch is the junior partner, besides having perhaps only one tenth the number of people working on internal subversion.

Unlike MIS, the Branch only operates partly undercover: as policemen they have powers of arrest, and they appear in court as prosecution witnesses, often as agents on behalf of MIS.

The tasks of the Special Branch include guarding royalty, ministers and diplomats, and the watching of ports and airports. They contribute the compilation of lists of foreigners, and those of foreign parentage, and vet applications for naturalisation. In addition they maintain surveillance of the left. Like the National Front, their designated enemies are Irishmen, blacks, and reds.

of left groups are scrutinised and filed away; following raids the contents of address books, cheque stubs, etc, are cross-indexed — all building up a network of friendships and contacts.

## Fenians

Trials of members of political groups are watched, and friends of the defendants duly noted. Every political meeting in London is notified to the Branch, and if they do not themselves attend, a report will be forwarded to them (this according to the general orders of the London police, 1974).

Employers and state officials of all kinds are approached to supply information on individuals, in addition to the efforts of the Branch to win informants among union members on strike, for instance. Again, in the case of a strike, the Branch will indicate to the uniformed police who the 'ringleaders' are, and it is they who are usually arrested. At any resulting trial the Branch provides pictures of the events, transcriptions of speeches and so on to support the prosecution case.

The arrests and trial of the Islington 18 following last year's Notting Hill Carnival, as well as many other black activists, bear the signature of the Special Branch.

When it was set up in 1884 this organisation was known as the Special Irish Branch. Its task then was to combat the Fenians, and the control and harassment of the Irish community remains one of its main priorities. In 1974 the Irish Squad was reported to have about 70 members.

The Lennon affair highlighted one aspect of its operations; and the Prevention of Terrorism Act has given it vast scope to arrest, detain and interrogate thousands of Irish men and women each year.

JAMES RYAN



# BRITAIN'S SECRET POLICE

job it is to see that government propaganda finds its way into the press.

According to a confidential memo dated 30 April last year and written by Henry James, the Director General of the Central Office of Information, "We are not just involved in interpreting legislation for a general public; we are also engaged in fields of persuasion and changing social attitudes". We know, on a different level, of the black propaganda carried out by the British Army in the North of Ireland.

And it is finally worth remembering the fate of Kenneth Lennon. Lennon worked for the Special Branch as a paid informer against Sinn Fein; he claimed also to have acted as an agent provocateur, setting up a robbery for which three Sinn Fein members were jailed.

Eventually Sinn Fein became suspicious of him; the Special Branch refused to give him protection, and so

he made a statement to the National Council for Civil Liberties, outlining his activities. He predicted that the Special Branch might kill him "and make it look like an IRA job". Two days later his body was found in a Surrey ditch.

MIS and the Special Branch do not confine their attention to political organisations. From the point of view of the State, one of MIS's functions is to cover the activities of trade unionists, particularly during strikes. In 1972 it was discovered that eight members of the Executive Committee of the rail union ASLEF had their telephones tapped during a dispute with British Rail. In the same year a meeting between NUM chiefs and a leading member of the Communist Party was bugged. The meeting was held in a cafe and an agent planted a briefcase containing a tape recorder within range of their conversation.

IF YOU have been active in leading a strike or in trade union affairs, if you have attended demonstrations and political meetings or written letters to the papers, then you are on the files of the Special Branch and of Britain's secret police, MIS.

But who has the police on file? The bosses have friendly working relations with the police.

But the MPs who are supposed to be our sovereign elected representatives, and even the Home Secretary, have no control over MIS.

Only our own self-organisation and our own vigilance can enable the working class to defend ourselves against this permanently organised State machine and eventually to smash it.

Just as the Army uses Northern Ireland as a training ground for its 'counter-insurgency' techniques, the Special Branch's Irish operations have been central to its development.

All this is supposed to be for 'national security'. But the political police operations, and the laws that back them up, serve only to defend the security of the British ruling class — here and in Ireland.

□ Demand that the Labour Government disbands MIS and the Special Branch, and replaces the Official Secrets Act by a Freedom of Information Act.

□ Insist on an enquiry by the labour movement — officially sponsored if possible, unofficial if need be — into the activity of the British State forces in Northern Ireland.

□ Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the 1971 Immigration Act. No more deportations!

## Monitors

One relatively simple function of the Special Branch was seen in operation during the April 23rd demonstration in North London against the NF. During the rally preceding the confrontation, Branch men occupied themselves with photographing and establishing the identity of the left's leadership; later they were pointed out to uniformed snatch squads, who dragged them out of the crowd.

Like MIS, the Branch monitors the activities of trade unionists and members of left groups. The sheer amount of information gathered is remarkable. All names of political activists appearing in the press are indexed, together with available photographs; the addresses of people writing left wing letters will be procured from the paper's staff; everyone signing a petition is indexed; all the publications



Special Branch used this photo of Kenneth Lennon at a 1969 demonstration in Newry to pressure him into becoming an informer and agent provocateur for them.

Dear comrades,  
In WA 50 you produced a major article attempting to assess the history of the Palestinian Resistance movement. While agreeing with much of your argument, I would like to take issue with your view of the debate inside the Palestinian movement on the question of the 'mini-state'. As you correctly observe this debate is posed as being "for or against the idea of a mini-state on the West Bank and Gaza".

Unfortunately your analysis of the debate suffers from being far too abstract, with the result that you simply condemn those who advocate a mini-state without suggesting any other way forward for the Palestinian masses. The only approach you seem to suggest is that 'the struggle must continue' until by some mysterious process the Zionist state is destroyed.



Such an attitude may have some justification if all you are trying to do is point out the justice of the struggle to completely destroy the Zionist state, but it will not cut much ice with any Palestinian actively involved in the struggle who can easily see the over-simplification of your approach. Surely what you are trying to do is to provide a balanced assessment of the strategy adopted by the Resistance — not simply assert your own idea of what the end of that struggle should be regardless of how the end is reached. It is easy to define the end, but much more difficult to map out the road that leads to it. This your article conspicuously fails to do.

In the article you point out that the demand for a mini-state is the result of the accumulated defeats of the 70's, combined with the narrowness of political approach of the Palestinian leadership. This is entirely true — but not very helpful presented in such a fashion.

In a few sentences you gloss over the complicated discussion inside the Resistance movement on the issue of the mini-state, seemingly ascribing the whole thing to the narrow, nationalistic politics of the PLO leadership. In fact the original idea of the mini-state came not from the right-wing leadership of Al Fatah, but from the least 'nationalistic' of the Resistance groups, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. They raised this demand a couple of years ago in the form of an 'independent Palestinian entity on liberated land', and saw it as being a way in which a viable guerilla base could be established on the borders of Israel itself and in which the Resistance would have a fair degree of autonomy of operation. Today such a base

# A Palestinian mini-state: a realistic step forward or...

no longer exists, having been destroyed in Jordan and the Lebanon. In such a situation the Resistance faces the difficult problem of asking under what conditions it is possible to continue the struggle for the total liberation of Palestine, given that such a struggle is seen mainly in terms of an escalating guerilla war.

To this question your article gives no reply. Indeed now that Hussein of Jordan is again trying to stake his claim to speak for the Palestinians, there is the very real possibility that the Palestinian question will be liquidated in the foreseeable future by the Arab states in conjunction with US imperialism & Israel. This would leave the Palestinian people with no possibility of regaining their lost national independence. It is this terrible prospect that dominates much of the thinking of all parties in the Resistance, and which propels many of them to look on the mini-state as being the *only possible alternative* in the given circumstances.

Of course, it would be a compromise and groups like the PDPFL do not deny that it is far from being the full programme of their movement. But they see only worse alternatives for the future. Surely we allow them to make that tactical choice and do not dictate to them what manoeuvres need to be followed for them to have our unswerving support. This is the correct Leninist approach to such national liberation struggles, and the one adopted at the time of the Paris Accords during the struggle for the liberation of Vietnam.



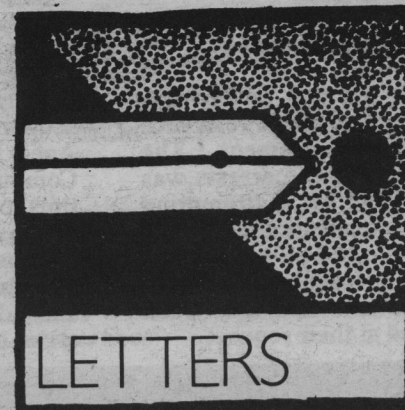
The programme of the PLO for a democratic, secular state of Palestine is not the programme of socialists for the Middle East, and we recognise the ambiguities of many of the PLO's attitudes towards the Zionist settlers. For example, the Palestinian National Charter conspicuously avoids all reference to the generation of Israelis who have settled or grown up in Israel since the founding of the Zionist state. What their fate will be is left open.

However, despite the criticisms we must make of the programme of the PLO, it is the duty of all socialists to support the just struggle of the Palestinians

for the return of their land. It may be that the mini-state will advance this struggle — or at least enable it to continue. I don't see that this can be assessed one way or another without a concrete examination of the situation in the Middle East, and this is simply not found in your article. Your opposition to such a compromise is just asserted and not argued for. It fails to provide any reason for the violent Israeli opposition to such a project. In fact, the whole drift of your ending would seem to imply that Israel ought really to be in favour of such a mini-state — yet it is not. Why? Obviously because it quite rightly fears that however feeble the mini-state might be, it will constitute a permanent destabilising factor on Israel's most vulnerable eastern flank, and its establishment will also amount to a de facto recognition of the justice of Palestinian de-

mands. Your article does not take this into account, nor does it give any reason why such a demand as the mini-state was raised by the PDPFL before the events in Lebanon.

Their initial reasoning follows a line that seems to me to be much more in touch with the realities of the situation than your own. Israel, equipped with the most sophisticated military equipment in the Middle East, armed with nuclear weapons with which to neutralise the hostility of the Arab states, and supported by imperialism and world Zionist community, is very unlikely to be destroyed from outside by a single stroke. If the Palestinian Resistance could combine with a revolutionary anti-Zionist movement amongst the Israelis themselves, then the prospects for such an overthrow would look much more rosy. Yet, as you yourselves have accurat-



ely point out, such a movement in Israel is unlikely in the foreseeable future because of the unity between classes generated inside Israeli society in the face of Arab hostility.

So the problem of the mini-state boils down to how can the Palestinians continue to struggle in such a way as to weaken the Zionist state and so bring about the conditions for a wakening of an anti-Zionist movement inside Israel itself. The mini-state might offer such a prospect. Whether it does or not cannot be written off in advance, but depends on the course of the struggle in the Middle East in the immediate future. At least we agree that at all costs that must be supported.

NEAL MORRELL

## ...the end of the line

COMRADE MORRELL believes that a West Bank mini-state (20% of Palestine) is the Palestinians' best and probably only option short of total defeat. He is not prepared just to dismiss as absurd the idea that such a state could be a military base for a guerilla war against Israel. And he himself clearly thinks that a mini-state can help subvert Israel by creating the preconditions for the emergence of "an anti-Zionist movement" inside Israel. He insists that socialists in Britain should only say a West Bank state solves nothing if they can suggest an alternative strategy. Otherwise it is an irresponsible crying for a given end, without any idea of the necessary means for achieving it.



What Workers Action says is that some variant of West Bank state (as part of a Jordan-Syria-West Bank federation, for example) is not ruled out, we do not think it could be other than a defeat for the Palestinian people. Workers Action did not simply say "The fight must go on". The article in no. 50 explained how the Palestinian people had come to their present condition by analysing their history and the history of their political and military organisations.

It is a history of successive defeats. The present situation, we argued, arises from the inherent nationalist limitations of the movements which have consolidated the "Arab Revolution" in a number of bourgeois Arab states, from the strength of imperialism and Zionism, and, finally, from the series of betrayals and slaughters of the Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon.

It is the fact of these successive blows from both Zionists and Arab bourgeois forces that makes the mini-state appear as a desirable option to some Palestinians.

Comrade Morrell says that a mini-state, though a bad alternative, is the *only* alternative to extinction of the Palestinian cause. But then he goes further and cites, with apparent approval, the idea of the Popular Democratic Front that it could be a military base "for the total liberation of Palestine". Finally, he thinks that the mini-state can destabilise Israel and open hopes of destroying the Zionist state — by evoking opposition forces within it. Morrell wanders between all three positions before finally settling

for the last!

But, he asks, why does Israel oppose the idea of the mini-state? He answers himself immediately: Israel refuses to recognise the very existence of a Palestinian people.

A mini-state can only emerge as a product of US, Israeli and Arab state diplomacy, using those Palestinians prepared to collaborate. Such a state would by its existence legitimise the racist Zionist state — and certainly it could only come into existence if the Palestinians explicitly recognised Israel.

Some people hold to the idea that it could be 'Zionism in reverse', beginning with a toehold and expanding. The idea of directly reversing Zionism implies Arab anti-Jewish chauvinism in place of the programme of a secular state. But Zionism, in addition to manipulating and using persecuted Jews, could also count on massive outside financial support, could draw on a far more advanced society for most of its colonists, could ally with imperialism — and, most of all, it faced an underdeveloped and initially unwary Palestinian Arab population, whose own upper classes were willing to do deals with Zionism.



With the Palestinians almost everything is the opposite. Far from it being a powerful military base, before Israel and the USA could agree to such a mini-state it would probably have to be a demilitarised zone. Those favouring the mini-state as a military base are either fools or demagogues. The mini-state is a "way forward"... only into an Arab reservation or Bantustan. To support is to admit, or proclaim, that the cause is lost. The quite unreal and fantastic project of a new upsurge of guerilla war from a "West Bank" base is, when checked against reality, only another expression of the fact that those who want to wage that war are not able to — and therefore that guerilla war is not now the appropriate weapon.

It is this underlying logic that unites some 'lefts' with those who see the West Bank state as the best to settle for.

Comrade Morrell argues for the mini-state as the only possible gain for the Palestinians and as opening the way for an anti-Zionist movement in Israel. But this is a very shop-worn left-Zionist argument, which mixes oddly

with comrade Morrell's Arab nationalist sentiments.

Remove Arab hostility, the argument goes, and the Zionist bloc will fall apart. It is quite true that if there were no Arabs, and especially no Palestinians, then there would be no Zionist bloc against them! At best a period of many years would have to pass before such a radical transformation of Israeli society could occur.

But Israel's opposition to recognising the existence of a Palestinian people, and Syria's aspirations for a Syrian-West Bank-Jordan federation, are most likely to rule out an independent West Bank state. It is not something to be fought for: it is not compatible with a socialist programme, nor part of a democratic programme. In its most radical, if unreal version — "Zionism in reverse" — it is logically Arab-chauvinist. And in reality it is a chimera of the power play between the Arab states, Israel and US imperialism.



Can Workers Action offer a better strategy, or another comparable 'option' to the Palestinians? No. We can work out a strategy for working-class militants in the Arab East — a strategy which relates to the Palestinian struggle — but we neither have a magic formula to allow the Palestinian movement as a whole to escape its petty bourgeois nationalist limitations, nor are willing to give our endorsement to the options imposed by those limitations. We are not "inspectors-general of history" who must select the 'best option' that seems on offer now. Nor are Marxists 'magicians of history' who can concoct some 'clever' Marxist formula to conjure away the situation resulting from the defeats of the Palestinians and the whole drift of Middle East politics.

Workers Action's solution to the Middle East cockpit is a socialist federation of the Middle East. A secular state for Arabs and Jews in Palestine is part of that programme. We recognise the right of the Palestine Arabs to compromise. We indict the Arab states for their betrayals of the Palestinian Arab people. And we refuse to join the Palestinian Arabs, or comrade Morrell, in the delusion that any variant of a Palestinian West Bank state would be other than a defeat.

FRANK HIGGINS

## WORKERS ACTION supporters' groups

BASINGSTOKE, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, CAMBRIDGE, CARDIFF, CHELMSFORD, CHESTER, COVENTRY, EDINBURGH, HUDDERSFIELD, LEICESTER, LIVERPOOL, LONDON, MANCHESTER, MIDDLESBROUGH, NEWCASTLE, NEWTOWN, NORTHAMPTON, NOTTINGHAM, READING, ROCHDALE, SHEFFIELD, STAFFORD, STOKE.

Write for details of meetings and activities to:  
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Left united against YS ruling clique

Perhaps the most significant new development was the strong political presence at conference of the new paper LEFT ACTION, produced by supporters of Workers' Action, Red Weekly, and independents.

The paper aims to be a forum for the politics of the various revolutionary trends which oppose the Right, the Tribunites, and the Militant reformists. First and foremost, however, it is a campaigning paper on issues like the Social Contract, racialism, and British troops in Ireland.

Left talk is cheap and counterfeited easily enough. Action to hit back at the system and build an outward-looking Labour youth movement is what is missing and what Left Action sets out to provide.

It held a very successful meeting, and its supporters look forward to a Conference which is planned for May 28th, 11am to 4pm, at Essex Road Library, Islington, London. Further details can be got from Linda Gregory, 7 Newman Road, Sheffield.

THE 1977 Labour Party Young Socialists conference at Blackpool over Easter weekend was markedly more lifeless than last year's not too lively affair.

Many young workers were present: but because of the weak presence of the revolutionary left, most of them supported the ultra-simple policies of the sectarian Militant tendency. Militant got a grip on the YS in the years when revolutionaries were concerned with the Vietnam war and the industrial struggle, and turned away from the Labour Party. It still keeps it.

Proceedings were less blatantly undemocratic than at former conferences. Platform speakers took less time than is usual at YS conferences. But selection of speakers was still transparently biased to exclude sections of the revolutionary left. Workers' Action supporters only got called to speak when they were moving or seconding resolutions.

Militant and Clause 4 (Tribunites) talked as if great principles divided them: but it was just a Punch and Judy show, much attitudinising, nothing very serious.

The cousinhood of Tribune and Militant emerged at the beginning in the debate on the economy. Both complained about the failure of the capitalists to invest, and demanded that the Government change course and implement the 1974 Manifesto — the same Manifesto which had at its heart the Social Contract.

Militant's big point against the Clause 4 strategy of gradually nationalising the 'commanding heights' was that this would lead to a Chile coup situation, which could be avoided by nationalising all at once, through an Enabling Act. If you can manage to expropriate the capitalists (through Parliament of course) all at once they can be taken by surprise and lose their power peacefully before they notice!

With this rosy prospect in the future, little active struggle is

The TweedleMilitant and TweedleTribune show goes on

necessary in the present. No assessment of the Youth Campaign against Unemployment was made, nor were any prospects for breathing life into it offered.

Ross Catlin, Northampton South YS, moving a motion in opposition, spelled out the need for "close liaison and collaboration with all committees and groups fighting unemployment", "support for the Working Women's Charter", and support for women's right to work. He pointed out the need to set up unemployed workers' committees and centres in the localities to build an active campaign.

On IRELAND, Jane Ashworth, Carlton YS, moved a motion calling for troops out and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole. Pointing out how British imperialism had set up the Northern Ireland state and manipulated the divisions in the north of Ireland, she showed how all struggles in the North — particularly the ill-fated civil rights movement of 1968-9 — come up against the existence of the Six County state.

In response, Militant delegates talked of the success of the trade-union organised "Better Life For All" campaign, which was born dead. The real situation was ignored, and a reactionary position spun out of wishful thinking. One Militant supporter even said, "withdrawal of troops can

only be achieved when the working class is united". That is at least honest — reactionary, pro-imperialist balderdash, but honest.

On WOMEN'S RIGHTS, a speaker from Garston YS began: "I speak neither as a man nor as a woman..." Nor as a socialist! Nevertheless the NC recommended that a motion from Brent East, moved by Angela Sharif, be accepted. So now the YS is committed to support for the Working Women's Charter, the National Abortion Campaign, and "all women struggling for equal pay and against sex discrimination". In the next year the left in the YS will have to fight hard to translate this into action.

In the ELECTIONS TO THE LABOUR PARTY N.E.C., Nick Bradley, Militant, was predictably re-elected overwhelmingly as YS representative. It was very unfortunate that the revolutionary left had not one but two candidates: Graham Durham (Leeds SE, Chartist), and Kevin Mayes

(Northampton North, Workers' Action).

Graham Durham took a principled position on Ireland and said that if the YS continues on its present course, it has "no right to preach on internationalism". He also pointed out the need for the YCAU to unite with other campaigns against unemployment.

Kevin Mayes supported the Carlton resolution on Ireland. He also demanded that Left MPs vote against the coalition (a demand missing from the Militant emergency resolution on the subject), arguing that "maintenance of the Labour Government" was not the central question, but rather defence of the interests of the working class.

Real "Marxists" in the YS should make a decision today — to stop supporting the Militant and to involve themselves in building an active working-class youth movement, which means shrugging off Militant's grip.

JIM HOYLE

LPYS CONFERENCE

NO VOTE ALLOWED ON COLQUHOUN

RACISM IS the acid test for all political tendencies in Britain now. And especially for the "sweetness and light" socialist day dreamers of Militant, one of whose two or three stock answers to everything is "working class unity".

The problem in this case is that black and white workers are decidedly not united. Socialists have to take sides. For example, where black and white workers are divided in a strike, as at Imperial Typewriters.

Here the approach of Militant's supporters is "Don't bother me with the facts, my tiny socialist mind is already made up".

A Leicester delegate said that only the YS had taken up the Imperial Typewriters strike in a serious way — by ignoring the fact that white workers scabbed on immigrant strikers! In fact "only Benny Bunsee" (a strike committee adviser) "turned Imperialist Typewriters into a racist strike". And she was not shouted down.

Julia Page, Shipley YS, told us the answer to racist violence against blacks, including murder, "is not black self-defence, but to join the Labour Party and LPYS and be active in the unions".

In reply, Simon Temple (Norwood YS) pointed out: "We support black self-defence and must not counterpose labour movement self-defence to black self-defence". He pointed out the

example of a POEU branch in London which had passed NF policy on immigration, showing racialism in the working class.

He also challenged both the Tribunites and the Militant to make their position clear on the struggle against Maureen Colquhoun in Northampton North.

Colquhoun, who is treasurer of the Tribune group in Parliament, has come out in defence of racist godfather Enoch Powell.

Kevin Mayes, one of the leaders of the fight against Colquhoun in Northampton, also demanded the majority show where they stand. But the Militant majority ruled out of order an emergency motion on the question from Northampton North.

The National Committee speaker, summing up, informed us that by taking up a similar issue the left had triggered a vote of confidence in the MP concerned, and thus strengthened the right wing. In other words — "Don't fight back — you'll only provoke the racists".

Most debates have a dreamy air of divorce from reality. The one on Colquhoun and racism dealt with things that many Militant supporters know and see around them, and with a left wing MP's support for the most notorious publicised racist in Britain. Militant did not dare allow a vote on the issue of Colquhoun's support for Powell.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

NUT EXECUTIVE RAMS HOME ITS OFFENSIVE



THE UNIONS



THE NUMBER of qualified teachers out of work will be hitting the 40,000 mark come this September. It will need another 58,000 teachers on top of those already employed to reduce all school class sizes to 30 or less. As long ago as 1962 the National Union of Teachers passed a motion at conference calling for statutory limitation of classes to 30. Fifteen years later it has still failed to grasp the nettle of class size at its 1977 conference, at Eastbourne.

But only just. A call for action on classes over 30 was narrowly defeated on a card vote, 131,000 to 100,000.

The strength of feeling in conference as a whole was high on this issue, and we can, motion notwithstanding, expect outbreaks of unofficial action as members grow tired of the Executive's footdragging.

The racialism motion was quashed by conference. Gone is the reference to excluding fascists from the union. Gone is the call for educational premises to be closed to fascist meetings. (And don't the fascists make use of our spinelessness? — at Haringey on April 23rd yet again they finished up with a rally in a school).

Direct action, of the sort seen at Tulse Hill school where teachers, pupils, and parents refused to work with a teacher who was in the NF, will be needed again in the future.

A scurrilous motion calling for investigation into transferring the cost of school meals from the education budget across to other government departments was passed. The "give education a bigger slice of the cake and never mind the rest" attitude is by no means dead in the NUT.

The suspensions last year of 30 teachers from Little Ilford school, Newham, East London, were finally ratified by conference. The 30 were suspended from the union for taking unofficial action against the cuts; they have now been reinstated.

Small wonder conference agreed. There had been a black-out in the union journal over the issue. The Little Ilford teachers were suspended and thus ineligible at the time of election of conference delegates, and the Newham delegation at conference were unable to make their statement indicating the amount of local support there had been for the 30.

Outside of conference proper there were very many healthy left wing teachers' meetings,

in particular joint meetings between Rank and File and the newly formed Socialist Teachers Alliance. Out of one such meeting has come the initiative of a joint conference in June of teachers on the left in the NUT (R&F, STA, or neither) to plan for a campaign of action on the issue of class size.

Ian Hollingworth

# WRECKERS IN ACTION

## Police defend Front against labour movement mobilisation

continued from page 1

A broad ad hoc committee managed to create a unity in action stretching from the revolutionary left to the Labour Party right. After a clumsy attempt by borough civil servants to get the anti-fascist march banned, the local Labour councillors were induced to turn out. Labour Mayor Vic Butler wore his chain of office and brought along the Council's Tory chief whip as chaperone. In fact the NF, which may get a third of the vote in London, has begun to worry even Labour's least militant wing, even those who support the policies of the Labour Government that help perpetuate the problems which the NF blame on immigrants.

Solid sections of the local working class movement were out to stop the fascists, as were many from the Cypriot community of North London. The Morning Star report [25th April] is simply lying when it says that those who tried to break through the police cordons were only the SWP.

Had the labour movement organised on the streets earlier than the Fascist vote in the coming elections would be much less than it seems likely to be. If, from now on, the same broad unity on the streets is the labour movement's reaction when the NF marches, then their inflated vote won't matter too

much. And a lot of present NF voters will begin to understand that the NF is the Nazi Front.



50 people were arrested in snatch-squad operations by the Special Patrol Groups, apparently modelled on the techniques used in Northern Ireland.

Dave Silcock, a T&GWU member from Reading, told Workers' Action what happened when he was arrested, near Wood Green police station. He tried to run away, but offered no resistance. The police took him into the station and through to the empty cell block (using him to push the doors open) — threw him on the floor, kicked him, and beat him about the head with a truncheon.

He was then taken to another station and charged... with 'assaulting the police'.

IN BASINGSTOKE, two anti-fascist activists arrested on the 23rd April demonstration were arrested again on the evening of Sunday 24th.

At about 10pm they were with another comrade in a pub when police entered and arrested all three. One, who had been released on Saturday for lack of evidence against him, was told that the police suspected him of spray-painting; and that, unless he admitted to it, all three would be forensically examined and charged with criminal damage and fly-posting. Grazes and a birthmark on his hands were alleged to be evidence of the spray painting.

Under this pressure, the comrade said he had been spray-painting, and the other two were released. The police produced witnesses to the alleged spray-painting — one of them from an address just three doors away from the local NF organiser!

A policeman was overheard saying: "We'd better get on to the Special Branch about this".

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word; block ads, £5 per column inch. All payments to be made in advance. Send copy to Events, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

UNTIL 7 MAY. 7:84 theatre company present 'Wreckers' by David Edgar. 8pm at the Half Moon Theatre, 27 Alie St, E1. Tel. 480-6465.

THURSDAY 28 APRIL: International Communist League public meeting, "A Programme for Workers' Power". 8pm, TU Club, Minster St, Reading.

FRIDAY 29 APRIL: International Marxist Group rally: "For a Unified Revolutionary Organisation! For a Class Struggle Left Wing!" Speakers: Alain Krivine (editor, Rouge); and from LCR (Spain) and IMG; plus discussion from the floor. 7.30pm, Hammersmith Town Hall. Adm. 50p.

SUNDAY 1 MAY. Labour Party May Day demonstration. Assemble 1pm, Embankment.

FRIDAY 6 MAY: Socialist Teachers' Alliance meeting on Compulsory Transfers. 7.30pm, Stevenson Room, Euston Station.

FRIDAY 6 May. 'The Crisis and the struggle for a Vanguard Party'. Speaker, Frank Richards. 7.30pm, Conway Hall 1st public meeting of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

TUESDAY 10 MAY. International Communist League public meeting, "A Programme for Workers' Power". Speaker: Martin Thomas. 7.30pm, at the Victoria Hotel, opposite Stoke City football ground.

SATURDAY 14 MAY. National Abortion Campaign demonstration against the Benyon Bill. Assemble 1.30pm, Belvedere Rd, Waterloo.

SUNDAY 15 MAY. Labour Abortion Rights Conference: 10am at the FTAT Hall, 14 Jockeys Fields, London WC1.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 21-22 MAY. National Conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign — "Which Way Forward for the Charter Campaign?" Delegates' credentials £1.50 from Jill Daniels, 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

### ADS

SOCIALIST VOICE; U.S. Trotskyist theoretical magazine. No. 3 includes: the class struggle in the American South, the nature of the Communist Parties. Price 50p or U.S. \$1.85, from: LRP, 170 Broadway, Room 201, New York, NY 10028, USA.

Campaign Against Racism in the Media pamphlet on racist reporting and how to fight it: "IN BLACK AND WHITE". 35p plus 10p p&p from 13 Cleve Road, NW6.

"THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS POWER" Manifesto of the International - Communist League. Out soon: pre-publication orders 30p each from G. Lee, 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF.

Still available: "International Communist" nos. 1, 2/3, 4, & 5, 30p plus 6½p postage each: "Women's liberation & workers' revolution", an I-CL pamphlet, 20p + 6½p postage. All cheques payable to "Phoenix Pamphlets".

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## SUPPORT THE HEATHROW STRIKERS

continued from page 1

The employers claim, of course, that increased allowances cannot be paid because of the Social Contract pay freeze.

The men claim this is not so. This doesn't mean that they support the Social Contract; simply that they point out that under the Employment Protection Act increases can be allowed to remove anomalies, and that therefore the Social Contract limits would not be affected. At the same time they have

### Now Grunwicks takes AGAS to court

THE GRUNWICK strike in North West London is now in its 36th week. They are out demanding the basic right of trade union recognition, denied by a management which pays slave-labour wages. Since 12th April the strikers have been operating a 24 hour picket, and a mass picket and demonstration are planned for Wednesday 27th April.

However, despite statements by the TUC General Council that all unions should "give all possible assistance to the Grunwick strike", the leaders of the Union of Post Office Workers, the union which could ensure victory by putting an immediate blacking on postal deliveries to Grunwicks (which does much of its business by mail) have said they will not act alone.

The latest move by the company — which has been continuing operation with scab labour — has been the announcement that they intend to contest in the High Court the decision of AC-AS that APEX should be recognised, on the grounds that the strikers themselves should not have been balloted, because they were dismissed by the firm soon after the strike began.

Help is needed both financially and on the 24-hour picket line, in addition to resolutions to Union executives and the TUC calling for services to be cut off from the company. Messages & donations to: Mahmood Ahmed, Secretary Grunwick Strike Committee, Broad Trades & Labour Hall, 373 High Road, Willesden, NW10.

PETE FIRMEN

made it clear on many occasions — as the Leyland workers did — that if it had not been for the Social Contract the situation would never have arisen.

The strike bulletin says: "Is the dispute about separate negotiations? NO — the AUEW ultimate objective is DIRECT negotiations for shop stewards with management in line with its National Committee policy. If each union achieved direct negotiations they could approach management singly on their own business or collectively on matters of common concern. On the question of shift claim, our national officials have attempted to pursue this within the existing (Engineering and Maintenance) Panel machinery, but because of the limitations of the panel procedure they have been prevented from discussing it by the other unions who have not yet started to prepare a shift claim".

The Heathrow strikers would be only too pleased if such claims were worked out by the other unions and a joint struggle

was pursued. What they are not prepared to do is wander through the procedural maze of the panel which favours the employers, or sit about waiting for the least militant of the unions to get round to putting in a claim.

It is essential that other workers show solidarity with the Heathrow strike. And that they campaign within their unions against the strike-breaking activities of their union leaders and against the social contract.

Paul Adams



### Hayward says support Newham LP against courts

Harold Lugg and John Clark, chairman and secretary respectively of Newham North East Labour Party, face legal costs of between £7,000 and £10,000 as a result of a successful High Court action brought by local Social Democratic Alliance supporter Julian Lewis to block the constituency's Annual General Meeting in February. It was this AGM that was scheduled to start the reselection procedure to find a successor to Reg Prentice, who has stated that he is not prepared to participate in any selection conference, preferring to run as a "Democratic Labour" candidate. On a technicality, that it was improper to extend the deadline

for nominations to the GMC despite a local postal strike, the court succeeded in dictating Labour Party affairs. Prentice dissociated himself from Lewis' manoeuvres, but attempts to raise the issue in wards subsequently were ruled out of order on the grounds that to do so would be contempt of court.

Labour's general secretary Ron Hayward is organising a nation-wide appeal, and the chairman of the London Labour Party, Arthur Latham [MP for Paddington] has called for strong support for Newham North East from London parties.

I.H.

### 'Pay too high' says auditor

MAINTENANCE workers employed by Crawley council in Sussex are threatened with wage cuts. Not just the general decline in living standards caused by the Social Contract, but actual cash cuts.

The district auditor has complained that their bonus system costs too much and wants it reduced. Yet this same system has been enforced for some years without protest. It is only when the Government wants cuts that the objections begin.

The maintenance workers held a token strike last Wednesday, April 10th, and marched to the Town Hall to show their determination to resist this attack. So far, both the council workers' stewards and the EC of the Trades Council have failed to get any assurance from the Council's ruling Labour group that they will ignore the district auditor's strictures.

If this attempt succeeds it will be a threat to the wages of council manual workers throughout the country, most of whom depend on bonuses to achieve a reasonable living standard.

SIMON TEMPLE