

FULL PAY

workers' ACTION

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NOW! NO

6,000 steelworkers strike against BSC plan SPREAD THE STRIKES!

LOSS OF JOBS!

Throughout the country steelworkers are rejecting the British Steel Corporation's plans to slash the labour force by 44,000 and do away with the premium shift payments and the industry's guaranteed week agreement.

On Wednesday January 14 representatives of the industry's 27,000 craft workers rejected the plans and demanded major modifications. The NCCC, the organisation representing the different craft unions, said that it had rejected the plan because BSC claimed the right to dictate redundancies and weekend working arrangements without consultation. The day before, the Scottish region of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the biggest union in the industry, also rejected the plans.

Pressure is rapidly mounting on the officials to call a national steel strike. The unofficial Scottish Action Committee has called for a national strike, and will lobby the BSC-union talks on Thursday January 22nd. Bill

by Andrew Hornung

Owen, President of the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils, agreed after a special meeting of steelworkers' representatives called by the Association, "The threat of a strike is there". In South Wales 6,000 workers at different works are already out on strike.

In the Midlands the Bilston and Wolverhampton officials representing 3,000 men have rejected the cut backs, while at Corby 1,400 men met on January 17th to reject these attacks and call on the union leaders to prepare for industrial action. At Shelton the ISTC officials are still undecided, although the men have shown their willingness for action when 600 struck on January 16th in protest against being refused Sunday working. Part of the problem here is that the TGWU has accepted the BSC plans.

Wriggle as they may, the union officials are being pushed closer and closer to the brink of a national strike. They realise that it could unleash a storm of active



opposition to the Steel Corporation, exposing the official line of capitulation and cowardice.

Steelworkers must combine any call for a national strike with taking steps to organise local actions right now. The call for a national strike cannot be a 'get-out' for organising

industrial action on a local basis immediately. At Trostre and Velindre, where two thirds of Britain's tinplate is produced, 5,000 workers have been on strike since January 15th; at Port Talbot, 1,000 are on strike; at Machynys 300 are out. If a national steel strike is not the outcome of that kind of

aggressive direct action, it will simply be an empty slogan at best, at worst an empty gesture easily tolerated by the right wing union leadership. Indeed, they might even encourage and lead it if they think that it will mean that the head of steam built up amongst the rank and file will be let off the angry militancy dissipated, and the movement demoralised.

The resolution passed by the Lackenby (Teesside) Allied Crafts workers (see last week's *Workers Action*) clearly reveals the distrust shown towards these 'leaders'. The Lackenby workers called on their Allied Crafts Committee to call a meeting of stewards and shop floor officials from every plant to organise national action and represent steel workers in negotiations.

Whatever the scale of the actions — whether local or national — industrial action should not end with the BSC cowboys simply agreeing to get round the table with Bill Sirs, Moss Evans, and the other nervous gentlemen we didn't elect. Strike action should be for the basic demands: Not a job lost, not a penny lost.

A fight around the retention of the premium shift payment is important. But a fight limited to this will fall short of the objectives we need to set ourselves to protect the living standards

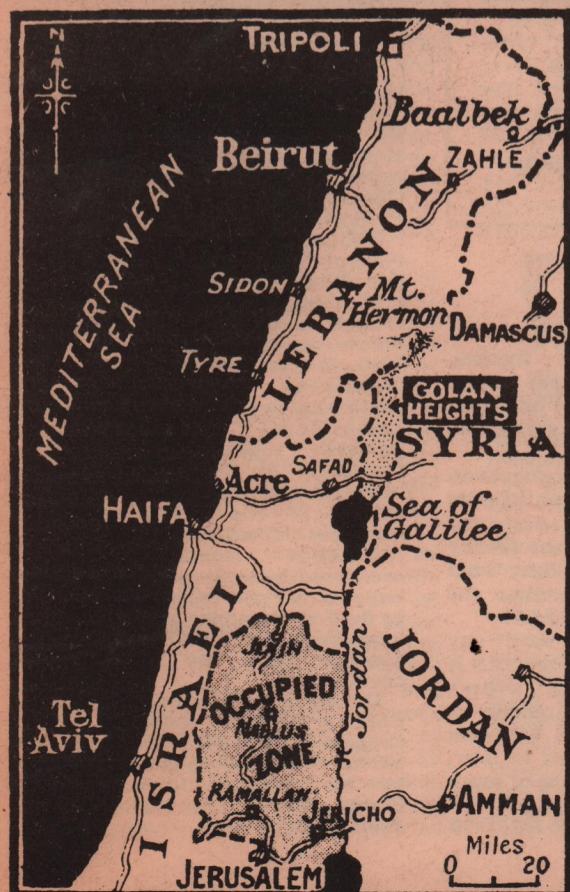
of the work force. Likewise a fight for the guaranteed week. (BSC might even relent on this as it contravenes the new "Employment Protection Act").

Not one of the trade union officials has put forward a policy in the interests of the working class. Sirs talks about shares, Evans calls for the government's conciliation service to intervene, and the TUC's steel committee toys with ideas of import controls and higher investment.

Unfortunately the BSC chiefs are smarter than our 'leaders'. They recognise that what is at stake, as in the 1920s, is what used to be called "management prerogative". BSC insist that management must have the right to decide which shifts will be worked. In different ways this is recognised by the officials. For instance Stan Biddicombe, ISTC Divisional Organiser has said, "The Port Talbot workers are not on strike because of their Sunday working controversy. They are on strike because the management did not negotiate or discuss the situation"

Contd. back page

Workers at Redcar ore terminal site are all out on strike over what one steward described as "a local Mr. 10% who's trying to become Mr. 50%". Full story next week.



Israel threatens Middle-East war over Lebanon

by Paul Harris

ISRAEL has warned Syria that if it intervenes in the Lebanon on the side of the Moslems and Palestinians "a situation of war will have been created." Thus Israel stands poised to turn the Lebanese civil war into another full scale Middle East war.

There are reports that sections of the Palestinian Liberation Army are moving into the Lebanon from Syria. The PLA is closely integrated into the Syrian army; and Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Khaddim has said that Syria will intervene to save the Lebanon from partition, even if it means war with Israel.

Israel's arrogant 'warning' shows up yet again its role as police-dog to US imperialism, and reveals also its continued tendency to expansion into neighbouring territories. It has already on numerous occasions raided Lebanese territory, in particular the Palestinian refugee camps. It has sent squads

over the border to 'arrest' its Palestinian enemies, as if it had divine jurisdiction over southern Lebanon.

If any country has the right to intervene in Lebanon, it is Syria. In fact, Syria and Lebanon were only set up as separate states quite recently, being carved up in the familiar manner by European imperialism. And the continuing special relationship of Syria to the Moslems and Palestinians of the Lebanon has traditionally been recognised by the Lebanese state.

The new war threat was triggered off when, last Sunday, the Lebanese cease-fire was brutally shattered by the forces of the right wing Christian Falangists. They attacked the Moslem area of Quarantina in Beirut, completely devastating the area with rockets and artillery fire. The Falangists have driven over 500 civilians from their homes, and taken many of them prisoner.

This assault by the Falangists was a carefully planned,

premeditated breaking of the ceasefire, and follows the bolstering up of these right wingers by the Lebanese army in the previous week.

Although the Lebanese government is supposed to be 'impartial' between the two communities, the Christian President, Franjeh, has increasingly been using the power of the state against the Moslem left wing. Last week Franjeh praised the army's action against the Palestinian guerrillas, who are supporting the Moslems.

These actions — including the use of aircraft against the Palestinian refugee camps — were met with uproar amongst the Moslems and the Left. On Sunday the Moslem Prime Minister Rashid Karami resigned. Such is the total hostility of the Moslem community towards the Franjeh regime that a replacement for Karami would be almost impossible to find.

To support the Moslem left-wingers, the Palestinian Res-

istance have been sending arms and men into Beirut. They rightly fear that if the Falangists win, then the Palestinians will be driven out of Lebanon.

Although Yassir Arafat, the official leader of the Palestinians, has in the past tried to restrain his supporters, he will no longer, he says, be able to do this after the fall of Quarantina.

At the root of the internal conflict in the Lebanon lies the composition of the Lebanese state, a sectarian 'power-sharing' whose constitution gives political domination to the relatively wealthy Maronite Christian minority community.

To this conflict is added the fascist Falangists' hatred of the Palestinians, and their complicity with Zionist Israel's attempt to exterminate them.

And, not far behind the scenes, US imperialism hopes to gather the harvest of a "stabilised" oil producing area, should Zionism, the Lebanese state and the Christian right wing win the day.

STRABANE 23pc; NEWRY 24pc; COOKSTOWN 18pc; ENNISKILLEN 16pc;

The other horror story from Northern Ireland

REPORT by Neill Bell; BELFAST

THERE is another horror story going on in Northern Ireland, as well as the one we hear about. And that is the worsening economic situation facing both Catholic and Protestant workers. There was always high unemployment here. Even during the 'boom' period of the 1960s unemployment never fell below 7%. Catholic workers bore the brunt of it, with the relatively privileged Protestants making up the most skilled and organised workforce in the engineering and ship-building industries of the Belfast - East Antrim complex.

Now the recession has brought a staggering rise of unemployment in the North to 10%. Again, the Catholic working class has suffered most, particularly in the textile and construction industries. The figures for the 'Catholic' towns speak for themselves: Strabane, 26.3%; Newry, 24%; Cookstown 18.2%; Enniskillen, 16.2%; Derry, 14.1%.

But now the crisis has hit so deep that Protestant workers have also been dragged into the dole queues. In predominantly Loyalist towns and areas, the jobless figures have also shot up: Coleraine, 13%; Ballymena, 8.3%; Antrim, 8.3%.

The collapse of many foreign-owned businesses, many of which are in the light engineering sector, has posed a direct threat to many Loyalist workers. Last week, for instance, Rolls-Royce announced that it was going to close its plant with a loss of nearly 800 jobs. This factory has been a stronghold of working class Loyalism; many of its stewards were leading members of the Ulster Workers Council. The reaction of these workers to the Rolls-Royce closure may well provide an indication of any possible break by Protestant workers from the reactionary cul-de-sac of Loyalism.

Traditionally, Loyalist workers have turned to their Orange MPs and Unionist leaders in any struggle. These leaders are virulently pro-capitalist and have a long record of hostility to the working class — though this hasn't prevented them from leading and addressing Loyalist workers' marches with the effect of always diverting any genuine anger and militancy into acceptable Loyalist perspectives. For example, they now explain growing



Loyalist workers' idea of "fighting for jobs": a Catholic Rolls Royce worker died in this car (and five others escaped) as it was machine-gunned on approach to the factory.

unemployment as being just one more sign that Britain wants to disengage from the North; one more act of betrayal of Ulster Loyalism by the British government...

Union officials similarly have proposed all sorts of ineffectual solutions to unemployment, ranging from import controls to worker participation. None of them is prepared to state the truth that unemployment is the result of the capitalist system and its priorities, and that the extremely high unemployment in Ireland (both North and South) is due to the weak and rotten state of Irish capitalism, warped by the requirements of British imperialism.

But to say that would mean issuing a clear call for action from workers not to maintain the system which divides them, but to unite to destroy it.

Already Loyalist workers have begun to fight back against unemployment. Some have occupied their factories. But they have been ham-strung by their own Loyalist ideas. In essence, the ideas of Loyalism are the ideas of class collaboration — and it is the possibility of this

collaboration breaking down which most worries the Loyalist politicians.

The determined opposition of West and Paisley to power sharing lies in their recognition of the fact that without the system of patronage and privilege for Loyalist workers, Loyalism has little to sustain it.

In the face of growing unemployment, the logic of Loyalism is to place the blame for this not only on the British, but also on the Republican population and those who side with them. Since the Ulster Workers Council strike, there has been a Loyalist campaign to drive Catholic workers out of 'Protestant' jobs. This is the practical meaning of such a sectarian attitude.

Rolls-Royce may well see these tendencies become more fully expressed. However, any attempt by the Rolls Royce workers to seize and occupy the factory opens up the possibility of further splits within the Loyalist camp.

Irish revolutionary socialists must be prepared to develop such possibilities, for in them lies the chance for Ulster workers to find a way out of the present sectarian impasse.



ISRAELI 'UNIONS' SAY DOUBLE THE JOBLESS

THE Israeli economy is in real trouble. Despite massive aid from the US, the Israeli state is spending about 40% of its Gross National Product on armaments in a desperate bid to keep ahead of its Arab neighbours.

The Israeli £ has been effectively devalued by 60% in the last year. Taxes, both direct and indirect, have been escalating (in a country where the blackest jokes were always about taxation) while real wages have been slashed. Everyday household goods are now 'super-taxed, and when it comes to the more serious domestic hardware, a black and white TV set now costs about £350, and washing machines are anything up to £400.

At the same time, the pressures on the Israeli ruling class are intensifying. The balance of payments deficit for last year was a staggering £2,000 million, (nearly £1,000 for every man, woman and child) and funds from Zionists outside Israel have been falling under the impact of the general recession and inflation.

Unemployment is currently running at about 10% — being at least twice this for Arab workers. Yet the Executive of the Histadrut (the General Federation of Labour, which is both the sole trade union body and the biggest employer of labour) has recently hatched a plan to bail out Israeli capitalism and squeeze the workers harder. Their scheme is to double unemployment!

Pressure is now mounting on the Histadrut and government to 'hit the wealthy' and attack the so-called 'black economy' whereby the really rich run tax fiddles with a vengeance. A survey recently showed that in the fashionable suburbs of Haifa and Tel-Aviv many people living in grand mansions had such nominally low incomes that they paid little or no tax.

Predictably, though, the government, in response to promptings from the International Monetary Fund and under threat of a massive run on the Israeli £, will launch the same recipe we've seen from Wilson: social service cuts, a vigorous offensive against wages, and an escalation of unemployment.

How long will the credit afforded the government by the Israeli masses last under these conditions?



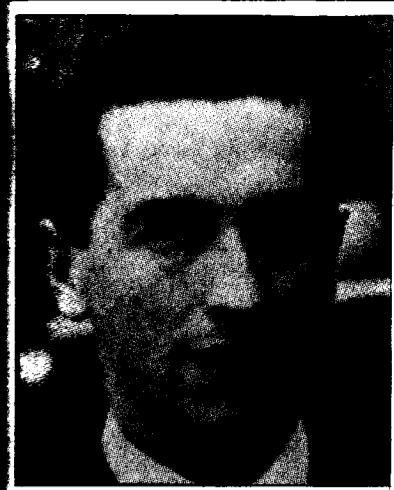
OF THE many national liberation struggles occurring throughout the world in recent years, one that has had little attention is the struggle of FROLINAT.

FROLINAT is the National Liberation Front of Chad, and is fighting a war to free Chad from the domination of French and American imperialism.

Chad, a former African colony of France, received its independence in 1960, but only at the cost of the installation of a government subservient to France led by its puppet Tombalbaye. His dictatorship ruthlessly suppressed the native population of Chad, using French 'advisors', while allowing the US to gain control of the main economic resources of Chad, its mines and oil.

Although Tombalbaye was overthrown by an Army coup in April of last year, the new regime is supported by the French and the struggle against it continues. FROLINAT claim to have liberated nearly two thirds of the country.

The aim of the 'Information Group on Chad' is to obtain solidarity for the struggle of FROLINAT and to provide information to anyone interested. They can be contacted c/o M.Bosch, 23 Bridge Avenue Mansions, Bridge Avenue, London W.6.



FRANK STAGG ON FOURTH HUNGER STRIKE

A COUPLE of weeks ago the British press waxed indignant over the detention and torture of Sheila Cassidy by the thugs of the Chilean Junta — and rightly so. However, these guardians of penal decency have utterly suppressed the news of the indignities and torture inflicted on Irish political prisoners festering in British jails.

FRANK STAGG has been on hunger and thirst strike for several weeks. His demand is a simple one and, as with the Price sisters and their companions Hugh Feeney and Gerry Kelly, it is even in line with prison rules. He wants to be transferred to a prison in Northern Ireland where his family can visit him.

Frank has now been restricted to one visit per month; his wife and sister who travelled from Northern Ireland have been refused permission to see him.

His condition is now critical, and he has suffered spells of unconsciousness. When he was visited by his mother recently he was in such a terrible state that she fainted with shock. Yet the prison authorities at Wakefield blandly issue statements saying there is "no change" in his condition. Warders keep a bright light burning in his cell night and day. And Labour Home Secretary Jenkins, jailor of Des Warren, is adamant in his refusal to return Frank Stagg to Ireland.

Frank, who has been on hunger strike four times, is facing death. He will die unless British workers and socialists mount a swift campaign for his removal to Northern Ireland to be granted. Wakefield jail should be picketed; trade union bodies, Labour Parties, political groups and individuals should deluge Jenkins with demands for the transfer.



BLOODY SUNDAY
Jan.30th 1972
14 shot by British Army

END BRITISH INVOLVEMENT!

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

**DEMONSTRATE Sunday Feb 1st
Shepherds Bush Green,
1.30pm**

S.A.S. TARGET IS SOUTH ARMAGH

THE SAS, the British Army's undercover dirty tricks squad, is not new to Northern Ireland. People there are familiar with incidents of marked cars being waved through army checkpoints after their plain-clothed passengers had opened fire on someone; of groups of men using heavy Irish accents engaging in kidnapping or gunning down selected targets; of a massage parlour and a laundry being used as cover for surveillance by the SAS; and of notorious Orange paramilitary characters with known connections with the SAS.

So if the SAS presence is not new, why the public announcement of their mobilisation just a public relations job?

The fact is that long before the

Bessborough killings, there had been mounting pressure in and around the Army for the SAS to be sent in force to South Armagh. This had nothing whatever to do with sectarian assassinations and everything to do with subduing this area of Northern Ireland where the Republicans are so strong that the Catholic community simply regards the place as 'liberated territory'.

Just two weeks ago, the Guardian Weekly published an article by a British Army officer complaining that the methods the regular army was allowed to use were 'too soft' for South Armagh. The SAS, with its cloak of secrecy, could employ tougher methods. He advocated, for instance, the installation of anti-personnel devices (remember the US's

fragmentation bombs in Vietnam?) in the road craters which the army makes in border roads and which are just as quickly filled in by the local people.

What disturbed this anonymous soldier (an individual? Or the Army hierarchy's incognito attempt to whip up public pressure?) was the number of army casualties in South Armagh (more than 200 since 1969), as against 'single figures for the IRA'. Crucial to getting the upper hand (or "dominating the ground" as Army jargon has it) is to "cut off the Provisionals from the support of local people". The only way that armies have ever tried to do that is to so intimidate and demoralise the local people that they will be terrified to support the partisans. It means collective reprisals for aiding or

sheltering the resistance fighters, torture and harassment to extract information, and the use of informers who are blackmailed and threatened into helping.

If the brutal use of such occupation army techniques is 'politically sensitive' (that is, brutal over and above the brutality and terror already employed by the army) then what better force to send in than the secretive and cold-blooded SAS?

And, should anyone have any doubts as to what interests the SAS is to protect, here is the writer's definition: "If Ulster is to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom the Government will, sooner or later, have to deal with the problem of south Armagh."

Sue Carlyle

Labour silent as more CIA names are leaked

by Gerald Manning

There seems no stopping the CIA revelations. Recently agents' names were published in a French magazine, among them that of Richard Welch, Athens station chief. Welch was assassinated shortly after his name had been linked with the CIA in the Greek press, after being published in the American magazine 'Counter-Spy'.

Last week, the French paper 'Liberation' listed another 32 names; the Spanish liberal magazine 'Cambio' listed 16; and London's 'Time Out' reported on the arrival of an extra 10 agents in this country, one of whom was an "expert on Communist affairs".

That wasn't all that 'leaked out'. The revelation that the CIA had

funded the Italian anti-Communist Parties after world war 2, had done so again in the '70s, and was now planning to rush them a (no doubt neatly laundered) \$6 million outraged an already worried and exasperated Congress.

So what was the CIA up to in Britain? Nothing very much, according to outgoing US Ambassador Elliot Richardson. He assures us that the British Government is well aware of what is going on. Unhappy at this glib reply, Tom Litterick, MP for Birmingham Selly Oak, will be asking a question in the Commons.

Not that he even expects to get an answer. While papers like 'The Economist' endorse the cynical paternalism of CIA chief William Colby ("The kinds of activities that big nations need to conduct in the complicated and difficult world that we face" must be done in secret — and if the US does not do them, they will be left to others "who are tough and mean enough") they are frantically searching for a formula tight enough to "satisfy" and cheat the American people now alerted to their Government's crimes.

Secrecy

As for the secrecy situation in Britain, the "Economist" has no fears. The total lack of open investigation powers by any elected public body — let alone the labour movement! — means that the information lid is kept tightly shut.

The CIA has come unstuck over their \$50 million arms supply to the FNLA and Unita in Angola and the 350 mercenaries they trained to fight there. Britain's "Angola" is in the Arabian Gulf. Every now and then some news of British involvement comes through. Now the Labour Party's International Committee has produced a report showing that "there are 206 serving British officers fighting on the Sultan's side, plus contingents of the SAS and the Royal Engineers". The report adds that Roy Mason, the Defence Secretary, refuses to reveal any details. The Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, refuses to confirm the details...

And when Tom Litterick asks his question of the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, the answer will be the same... "Ssssh!"

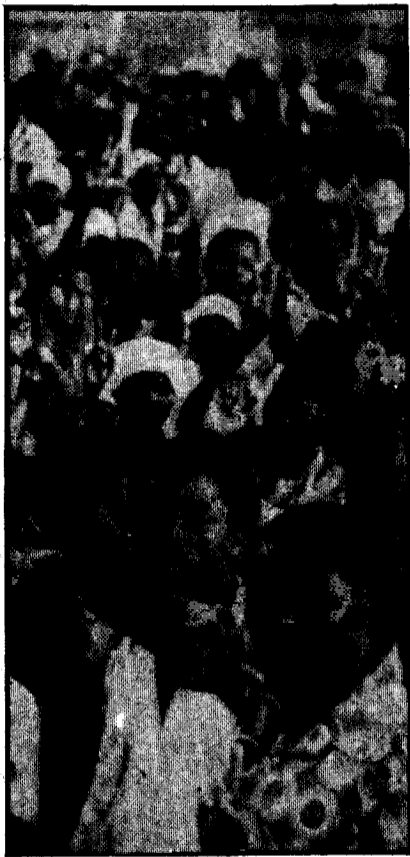
Angola: MPLA moves on to complete victory

As the MPLA continue to advance in Angola, the leaders of other African states were meeting at the Organisation of African Unity conference in Addis Ababa. As expected, the delegates failed to reach any agreement, being evenly split over support for the MPLA.

With military victory for the MPLA appearing almost assured, within the next few months, the African states have been desperately searching for a formula to keep everybody happy. After the OAU conference, the presidents of Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana met in Dar es Salaam and came forward with the idea of a government of Angola based on a dominant role for the MPLA but with representation for Unita and the FNLA.

The biggest obstacle to this exercise in 'power sharing' is the attitude of Mobutu of Zaire, the supporter of FNLA. Although Mobutu may be persuaded to accept this scheme, at the moment he is still banking on something upsetting the advance of MPLA in the north.

MPLA's most formidable military opponents are South African forces — but any big increase in those forces would almost certainly swing the vast majority of African nations behind the MPLA. The greatest danger to the people of Angola now is not so much victory for the outright stooges of imperialism, FNLA and Unita, but the possibility of the African nations finally coming together to impose a neo-colonial compromise solution on the MPLA.



Sharks play double your money

A "perfectly normal business transaction" said the estate agent, the land speculator and the industry chief. Obviously the Director of Public Prosecutions was a little hard of hearing at the time, for he ordered a police special crimes squad inquiry into the Crawley land deal which netted a few sharks a clear profit of £3,750,000 for doing precisely nothing.

One of the leading characters in the affair is Lord Ryder, who is busy exhorting (or extorting) British Leyland workers to work harder and put in a "fair day's work for a fair day's pay". As head of the Reed Paper Group's Pension Fund, he led a dirty little consortium of off-the-peg front companies and a Sussex estate agent in buying 644 acres of land in West Sussex for £3,250,000.

Half the land was not valuable, as it lies in the Gatwick flight path. The other half, 302 acres to be exact, rocketed in price after West Sussex council gave planning permission for it. Mr John Mellis Smith, estate agent, and conveniently, a West Sussex councillor, then sold the land to Crawley Council, who paid £7 million for it. West Sussex council, which is all-Tory, was no doubt comforted by the fact that Crawley

council is all Labour. Before any one gets carried away by the idea that the DPP investigations mean that the matter will be brought into the open, it should be said that Crawley Trades Council had already opened an investigation to unearth the facts. For the moment they have been stopped by the DPP... the matter, they say, is sub judice.

Please freeze peas?

DID anyone actually notice that inflation was "only 1.2%" in December? The 'good news' was actually pretty bad news to those families whose income goes mainly on food. For them, inflation went up, not down, in December.

Grocery prices in general went up by nearly 4% last month. Bread prices were upped by 7% following the withdrawal of the 1/2 bread subsidy and an additional increase by the bakers to make up for a price reduction they apparently made in October.

Meat prices went up by 3% and are expected to continue rising sharply. Beef production will certainly fall in the coming year as a result of a shortage of feed — an excuse for another big dollop

on prices, making even the cheapest cuts a luxury in many working class homes.

Though all the essential, staple items of diet were affected, fruit and vegetables — including of course the notorious potato — increased the most, going up by an overall 14%.

It all adds up. In fact, for some it adds up to worsening general health and less resistance to disease, as families stop forking out for tomatoes or potatoes through the winter and fill up with another slice of bread and jam instead.

In two weeks' time we're to be bestowed with another cause for general rejoicing, as the 'voluntary selective price restraint' provided for in the White Paper 'The Attack on Inflation' (better known as the attack on wages). The government has agreed with traders on seven types of food (out of an initial list of 77) where prices will be restrained.

These are bread, milk, tea, sugar, sweets, biscuits and frozen peas. Of which bread, milk and tea are already 'controlled', for what that's worth, through subsidies; sugar prices are falling anyway as the world price falls; and sweets and biscuits are hardly the "products of special importance in family expenditure" the White Paper proclaimed would be controlled by 'restraint'.

Which leaves, as the sum total of the government's food pricing control, a determined and relentless attack on frozen pea prices.



Just when a united struggle

is most needed:

DEVOLUTION — THE BIG DIVERSION



The Parliamentary debate on 'devolution' has highlighted divisions in both major parties, with the possibility of a serious split in the Labour Party in Scotland.

The Government White Paper proposes elected Assemblies for Scotland and Wales, which will be subordinate to the central government in London. Some MPs, both Labour and Tory, oppose this as "leading to the break-up of the United Kingdom". On the other side, the Nationalist Parties are calling for the Assemblies to have power over matters of economic policy relating to Scotland and Wales. Two Labour MPs — Jim Sillars and John Robertson — and their supporters now risk expulsion for supporting the Scottish National Party in this demand, and setting up the Scottish Labour Party to pursue that policy.

Would even the granting of full independence for Scotland make any fundamental difference? The Scottish economy is an integral part of the British economy, a component of British imperialism rather than a victim of it. It is a depressed area — but then so is the North East of England. An independent Scottish capitalist state would not make Scotland more prosperous. It would simply be a junior, poor and rather dependent part of the closely interlinked western capitalist world.

Over the last few years Scottish nationalism has proved to be a reactionary blind alley. For the unity of action which does exist between Scottish and English workers, it substitutes empty appeals for a uniquely Scottish capitalist road of class collaboration. The policies of the Scottish National Party offer no hope for the workers at Chrysler Linwood, or the ex-UCS workers at Marathon also facing redundancies. Those redundancies can be fought only by the combined might of the workers of Scotland, England, and Wales.

Break-up

For this reason we would favour a separate Scottish labour movement even less than a separate Scottish state. A separate structure for the Labour Party in Scotland would — given the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions — imply a separate political focus for the trade unions in Scotland. Rather than pressing workers' demands in unison with their brothers and sisters south of the Border, Scottish trade unionists would be more inclined to demand just that the Scottish section of the Labour Party do this or that. Thus the development of the Scottish Labour Party is in no sense a progressive step.

People like Sillars argue that his sort of devolution would mean "more democracy for Scotland". Yet his contempt for basic democratic principles can be seen by his refusal to resign as an MP so that his constituents can choose whether they still want him to represent them as 'Scottish Labour Party', having been elected as Labour.

That does not mean, though, that the bureaucratic attitude of the Scottish executive of the Labour Party is justified. We believe that the Labour Party — being the mass party based on the trade unions — should be open to all currents of working class thought. If Sillars is expelled, the main fault will lie with the leadership of the Labour Party and disgust with this action will certainly lead to losses for the Labour Party and gains for the SNP.

If the time should come when the majority of people in Scotland wish for independence, then socialists should not deny them that right. We would not get into a panic about the 'break-up of the United Kingdom'. However, it would be a real set-back if Scottish workers were to believe that they could do better uniting with Scottish capitalists of the SNP than with the workers of the rest of Britain. If that does happen it will not be because of the justice of the demand for an independent Scotland, but because of the betrayal of the interests of Scottish workers by the Labour Party leadership.

The optimists, the forecasters and the workers in between

Is the TUC dogged, imperturbable, or dead to the world? This question naturally forms in the mind of any one who reads their latest declaration that "we see the new industrial strategy as one for economic growth and full employment".

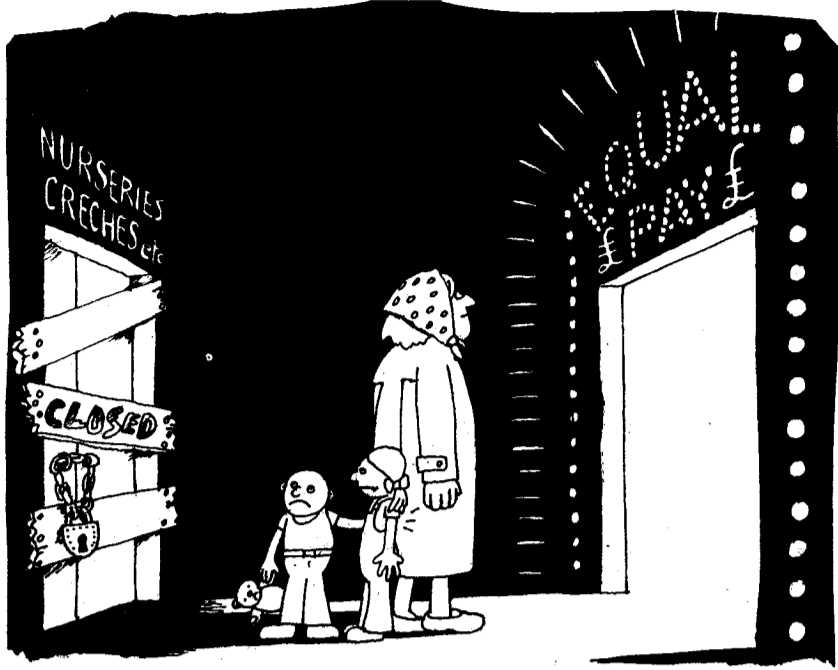
True, Denis Healey has said that unemployment will be reduced to 600,000 — a figure which the TUC has generously declared "acceptable". But as a number of economic forecasts published last weekend make clear, the present trend in joblessness will continue. A million jobless until 1980, they all agree.

The Ruskin College Trade Union Research Unit points out that the "slump has been cushioned so far by continuing expansion in public service employment". While 360,000 jobs were lost in manufacturing between mid 1974 and mid 1975, 300,000 jobs were created in the same period in the public services. Cut-backs in this sector as well as in steel, ship-building, vehicles, and almost everywhere else, will ensure a sharp rise in unemployment.

The point is that the TUC should junk its "good advice to the government" attitude. It does not need a "strategy for economic growth"; it needs a strategy for leading a fight against the sharp decline of working class living standards, against unemployment, against cuts in social service facilities.

CUTS EXPLODE THE SOFTLY PADDIE

by Pat Longman



'THE soul of woman under socialism', to many of us, comes down to being treated as people in our own right: working in any occupation that suits us, alongside other men and women, without having to clamber over a thousand and one obstacles or face ridicule and hostility. And if the New Dawn is somewhat unexciting, it's a mark of the degree of women's oppression now that such an elementary state of affairs has become a great goal to strive for.

Will the new Sex Discrimination Act take us any way toward this goal? How, if at all, does it set out to tackle the causes and roots of women's oppression?

The major reason why women get a raw deal at work is the fact that the rearing of children is still not seen as a social task, but a personal one. With child care shuffled onto each private family unit and within that onto the woman, all the votes, all the educational opportunities and all the legal rights that women have won and will win are emasculated and reduced.

Root

A woman's place in the family is at the root of pretty well everything that affects her. It is responsible for the attitudes and stereotypes about femininity and 'maternal instincts' which saddle us from birth, and with them for social taboos surrounding certain jobs and the ridicule and hostility that meets a woman who tries to break through these barriers.

With marriage and housekeeping still regarded as the real and most important career that a woman can aspire to, girls are educated differently. Even where they are offered science, metalwork or technical drawing at school, most girls are actually afraid to do well in them. It is a fact that from early adolescence girls begin to almost consciously limit

their ambitions and hopes, and start doing less well at school.

Most indisputably, the privatisation of child rearing places a host of practical, material obstacles in the way of the working mother: with long periods of enforced absence from work training is forgotten, promotion prospects hindered and chances are missed.

Employers have always played on these obstacles and on the attitudes and stereotypes to exploit women workers even more than men. On the whole, the trade unions — themselves a continuing male preserve even in those occupations where women form the majority of the workforce — have gone along with this; they have themselves had a two-class membership, with a different scale of benefits for women.

What the Sex Discrimination Act does is to give individual women a chance to challenge these excuses about their unsuitability for promotion or entry into certain jobs. But it does next to nothing about either helping women to qualify for them, or making them free to work. And it goes both ways: because women are not free, mentally and physically, from the burden of the private family, they are less likely to become qualified.

What the Act says is that if a woman has qualified to be a mining engineer, or airline pilot, or electrician, then an employer must give her equal consideration for a job. It makes the separate grading of 'womens jobs' in

ISLINGTON Council in North London, with over one hundred children on the priority waiting list, plans to close one of its nurseries and to slash provision in others. Not a big piece of news these days: but it means, in one borough, a loss of 217 nursery places. And because the cut is part of a national policy, that number can be multiplied, give or take a few thousand here and there, by every borough in the country.

The conference on 'Women and the Cuts' organised by the Working Women's Charter for February 28th, is probably one of the most important initiatives that the Campaign has mounted since the Charter was drawn up in 1974. The Charter, aiming to improve the lot of women, now finds itself in the forefront of a bitter struggle to defend women against the most vicious and sustained attack on women's rights and facilities.

It has taken the deepening crisis of 1970s capitalism to show up just how precarious, seventy-five years on from the Victorian era, is

women's hold on life outside the confines of the home. The softly padded chains of home and family are still there: it only takes the closing down of a few nurseries, the discharge from the hospitals of the old and the sick into the care of their female relatives, or the 'women first' redundancy notices, to make those chains tighten about us.

Everywhere, women are hit first by the cuts. Hospitals, old people's homes, schools and nurseries have been cut, precisely in those places where the town hall bureaucrat reckons a woman will step in and, alone in her home, take on a burden which society finds inconvenient. The cutback in hospital spending has in most places seen abortion facilities wiped out first, being regarded as the most expendable.

CHEAP

Now instead of nurseries, we find child-minding as the new panacea. The Social Services Report shows the Government's thinking: "With

regard to children's day centres the emphasis should be on other forms of care such as playgroups, child-minders, nursery schools etc. The provision of new day centres should proceed but with less urgency..."

Child-minding is clearly a cheap and unsatisfactory substitute for proper nursery provision. It needs no training and it is difficult for child-minders, isolated in the home, to fight for better pay and conditions. While those that exist should of course be organised to fight back, the primary need is to free such women from the home and for the socialisation of childcare in the interests of both women and children.

All the present cutbacks have had the effect of driving women out of work and back into the family. The glaring inadequacy of such documents as the Sex Discrimination Act is shown by the fact that for many women the chance of any job is completely unrealisable given the lack of those social facilities which are

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

But they've left us holding the baby

order to get around the Equal Pay Act more difficult, as jobs are not supposed to be defined as excluding anyone on grounds of sex. And it says that, except in single-sex schools and institutions (which are still permitted) facilities and courses must be available to either sex and that girls should be encouraged to take up subjects previously considered 'unfeminine'.

As such, the Act could bring about small and useful changes. It even tries to envisage how employers will evade it, and includes clauses against indirect discrimination (an employer can't stipulate a hairy chest as necessary to a job, or minimum height, so as to exclude women applicants). And the Act makes it illegal for women to be victimised who have organised themselves to complain.

Outlawed

But the Act itself has many loopholes and drawbacks, apart from its limited scope. First, the procedure for complaint is so complicated that many will be put off before they start, especially as complaints are to be registered by women as individuals, in isolation. There are numerous time limitations and other bureaucratic measures, which anyone who isn't trained in industrial law would balk at. Legal aid isn't available for making representations at tribunals, so a woman who can't afford it could be up against a trained lawyer retained by the other side. The same applies to a complaint about victimisation for someone who has been through the tribunal once before.

The state in many of its own dealings with women is exempt: for instance, don't expect to get any better deal from Social Security. The notorious co-habitation rule has not been outlawed by the Sex Discrimination Act.

Another exemption is that the Act doesn't provide for people working in firms employing less than five people — i.e. the huge proportion of working women in small sweatshops and tiny firms.

And it is worthwhile pointing out also that there is no mention in this Act of discrimination against homosexuals.

Yet it's not the Act's imperfections that will make its impact marginal, so much as its social context.

For, apart from the clause about the availability of courses, the Act tackles the question of discrimination in a very narrow way and at a very late stage in the process. If the whole cause of women's oppression were to be found in the iniquity of employers

refusing to give women decent jobs, the Act would be fine. The fact is that women have had a whole number of abstract rights for a very long time, have won the vote, have forced their way into colleges and universities — yet still the vast majority see 'housewife' as the most they should aspire to.

The conditioning and role-training that produces this outlook — an outlook reinforced at every stage of a woman's life by propaganda and in advertisements and magazines — will not be affected by the Act itself, although it will perhaps be very slightly minimised if the range of acceptable 'womens work' is seen to be extended. Certainly, the privatisation of the family and the position of working class women as "the slaves of the slaves" will not be changed at all. And these are the basics.

But the thing which most immediately and practically makes a mockery of the Sex Discrimination Act is the fact that women are, quite literally, left holding the baby. The fact that up and down the country nurseries are closing down, abortion clinics are being abolished, rising-fives are being left at home and women are being sent home in droves from the factories, undermines this Act more than any of its loopholes or internal weaknesses.

Nevertheless, both the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act can

provide a better climate for fighting against discrimination. But women must be organised. A unionisation campaign is essential (only 31% of working women are in unions, compared with 57% of working men), and a major part of this campaign must be the abolition of discrimination against women within the unions. (In NUPE, for instance, nearly two thirds of the members are women but 92% of branch meetings are held after working hours when most women can't attend.)

Tribunals

The formation of women's caucuses within unions would be an enormous impetus to the struggle for the rights outlined in these Acts, and would help many more women to play their part in the trade union movement. And we must demand that the unions make it their business to take up cases and push them in the tribunals.

A big part in this can be played by the Working Women's Charter Campaign, which explicitly recognises the way in which the different elements of women's oppression — the ideology of home and family, the lack of facilities for child care and abortion, the legal status of women and the educational problems — all interconnect with each other. For even the most minimal start to women's emancipation, it's going to need a fight on all these fronts.

Information on the two Acts can be found in 'Rights for Women' by Pat Hewitt (NCCL, 65p)

I WANT TO BE AN ENGINEER

When I was a little girl I wished I was a boy
I tagged along behind the gang and wore my corduroys
Everybody said I only did it to annoy, but I was gonna be an engineer
Momma told me "Can't you be a lady? Your duty is to make me the mother of a pearl girl"
Wait on until you are older, Dear, and maybe you'll be glad that you're a girl

Dainty as a Dresden statue
Gentle as a Jersey cow
Smooth as silk, gives creamy milk
Learn to coo
Learn to moo
That's what to do to be a lady now.

When I went to school I learned to write and read
Some history, geography, and home economy
And typing is a skill that every girl is sure to need
To while away the extra time until the time to breed
And then they had the nerve to say "What would you like to be?"
I says, "I'm gonna be an engineer."
No, you only need to learn to be a lady
The duty isn't yours, for to try and run the world
An engineer could never have a baby
Remember, dear, that you're a girl.

So I become a typist and I study on the sly
Working out the day and night so I can qualify
And every time the boss came in, he pinched me on the thigh
Says, "I've never had an engineer!"
I been a sucker ever since I was a baby
as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and a dear
But I'll fight them as a woman, not a lady
I'll fight them as an engineer!

Peggy Seeger



CHAINS

necessary to enable women to leave the confines of the family.

But there is also a more direct link between the cuts and women's unemployment. It has been estimated that women are currently losing their jobs 106% faster than men. It is not difficult to see why. Women are employed precisely in those jobs hardest hit by the cuts, and often on a part time basis where they are unorganised and have no security of employment. The loss of such jobs in many cases brings a severe drop in living standards and hardship in the face of rising prices and wage restraint.

£6 LIMIT

All this points to the need to draw women into a unified movement against the cuts, against the £6 limit, and against redundancies. And it points to the need to back up the struggle for legal rights (such as the National Abortion Campaign) with a fight for the practical means to implement them.

The Conference must include a full discussion of how exactly the

cuts are affecting women; how they can be fought; and the attitude of the Charter Campaign towards movements (such as those around the public sector unions) which already exist or are being formed to fight the cuts.

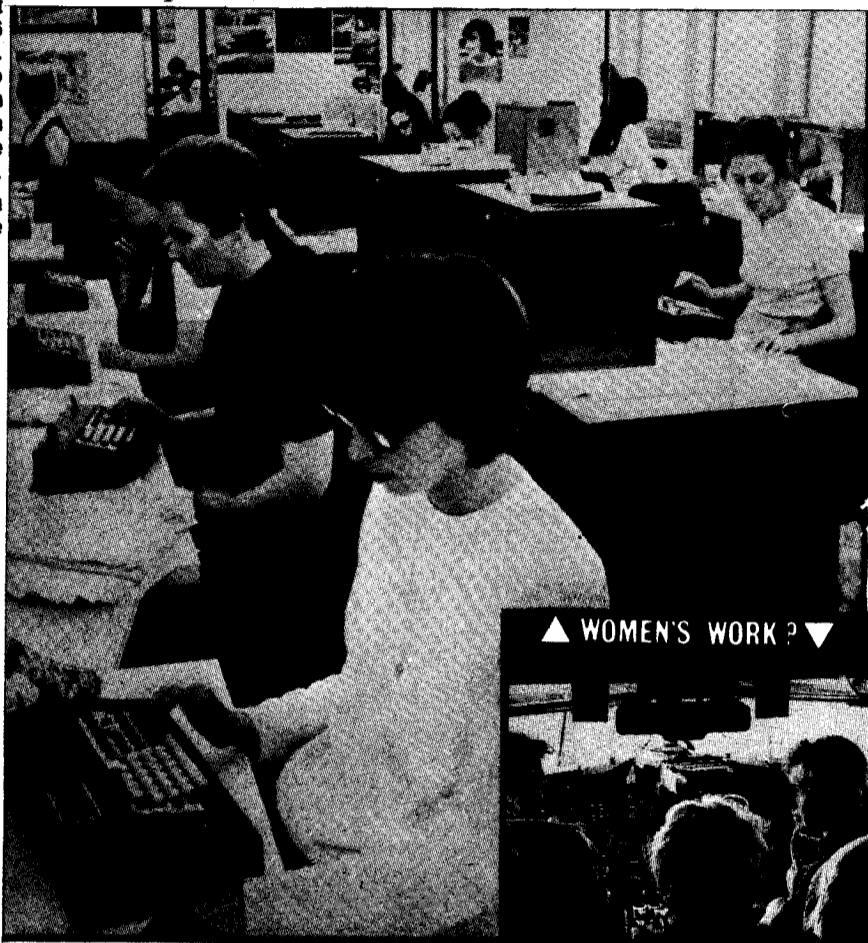
The trade union bureaucracy is well aware of what a fight against the cuts will mean. The SE Regional Trades Council, which has pledged support for the Working Women's Charter, has refused to support the Cuts Conference on the grounds that it is against the aims of the Labour Government and the TUC's anti-inflationary measures!

It is vitally necessary that a fight be taken up in the whole labour

movement, especially in those organisations which have passed the Charter, pointing out that support for the Charter by its very nature means taking up a fight against the cuts and a struggle against all the attacks presently carried out by the Labour Government.

The Conference (which is primarily for the London region but which it is hoped will prepare the way for a national cuts conference) has so far been sponsored by Islington Cuts Campaign, Westminster Trades Council, ATTI Rank and File and ATTI Willesden Tech. Now is the time to get it sponsored by YOUR organisation, and the time to get delegations together to make it a success.

For details of the conference and application forms, write to Michele Ryan, 39 Parkholme Road, London E.8.



TY?

Michele Ryan looks at the new 'Women's Rights' laws

● **CAPITALISM** is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (and since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the neo-colonies and colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, and at the same time it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health. By the late '60s the boom had given way to creeping stagnation, followed in the early '70s by the biggest crisis since the '30s.

● **TODAY** the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world; of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world; and of the ever present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

● **THE ONLY WAY OUT** is for the working class to take power and bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

● The working class has created political parties for this purpose — **LABOUR PARTIES, COMMUNIST PARTIES, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES**. But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

In certain areas, so-called Communist Parties have taken power, overthrown capitalism, and have established, with the degenerate USSR as a model, totalitarian police states which oppress the working class and serve a parasitic anti-working-class bureaucracy.

● The task is therefore to build a socialist **PARTY** which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class; a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserve its political independence, and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

● The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of **MARXISM**, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change. Marxism is not a series of texts from the past, but in its essence a scientific method, which allows for permanent development and regeneration of our understanding of the world and for definition and yet sharper re-definition of our goals in the light of experience.

● Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers' power, the **TRADE UNIONS** are indispensable for the defence of workers' interests. We fight for the independence of the unions from all state control, and within the unions for militant policies and for democracy.

We see the trade union bureaucracy as a distinct stratum which acts as a broker between workers and bosses. Lacking a direct, necessary allegiance to working class interests, or any fundamental interests of its own, its general tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class.

Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries and guided by the ideas of revolutionary Marxism can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable instruments of working class interests, independent of the bosses' state.

● We fight against any **INCOMES POLICY** under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

OUR POLITICS

● We fight against **UNEMPLOYMENT**; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining. We fight for hours to be cut without loss of pay, instead of even a single job being lost, and for direct action to implement this demand. In case of closure or large-scale redundancies, we support and advocate factory occupations, which should force nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control.

● We fight to extend the power of workers to control their own lives in industry here and now, understanding, however, that **WORKERS' CONTROL** can be made a serious and stable reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' "participation" in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

● We believe that the **'PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM'** is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully; no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine (army, police, civil service) which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils.

● **THE LABOUR PARTY** — in its ideas, its policies, its relation to the bourgeois state, and its record in government over 50 years — has shown itself to be inextricably tied and integrated into the established system. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party. It is a party which serves capitalism, but which can only do so because it is based on the organised working class movement, many elements of which want to bury capitalism. In that contradiction lies the potential of transcending Labourism.

The 'open valve' connection between the Labour Party and the Unions allows for the possibility of large scale working class participation in the party.

Labour in Government can be a strong party when, together with the trade union bureaucracy, it induces workers to patiently bear the cost of capitalism's problems. Or it can be a weak party for capitalism when, as with 'In Place of Strife', its working class base rises up against it.

We relate to the Labour Party, not simply by denouncing it, but by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the particular stage in its development represented by Labourism. The Labour Party should exist to serve the working class, and socialists should fight to make it do so. In no sense does the working class exist to serve the reformist Labour Party which serves capitalism.

We defend the right of all varieties of socialist thought to exist and organise within the Labour Party — the mass party based on the trade unions — without bans or proscriptions.

● We fight for full and equal rights for **WOMEN**, for female emancipation from the male domination which throughout history has co-existed with class society and which has its roots in class society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves".

Women's liberation presupposes the root-and-branch reorganisation of society; it thus demands a proletarian revolution. Women's liberation is necessarily linked to the proletarian revolution — or else it is either utopian, reformist, or both. In history mass working women's movements were built in association with the early Second International and the Communist International. They were destroyed by fascism and Stalinism, and vanished.

Today a movement is being re-born, in ideological chaos — because it has to re-discover so much, and because no mass revolutionary movement exists to help it. Yet it is a healthy ferment, this chaos.

We explicitly support the idea of an **autonomous women's movement**; but we believe that the women's movement must be firmly linked to the working class struggle for power, and ideologically educated to make that link. A revolutionary working class based women's movement must be built. For the first time in history it is possible to build it at a time when a mass female industrial proletariat exists. We fight to build it, keeping in mind an imperative need for a sensitive approach to the movement, recently re-born, is a doubly-oppressed section of humanity.

The Working Women's Charter

WE pledge ourselves to agitate and organise to achieve the following aims:

1 The rate for the job, regardless of sex, at rates negotiated by the trade unions, with a national minimum wage below which no wages should fall.

2 Equal opportunity of entry into occupations and in promotion, regardless of sex and marital status.

3 Equal Education. Training for all occupations and compulsory day release for 16-19 year olds in employment.

4 Working conditions to be, without deterioration of previous conditions, the same for women as for men.

5 The removal of all legal and bureaucratic impediments to equality, eg with regard to tenancies, mortgages, pension schemes, taxation, passports, control over children, social security payments, hire purchase agreements.

6 Improved provision of local authority day nurseries, free of charge, with extended hours to suit working mothers. Provision of nursery classes in day nurseries. More nursery schools.

7 Eighteen week maternity leave with full net pay before and after a live child; seven weeks after birth if the child is still-born. No dismissal during pregnancy or maternity leave. No loss of security, pension or promotion prospects.

8 Family planning clinics supplying free contraception to be extended to cover every locality. Free abortion to be readily available.

9 Family allowances to be increased to £2.50 per child, including the first.

10 To campaign amongst women to take an active part in trade unions and in political life, so that they may exercise influence commensurate with their numbers, and to campaign amongst trade union men, so that they too may work to achieve these aims.

● We give unconditional support to the struggles of the oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against **IMPERIALISM**, and to their organisations leading that fight, irrespective of political differences we have with them and which would lead to sharp conflict were we working on the same political and geographical terrain.

We support the struggle for a united and independent **IRELAND**, and for an end to the military and political interference in Ireland by British imperialism.

● British workers have — fundamentally — more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, language or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We oppose all immigration controls, and fight for the repeal of the oppressive and racist 1971 Immigration Act and other such curbs to free movement. We see the fight for socialism as a **WORLD WIDE STRUGGLE**, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party.

The 'Great Debate' on the **COMMON MARKET** is a bosses' debate on how to run their system. The labour movement shouldn't have got involved in it. In or out, the working class struggle goes on. We denounce the agitation for withdrawal as a reactionary diversion. The British labour movement must establish links of cooperation and solidarity with the working class of the rest of the EEC. The retrograde Little Britain-ism of the anti-marketisers in the labour movement sums up only too accurately the crippling insularity which still besets the British working class.

● **FASCIST MOVEMENTS** express the reactionary fury of people frustrated by capitalism — fury expressed through violence against militant workers, against socialists and against oppressed minorities. They can be used as the shock troops of a moribund capitalism to smash up the labour movement. We must destroy fascism or it will destroy the labour movement: fascists should be driven out of the unions; they should have no right of way to march or speak or organise. Workers' defence squads must protect meetings of the labour movement, and massive mobilisations must drive the fascists off the streets.

● We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of the USSR and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social and political regime of the different bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone real communism — unless one believes in a police state socialism! At the same time, we defend the nationalised economies of these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally; that is, irrespective of the self-serving, usually anti-working class and reactionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies. In any clash, or apparent clash, between this 'defencism' and support for working class revolt against the bureaucratic tyranny, we stand entirely with the working class against the bureaucratic parasites who oppress them with police state terror.

What is the political revolution? While the degree of resistance by the bureaucracy and by the state machine will vary from country to country (in Hungary in 1956 the ruling party itself fragmented, sections joining with the proletarian revolutionaries), the political revolution means:

a) The smashing, through revolutionary direct action under the leadership of a revolutionary party, of the bureaucratic state apparatus. Its dismantling and the assumption of direct power by the working class masses through a network of workers' councils (the historically established form of proletarian democracy).

b) The simultaneous assumption of direct control in industry by the working class — control in which factory and area organisations will interact creatively with the central state power, and organise the economy according to a democratically arrived at, and democratically controlled and implemented, working class plan.

c) The complete destruction of the bureaucracy as a social stratum by removing all material privileges, as well as destroying its totalitarian monopoly of control and power in society.

● There are other political tendencies which have generally similar aims, but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider these tendencies to be seriously — sometimes grossly — inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these tendencies where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

LEARNING FROM THE DUKE OF YORK

IMAGINE that you had been sentenced to several years' hard labour, appealed against the decision, and found that the appeal was to be heard by the same judge... Nobody, surely, would accept that! But what if somebody said "Great, that's just what we want!"?

Pretty unlikely, perhaps, but that's just what the International Marxist Group are proposing workers should

be in favour of in the fight against the £6 limit and unemployment. Since December, *Red Weekly* has been putting forward as its major slogan the demand for the recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

For example, they say in *Red Weekly* of December 18th: "...the demand from Birmingham Trades Council for a recall TUC conference on unemployment is

one that must be echoed throughout the working class."

Presumably the IMG hopes to see masses of workers forcing these conferences to be recalled, overturning the present policies of the government and the TUC, and then perhaps going on to implement socialist policies. In this perspective, the IMG follow that of the Tribune group, and come close to the policy of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Unfortunately, this neat picture of how they would like things to go does not correspond at all to the real situation in which workers find themselves.

Both these conferences only a few months ago accepted the £6 limit and the cuts in government spending that have contributed so much to unemployment, realising full well the effect this would have on the working class. For the present, the majority of organised workers are falling in with the Labour government's plans, because they can see no other option. Although there have been struggles against the wage limit and redundancies, these have so far been sporadic and uncoordinated.

It is the development of these struggles that must be the focus for fighting back.

By calling for recall conferences at the present time the fight-back is postponed, or at best held at a low level, until the far-off day when these conferences meet. In fact, if enough workers could be mobilised to force such a recall conference, then the conference itself would probably not be the major focus of attention.

Such a mobilisation of workers campaigning against the government's policies would really be a threat to them what the politics of this murky stream are — anti-EEC; against the 'Wilson clique'; Tribune demands for import controls (glossed over by the IMG as 'state monopoly of foreign trade') — as long as they can dabble their fingers in it.

At the back of this lies the IMG's overall orientation towards some sort of undefined 'broad mass left movement'. It doesn't seem to matter to them what the politics of this murky stream are — anti-EEC; against the 'Wilson clique'; Tribune demands for import controls (glossed over by the IMG as 'state monopoly of foreign trade') — as long as they can dabble their fingers in it.

The fake 'lefts' of the Labour Party, such as the Tribune group, only call for a recall conference because they know very well that they won't get it. Instead of waging a real fight now, the battle is postponed to the impossible future. The IMG, mesmerised by the radical noises of the Tribunites, drift along with them in the vain hope that something will come out of nothing.

For our part, we believe that the main task of socialists is to organise the fight-

back here and now, taking the issues to the rank and file workers on the shop floor. That is the starting-point for a successful resistance to the government's attacks. When the fresh wind of real class battles begins to blow through the stale air of Transport House and Congress House, then is the time to call for a conference that really represents the fighting mood of workers. Until that time all the conferences in the world will count for very little.

workers' ACTION supporters' groups are being formed in the following places:

Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chelmsford, Chester, Coventry, Crawley, Durham, Edinburgh, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Newtown, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Rochdale, Sheffield, Stafford, Stoke

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



They ruled the roost at TUC just four months ago. Will it be different now?

CONWAY HALL on 13th January saw the first public rally of the newly-formed International-Communist League (I-CL). The League's formation from the fusion of the Workers' Fight group and Workers' Power (the expelled Left Faction of the International Socialists), together with a group expelled from the Workers' Revolutionary Party, has aroused a good deal of interest on the left, and drew a capacity audience of over 300.

Jack Sutton, NHS member of the National Committee of NUPE, chaired the rally in personal capacity. Introducing the speakers, he stressed the importance of "this major fusion on the left — one which the I-CL considers the first since 1944 which may alter the balance of forces to the left of the Communist Party".

First to speak was Sean Matgamna, National Secretary of the I-CL, formerly of Workers' Fight. He described the I-CL's immediate job as "hammering out an organisation" — both in working class struggle and in ideological argument with other groups. "We didn't" he said "choose this time to start organising: a time when the Unions have brought down a Tory government only to knuckle under to Labour, which is saving the day for capitalism."

Chaos

Stating that "the Trotskyist movement is in chaos", Sean Matgamna outlined the historical reasons: a British labour movement nourished in the womb of an imperialist power, bargaining for scraps from its table with no thought of challenging the system; a Communist Party which struggled out of a sectarian past only to be stricken by the false Stalinist ideology; the tiny international forces of newly-born Trotskyism unable to win the sincerely communist base of the Communist Parties; and finally — and most crucially at the present time — the workers' defeats of the post-war period.

Coupled with these were new phenomena that the Trotskyist movement was unable to cope with from existing theories. These included mainly peasant revolutions (such as China) led by Stalinist parties; the non-appearance of an expected World War

'We believe we'll convince you' says I-CL

Three; and the seemingly endless post-war boom.

How was Trotsky's programme to be developed in such circumstances? Comrade Matgamna labelled the groups thrown up as "mutations": the first British section of Trotsky's Fourth International after the war, the Revolutionary Communist Party, had a purely trade union concept of struggle: when it split up, it spawned similar groups (such as the International Socialists) and ones which swung to the other extreme and saw revolution only in terms of the Labour Party.

This, of course, is where the crunch comes for the I-CL. How will it get things right where so many have failed? Matgamna pointed to the exact definition of the revolutionary party as being the thing which must be "got right" in practice if a new programme is to be produced and tested.

The basic idea of 'the Party' held by all existing groups, he claimed, is of an essentially 'technical' instrument for carrying on struggle. But when it comes to taking control of society, the working class is facing ideological barriers above all. Trade union consciousness can lead workers to a general strike: but a general strike cannot itself replace capitalism.

Only a working class no longer under the thumb of the bosses' ideology, he continued, can first destroy the capitalists' state and then create its own, workers', state, to crush capitalism's resistance. So, the conclusion was that educating the class away from capitalist ideology is the central and unique job of the revolutionary party.

It was through seeing the party as a mere technical instrument — for

linking strikes, for example — that other groups had gone wrong. He gave as an example the way the IS group has ignored solidarity work with the Irish liberation struggle because such work blocks the recruitment of ordinary trade unionists to the group. The left's stand on the EEC — nearly all groups being against entry, with the I-CL arguing that it's no choice for the working class — was another such example. Thus in order to "build the party" as a mere technical instrument, these groups abandoned the real, political, irreplaceable job of the revolutionary party.

Sean Matgamna ended with a call to start building from the negative experiences of the past. "Start building positive experience for the Trotskyist movement. Build the I-CL".

Peter Morton, ex-secretary of Broxtow WRP (Nottingham), spoke next. He made a statement explaining why he and his comrades had left the WRP in Nottingham to join the I-CL. They had joined the WRP in the first place because it said it was building the revolutionary party and educating workers to be socialists. "In fact it was a sham. The WRP simply turns socialists into papersellers".

In the past few months, he said, the WRP has put more energy into publicising the police raid on its 'Red House' than it had in campaigning against British imperialism in Ireland in the last six years. It had stated that revolutionaries could never support the use of violence — though the Catholic workers of Belfast had no choice but to defend themselves with violence. The WRP had never supported a Troops Out demonstration. Its record on opposing fascism was passive and verbal.

The WRP's answer to these

criticisms had been a circular calling its critics "vermin, rats and cowards". There had been no trace of a political reply. Serious and sincere revolutionaries in the WRP should follow their lead and join in building the I-CL.

Women

Next to speak (in a personal capacity) was Michele Ryan, secretary of the Working Women's Charter Campaign "Women and the Cuts" conference. She stressed that the I-CL will give importance to women's struggles. At present, women face some of the harshest attacks of all. But in her work as secretary of the Conference she had seen most groups, despite fine words, falling down on their duty to the women's movement. In general (and IS, from which she was recently expelled, was an example) the left approached women as another bunch of workers, with little analysis or understanding of their oppression as women.

Specifically, she felt that the right to form women's caucuses in the Unions was an issue to be fought for. The Working Women's Charter must be built up. And the National Abortion Campaign: "People on the left say it's dying — but I don't see any alternative."

Dick Hughes, I-CL Industrial Organiser and a former leading member of Workers Power, spoke last. He described the situation facing the working class at present: it has suffered real defeats over the £6 limit and unemployment; Chrysler workers have failed to give a lead, and the Right is winning union posts.

"The first problem is, what policies can unite the left militants in the fight against the right? What line can we take in union branches and on Trades Councils?" He claimed the crucial question here is "What is the real Workers' Alternative?". For example, take the social expenditure Cuts: workers need to be equipped with a line on the question "Where will the money come from?". Plainly, we cannot simply exhort workers to be more militant. A Labour Government means that difficult questions often have to be answered.

Forging a Workers' Alternative, he went on, is what 'transitional politics' is all about.

And why won't the rest of the left evolve real transitional politics? "The WRP, self-styled generals of the working class, predict that the working class will rise tomorrow and ... join the WRP. The International Marxist Group is mesmerised by 'broad' conferences that bring the left together and work out slogans but mean little to the rank and file."

"I.S. has had the strongest showing", he continued. For some time — up to the early 1970s — its line of "bash the Tories with militant sectional struggles" (like the miners' strike) was what many trade unionists wanted to hear. But the return of another Labour government had finished this strategy and IS can't find a new one.

Some revolutionaries are reacting to the mess by setting up 'Son of...' groups: the 'Son of WRP' is the WSL; expelled IS members will soon be starting a 'Son of IS'; the IMG, as part of the Fourth International, he predicted would split "within a matter of months". All these split-offs are based on the same mistakes as their parent groups: they simply insist that the old line hasn't been carried out properly.

Programme

But the I-CL will not turn towards another group's past for its politics. One of its first moves will be to put out an Action Programme. "Not an Action Programme for the I-CL, but a programme for the working class movement which we will be ready to discuss and debate with everyone — and which can re-unite the fragments of the revolutionary left."

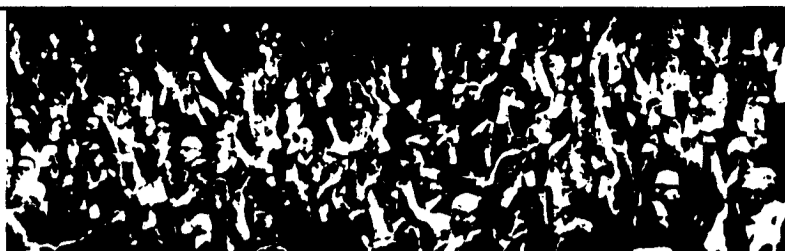
Evidently there wasn't time to go into the details of the programme at the Conway Hall. No doubt that, together with such questions as the I-CL's attitude to the IS-dominated Rank and File organisation, will emerge in the coming months and in their forthcoming journal *International Communist*.

After some contributions from the floor, which hadn't time to develop into a real discussion, the rally was rounded off by Sean Matgamna, who appealed to sympathisers to keep in contact with the I-CL. "Work with us. We believe we'll convince you".

Hudson Pace



NUPE plan: ALL BARK BUT NO BITE



THE UNIONS



Acton Hospital

ACTON's Health Service Management is putting forward plans to remove most of the services at Acton Hospital. They are to be replaced with geriatric and psychiatric facilities, and general services will be transferred to Hammersmith — where rebuilding plans have been cancelled to save money and staff and buildings are already unable to cope.

'West London Hospital Worker' produced by a group of health workers in the area, point out that as the psychiatric and geriatric need fewer staff, the plan will add to local unemployment. They say - "It is true that these facilities are desperately needed in the area. However, it is a terrible mistake to provide one thing at the expense of another..."

They are organising a **SAVE ACTON HOSPITAL** meeting on 28th January at 7pm in the recreation room, Acton Hospital, Gunnersbury Lane, W.3.

THE threat of cuts in bus services on 'economic' grounds has been met with statements of resistance from transport union leaders. "Any attempt ... to press reductions of services could mean strikes", said the secretary of the T&GWU's National Passenger Transport Group committee. Passengers on decimated bus services may be wondering when the strikes will start: in fact, of course, economies are made and services cut by keeping pay and conditions lousy leading to staff shortages, and by having ancient vehicles which break down and run out of parts.

MORE than 1,000 families under the Strathclyde Regional Council, which covers half of Scotland, are to have their electricity cut off. The reason is that the Council's fund for emergency rent and electricity to needy Council tenants (it's cheaper than evicting them because they then have to be rehoused) has dried up. Now the bills will only be paid if it's "life or death" — that is, pensioners or babies. The possibility of increasing the fund is not apparently being considered.

NOW the good news... Just one Council in the country is refusing to follow the Government instructions to stick to 'nil growth' (equals massive cuts, after inflation) in spending. Wandsworth Council in South West London is in fact going to push up its spending by around 12 per cent. Whether this will mean a showdown with the government has yet to be seen, since the instructions are framed in terms of limiting rates increases and Wandsworth has yet to work out the effect on rates.

AND another fightback: "This Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to initiate a campaign of industrial action if the present government policy on public expenditure and employment is not reversed by 1st April". Camden Nalگو (the Local Authority staff's union) has framed this motion to get a recall National Conference to force Nalگو leadership to follow union policy and fight cuts and unemployment. 50 branches must pass it within 2 months to get the Conference. So hurry up, and put it at the top of your agenda for the next meeting.

Haringey Council's Labour Group have decided to slash their 1976-77 programme of community centres by £900,000. After a bitter debate, those in favour of the cuts won by a slender margin. Now the question is, which of the eight proposed community centres will be dropped and which two will be built. The main part of the council area is inside the Hornsey constituency, which is a marginal Tory seat. No wonder Labour can't make any gains when it acts like this.

WITH the cuts in social service spending being felt everywhere, NUPE has put forward in its paper 'Public Employee' a policy for resisting any "reduction in the labour force or lowering of the standards of service."

The policy statement argues for "action in two areas; within the workplace situation ... and within the wider labour movement"; it demands "full consultation" and urges the setting up of committees to monitor "all proposals made by employing authorities in the Area" and "co-operation with all trade unions which organise alongside NUPE at local level in the public services".

While the statement dishonestly covers up the real positions taken up by the TUC and by Labour Party Conference, it quite rightly urges a policy of trade union, trades council and Labour Party activity: "In the first place, Union branches must maintain a steady flow of resolutions to local trades councils and Labour Parties calling for resistance to cuts in public expenditure. Where possible such resolutions should link specific local circumstances ... to the national policy. Secondly, union branches must urge local trades councils and Labour Parties to organise broadly-based campaigns of public meetings, rallies and demonstrations aimed at opposition to cuts in public expenditure."

These are all constructive suggestions. But one thing above all is lacking: a clear statement supporting industrial action against the cuts! All that NUPE commit themselves to in this issue of their paper is to refuse to support employing authorities who go against union policy.

Of course, the first line of resistance will be to demand consultation, to refuse to implement cuts, and to refuse

any lowering of standards. But once this table-talk has been gone through, the employing authorities will simply close down a hospital or hospital wing, will shut down a depot or sack cadet nurses.

One way or another, management will be taking direct industrial action. All the resolutions in the world are not going to stop a determined local authority.

This means that NUPE, which has taken a lead in making these recommendations, must also take a lead in preparing for industrial action at a local and perhaps also at a national level. This must be based on a clear programme of action, which must include demands for "no redundancies", for a shortening of the working week, for increases in staff, reorganisation of rotas and other work systems under the direct control of the workers; no loss of pay; and an end to all secrecy in planning.

Resistance

The point is to put forward a programme which not only relates to general nation-wide questions like the need to have a health service which meets the real needs of the working class, but also provides ideas that actually help workers organise their resistance.

NUPE's ideas don't do this adequately. No doubt this is directly related to the fact that its "plan to tackle the main causes of the crisis" (in the latest issue of "Public Employee") also entirely overlooks the question of direct action by trade unionists. It restricts itself to items for the Government to implement and us to applaud — some of which are not even progressive.

More important than all these 'plans' is the kind of action reported on the front page of the same issue of PE. It reports that Manchester members "are mounting a local campaign against cuts in the NHS. As a first move they organised a protest picket at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and they followed this up with a public meeting. Both events were supported by local branches of other unions in the hospital services."

Jack Sutton, one of the organisers of this picket, who is a NUPE branch secretary and member of the union's Health Service National Committee,

Bosses sweeping floors

AT Nottingham's Savoy Hotel, 13 T&GWU members including kitchen staff, porters and chamber maids are on strike — while the union-bashing management is sweeping up and making beds.

The 13 walked out when the second chef was sacked for organising a union in the hotel, which is owned by Pickering Investments. 60 people were recruited to the T&GWU, and most of them have been intimidated to stay at work. But more are joining the union, despite the fact that management, in desperation, started a company union to try to hoodwink the workers.

The strikers' demands are union recognition and job security. Management's response has been to introduce a "new contract" which includes not joining a union and working without fixed hours with no overtime pay.

Management also brought in Filipino workers who, because of Britain's Immigration Act, are vulnerable to such slave-driving. Their work permits stop them changing jobs within 12 months.

At a meeting with the strikers, the management made it clear that no union officials would be allowed in. When one did try to come into the meeting he was told that he would be stopped ... with physical force 'if necessary'.

But life is getting hard for management. With beer and bread deliveries stopped — delivery drivers won't cross the picket line — the union bashers are having to bring in deliveries in their own cars. And now local authority workers have left the dustbins uncollected.

Although management has declared all the strikers sacked — 13 more to the total of 130 that have had their cards in the last year — they say "We'll carry on till we win". With some extra support that shouldn't be too long.

But that extra support must come soon!

THIS COLUMN will appear regularly, carrying news from trade union militants. USE IT to publicise YOUR activities, resolutions, requests for solidarity and contact, problems and ideas.

outlined to WORKERS ACTION some of the forthcoming actions against the cuts: there will be a picket of the Social Services Committee of the City Council; on January 28th there will be two pickets (at 1.45 and at 6.45) to organise support at Crumpsall Hospital for sacked cadet nurses; A Manchester 'Fight the Cuts' Committee has been formed with affiliation from branches of NUPE, ATTI, Nalگو, the Fire Brigades Union, ASTMS (MPU), COHSE, several students' unions, Manchester and Salford Housing Action, and the National Abortion Campaign.

And on February 20th there will be a public meeting and the performance of a play.

Campaigns similar to the NUPE one have been announced by COHSE and Nalگو. Future editions of WORKERS ACTION will look at these and the way in which other public sector unions have been facing the cuts.



LAST Wednesday (14th January), 350 workers at Keith Blackmans in North London, which makes ventilators, were locked out as management tried to raise the stakes in a bid to smash trade union organisation in the factory.

"Over the last year", one steward commented "shop stewards have had to tolerate day to day warnings and even dismissal while carrying out union business".

Last week's escalation by Blackman's management is a clear sign that the storemen's strike over the victimisation of a steward was biting hard. In fact General Manager V.F. Jennings, who runs this particular bit of the GEC empire, admitted as much in a circular, saying "the combined effect of the strike of storekeepers and of the sales engineers, the 'backing' of stores issues and of suppliers' deliveries, and the refusal to dispatch finished goods, makes continued operation on the site impossible."

The strike started when TASS members walked out after

Blackmans sacked a TASS shop steward. It was clear to many that this arbitrary action was an attempt to break union organisation, either by demoralising the workers, or by provoking a strike and breaking it. This was all part of Blackmans' preparations for selling off part of the site and forcing a large number of redundancies.

Realising the importance of this fight for trade union organisation in North London, the Haringey Trades Council has circulated members urging support of the strikers and has written to the local ASTMS branch about its members who are crossing the picket line. A spokesman for the strikers at the Trades Council meeting also raised the problems they had encountered at the Social Security offices.

Last May a 36-hour occupation of the plant produced a smashing victory over Blackmans management. Clearly, the same thing is needed again!

EVENTS

Small ads for labour movement events are free. Write to 'Events', Workers Action, 49 Carnac St, London SE27. Ads should arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee demonstration on 1st February under the slogans: an end to British involvement in Ireland, self determination for the Irish people. The BSCC meets every Tuesday, 7.30pm, at the University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1.

Working Womens Charter national conference: 10th-11th April Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Two delegates each from all labour movement organisations. Credentials from H.Gurdon, Flat 4, 39 New Bold Terrace East, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Solidarity with the Portuguese working class: conference, 10am, 13th March, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. All labour movement organisations may send delegates. Details from PWCC, 12 Little Newport St, London WC2.

Fight the cuts and unemployment. Public meeting organised by Westminster National Union of Teachers and sponsored by Westminster Trades Council. 7.30pm, Monday 2nd February, at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2.

Demonstrate against youth unemployment. Demonstration called by Birmingham Trades Council and West Midlands TUC. Assemble 12 noon, Saturday 7th February, at Victoria Square, Birmingham.

Demonstrate against the dictatorship in India. Assemble Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, 12 noon, Sunday 25th January. Called by Indian Workers Association.

What is the International-Communist League? public meetings to launch the I-CL: Middlesbrough, Friday 23rd January, at the Settlement, Newport Rd.

Newcastle, Monday 26th January, at the Socialist Centre, Cradlewell Books, 235 Jesmond Rd. Birmingham, Thursday 22nd January, at Davenport's pub, Hurst Street.

"Break the law and we'll prosecute" — that was Crawley police's reaction to the announcement that CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality) would be setting up a branch in the town.

According to the "Crawley Advertiser" "top police officers" made this statement "warning homosexuals".

The police have denied it, saying "it was probably only a desk sergeant".

CHRYSLER PLAN HIT BY FIRST PROTEST OVER CLOSURE

When the Tilling Stevens plant of Chrysler marched through Maidstone to protest at the closure of their particular plant, they provided the first swallow of what could be a spring and summer of resistance to the redundancy plans.

For the trade union leaders, the matter is settled. They got the vote they wanted and are busy "participating" 8,500 of their members onto the dole queue. But with Linwood the only plant "volunteering" the required redundancies, there is still a chance of a fight back.

It should be remembered too that certain special factors may have operated here: Linwood workers have hardly had a full week's work over the past 12 months, and there has been an extra factor of uncertainty about the retention of work there, reinforced by Stokes' statement that Linwood production was uneconomical as it costs £54 more than elsewhere in transport costs.

At Chrysler's Stoke plant 777 have volunteered for redundancy while management is demanding 2,100 by February 2nd and another 300 by June 30th. At Ryton only 591 had volunteered by the last date for registering for redundancy. The management-government figure (supported by the 'participating' unions) is set at 1,700 by February 2nd and a further 800 by June 30th.

Wriggle

Meanwhile the Parliamentary 'supervision' farce continues. Not only has Riccardo, 'the flame thrower', refused to appear before the Select Committee, but Wilson has 'stopped' his millionaire Cabinet minister, Harold Lever, from appearing. This simply left Varley — who in any case had been overridden time and again in the discussions with Chrysler by Lever — to wriggle under the Select Committee's not very searching spotlight. No, he admitted, his Department had not checked Chrysler's figures; no, they had not checked Chrysler's assurances; no, there were no guarantees of either continued employment or production. The only "yes" Varley could give is when he admitted he could have nationalised Chrysler and paid its debts for less than he paid Riccardo and his fellow millionaire directors.

Among those who have volunteered for redundancy are many who not only voted for but helped organise the retreat of a fortnight ago. The remaining workforce which will be screwed for compulsory redundancies and speed-up for those remaining should use the situation to try to reverse these policies.

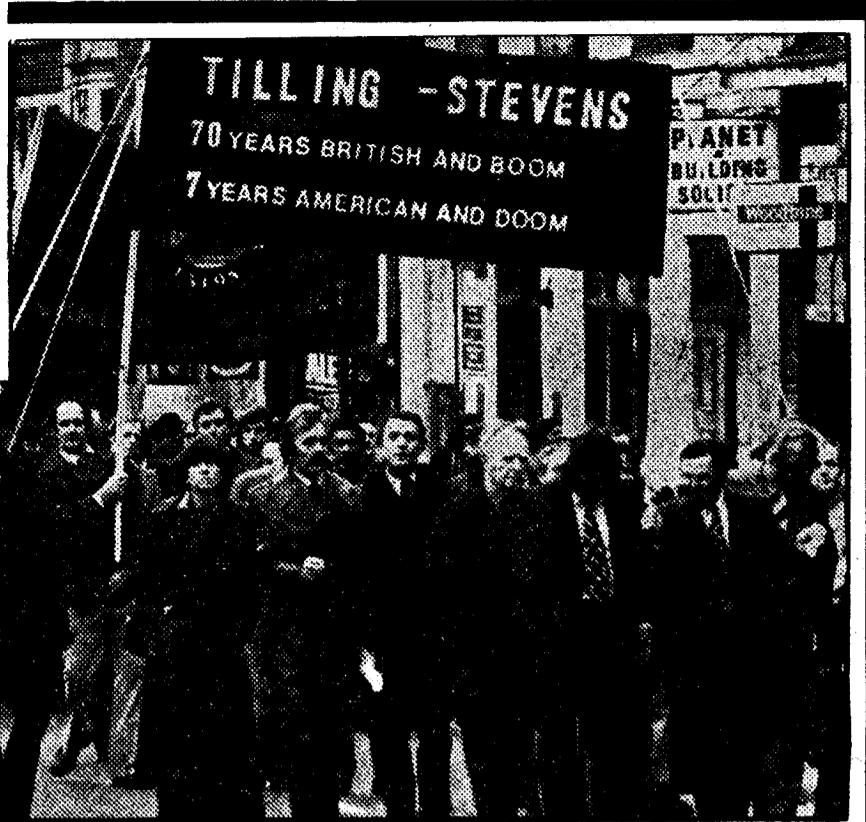
Our policy remains the same. Shop stewards' committees must be recalled and must hammer out a policy of resistance to redundancies. We think only a policy of occupation — holding property as ransom for jobs — can answer the needs of Chrysler workers. Shop stewards' committees, now that the rats have accepted 'retirement', must meet and discuss those policies again. Policies of rejection, of adopting militant tactics, were only narrowly defeated on the shop stewards' committees at Linwood, Ryton and Stoke. All sections, all groups of workers, taking such action must be unconditionally supported. The Combine Committee must be recalled, without the Trade Union officials, to lead an all-out fight and support all forms of workers' resistance.

Alternative

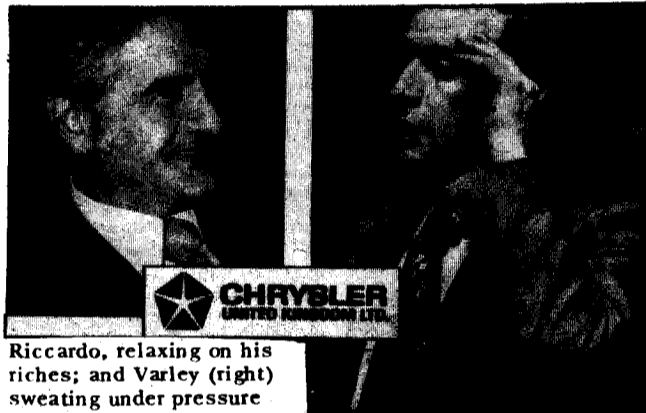
Chrysler workers do have an alternative to sackings and handouts to the Chrysler Corporation. If there is not enough work, then under workers' control the workers will share it between themselves and fight management for no loss of pay. Chrysler workers should control hiring, speeds, and manning levels. They should demand the right to opening and inspection of the meetings and accounts of the Chrysler management by workers' representatives. Shop stewards' organisation must remain absolutely and totally independent of management as the only way of ensuring that they shall decide whether or not management decisions are implemented and put into practice.

A policy of no covering for jobs left by workers volunteering for redundancy should be fought for.

These are the workers' alternatives to sackings and redundancies. If Chrysler workers fight to maintain their jobs, they will be launching a battle, not just in their own interests, but in the interests of all workers in the battle against the bosses and their Labour lackeys.



The first protest — but the slogan heading this march won't help. As if workers fare any better under British management! Chrysler workers in Britain and the USA have the same bosses — American ones — and the same basic problems. Leyland workers in Britain and in Italy have the same bosses — British ones — and the same problems. What is needed is policies that can mobilise Chrysler workers in counter-attacking against the joint British Government/US Corporation plans.



Riccardo, relaxing on his riches; and Varley (right) sweating under pressure

Steel strike from page 1

And Arthur Hunt, the Trotstre and Velindre strikers' spokesman stated, "We are demanding that local and national agreements be negotiated and we are against the unilateral decision to change such agreements".

But if the union officials recognise this issue, they are not organising any fight to turn the tables on the Corporation and impose work sharing under shop floor control, refusing to accept any loss in pay. All there is, is platitudes about "mutuality". Thus workers turn up, making themselves available for work on the old rotas, but they are not organised to disrupt the new shift rotas, imposing, initially on a plant by plant basis, the workers' own plan of production, protecting present jobs, and using the organised labour force to fight any refusal to pay out the old wages.

Only this policy links the struggle against redundancies with the fight against wage cuts.

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After only one week, the Fighting Fund has got off to a flying start. Enthusiastic meetings to launch the paper in East and North London raised a magnificent £24.05 and £32.17 respectively. Edinburgh supporters sent us £10, and a raffle in Liverpool brought in £4. Smaller individual donations came to £2.11. This makes our first week's total: **£72.33**

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SPAIN: 250,000 workers strike despite army attacks

"It is not a problem of reform. It is a problem of freedom". This is how the present situation in Spain is viewed by Adolfo Pinedo, the strike leader sacked last week by ITT-Standard Electric of Madrid. The strike led by Pinedo is just one small part of a massive wave of working class action convulsing Spain.

About a quarter of a million workers are on strike at the moment. What began as a series of strikes in sympathy with the Madrid Metro workers has rapidly spread as other sections of workers put forward their own demands, many of them being for wage rises of over 20%.

Engineering, construction, dock, postal, and bank workers are the major sections at present involved, although

dockers and building workers in Madrid and Barcelona may return to work after being granted 20% pay increase. They demands, however, are not limited to wages, but are being extended to cover a whole range of democratic rights, such as the freedom of speech and assembly. Demonstrating workers in Madrid have also begun to demand the abolition of the new monarchy.

The death of Franco has blown the lid off a whole Pandora's box of problems for the Spanish ruling class. The regime of Juan Carlos is trying hard to appear as democratic as possible, but is responding to the upsurge of workers in exactly the same way as Franco. The response of the regime to the Metro strike and the sympathetic strikes was to

use the army and police against the strikers. Demonstrations of workers have been attacked and broken up, strike leaders arrested and interrogated. Riot police were used last week to evict bank workers from their meetings, and the postal service has been placed under military control.

Despite this repression the strike wave continues to spread, and the regime is being forced to at least try to appear more 'moderate'. A sign of the times is that fascist groupings are now making 'left' noises, and even deny their past. For example, one Falangist group has declared its sympathy with the Portuguese revolution and its willingness to coexist with the Spanish Communist Party. A Falangist minister who served Franco for over 20 years

has even gone so far as to claim that the Franco regime was really "left of centre".

Such antics fool nobody — least of all the Spanish workers who have suffered for decades under Franco's dictatorship. The only value of such pronouncements for the Spanish regime is that they hope that they can curry favour with the countries of the EEC.

Already Spanish overtures have received a sympathetic response from the British Labour government. We must demand that Labour breaks all links with the Spanish fascists, and supports all struggles of the Spanish workers to free themselves at last from the shackles of dictatorship.

Neal Smith