

Workers' ACTION

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8p

Cuts, wage cuts and dole queues; this is the

UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF LABOUR

MORE THAN one and a half million workers are now on the dole. And the numbers are rising.

Throughout the country welfare and education services are being slashed. Rents are being put up. Massive cuts in rail and bus services are now lined up.

Over the last year the 'official' cost of living index has risen by over 25%. This takes into account luxury articles most workers can't

afford. The workers' cost of living has risen far more than that.

Earnings before tax have risen by only 21% in the same period. The £6 wage limit has meant a cut in real wages. And whole groups of workers have not managed to win the full £6 — for instance, postmen and hosiery workers.

Cuts, unemployment and wage curbs — these Labour policies are going down very

well in certain circles. A week ago the Financial Times share index reached a two-year high. The business weekly *The Economist* is cheering Dennis Healey on. They are only worried that he'll lose his nerve and back down on plans for higher unemployment and tighter wage restraint.

Some trade union and Labour leaders are now suggesting that present levels of unemployment are 'becoming unacceptable'. Len Murray is reported as being 'concerned'.

Labour's General Secretary Ron Hayward is getting bothered too. "I accept that a number of measures have been taken. But they are nowhere near enough".

Rip Van Winkle managed to sleep for forty years. Are the trade union leaders just waking up to what is happening? Are they just about to lead a fight?

Far from it. They have not been asleep at all! The Labour Government and the CBI have only managed to get away with their policies because they have been actively supported by the trade union leaders from the start.

The policies that have put one and a half million on the dole, cut our wages and slashed social services have been the result of three-way negotiation and bargaining between the Government, the TUC and the CBI. The £6 limit was Jack Jones' idea. The TUC has never publicly opposed any aspect of these government policies.

Curbs

What are these Trade Union leaders up to now? They are searching for a more 'acceptable' number of unemployed. They "suggest 600,000" as a figure to be aimed at.

They are asking the government to boost the economy to save jobs. They are calling for a temporary 6-month ban on mass dismissals of over 200, or maybe over 400, workers.

The Government and the

bosses are not shaking in their boots!

And now, after that fighting stuff, our leaders have started to argue about the next round of wage curbs to replace the £6 limit. They all, of course, accept that wages must be held down. After all, they hold respectable responsible jobs...

No, they are only debating whether flat-rate puny increases or percentage puny increases would hold both wages and militancy down effectively.



All the squeaks of horror at mounting unemployment don't mean that the TUC and trade union leaders are just about to lead a fight. They know that wage cuts, unemployment and welfare cuts are hitting hard. They know the hardships and the anger they are causing. In a whole number of areas, campaigns against the cuts, campaigns to fight unemployment and fury over the £6 limit are starting to pick up steam. They have been discouraged and held back by the TUC but they won't just go away.

The TUC don't want to upset the bosses' appletart. They want to head off the steam by mild complaints and hoped-for concessions from the Labour Government.

That's why the campaign to protect our jobs and living standards must start in the workplaces, in the Trade Union branches and Trades Councils. It must be independent of the Union leaders. We must have our own policies and our own organisations. ONLY IN THAT WAY CAN A SERIOUS FIGHT BE WAGED.

Frank Stagg nears death on fourth hunger strike



months of solitary confinement and punishment regimes, no daylight and no outdoor exercise. Wakefield's Deputy Governor Gadd is known to have a family connection with convicted Orange paramilitarist. A man like Frank Stagg at his mercy can hope for no let-up.

During his hunger strike bright neon light has been kept on a couple of feet from his face, night and day. A tray of food is brought in every minute and placed by his bed.

Conditions like these forced a man into a life and death struggle to establish some minimum standard of dignity in his treatment. He demands an assurance of no more solitary, and wants to be transferred (as others have been) to a Northern Ireland prison to serve the rest of his ten-year sentence as a political prisoner.

On Sunday, two fellow prisoners climbed onto the roof at Wakefield in sub-zero temperatures to draw attention to Frank Stagg's condition.

This week, there will be a nightly picket outside the Ladbroke Square home of Roy Jenkins — the man who could end the torment of Frank Stagg and save his life. At next Sunday the Bloody Sunday Commemorative March will end up at Ladbroke Square. Perhaps, by the time Stagg will have joined the killed on Bloody Sunday another victim of collusion murder by the British state.

IN TONES of studied unconcern, the Home Office has finally admitted that one of its prisoners, Frank Stagg, is dying. A week before they made their cool pronouncement, Stagg must already have passed the point of irreversible physical damage.

The British prison system allows no outlet for complaints about treatment, and that treatment is often difficult for the outside world to know about. The only way a prisoner can struggle against intolerable conditions is to put his own life at risk.

Stagg has had ample cause for protest. At Albany jail in the Isle of Wight, he was kept in a dark, verminous basement cell. Albany was just about as far as they could have put him for his relatives in Northern Ireland to visit him. Prison rules say prisoners should be kept nearest to their homes. According to all the rules, he shouldn't have been there at all. But he had to come near to dying before he was moved.

A long hunger strike ended in death for his young companion Michael Gaughan. But Stagg was only transferred as far as the Midlands.

Another hunger strike followed, in protest against continual, vindictive harassment. Stagg had been subjected to several degrading strip searches every day. Visits were made difficult.

Stagg's present hunger strike results from his treatment at Wakefield. He has suffered 11

**END BRITISH INVOLVEMENT!
TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!
DEMONSTRATE
Sunday Feb 1st
Shepherds Bush Green,
1.30pm**

UNION BASHER BRYANT FINGERED IN CORRUPTION CASE

James Sharp, an architect jailed in 1974 on charges of corruption, has pointed the finger at the big building firm Bryants. In the Birmingham Evening Mail he has stated that Alan Maudsley, the city's former chief architect, was "lavishly entertained" by directors of Bryants.

Bryants at one time held the vast majority of big contracts in Birmingham's redevelopment programme, including several municipal housing contracts. They were not implicated when Sharp was tried for corruption along with Maudsley, but they have since been investigated by the police.

Maudsley denied Sharp's allegation, although he does admit travelling with Bryants directors for holidays in Ireland, Portugal, Hamburg, and Copenhagen. Despite his claim that he always paid his share, there is another allegation made by an under-manager at a Dublin hotel that on up to 15 occasions Maudsley's bill was paid by Bryants.

Bryants are well known in the building industry for their campaign in the early '70s of victimisations, blacklisting, and mass sackings to try to prevent the builders' union, UCATT, getting a hold on their larger contracts. Perhaps best known is the protracted struggle at the Woodgate Valley housing site in 1971-72, when Bryants, in an attempt to smash unionisation on the site, twice sacked the whole workforce. Other tricks included the attempted blacklisting of leading militant Pete Carter on the Chamberlain Gardens site.

If anyone doubts the viciousness of employers like Bryants, Sharp's allegations will help open their eyes. We should never forget, however, that when it comes down to it the 'honest' capitalists can be just as vicious as their 'corrupt' colleagues.

Gerry Kelly

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After Carvalho: Who goes next?

LAST WEEK'S arrest of Major Otelto Saraiva de Carvalho, the left-wing former chief of the Portuguese security forces, is yet another blow by the repressive forces which are consolidating their hold on the country. "His arrest" writes Financial Times Lisbon correspondent Paul Ellman "along with that of others implicated in the November 25 rebellion, leaves the Left dangerously exposed in Portuguese politics, whether of the military or civilian variety."

Carvalho was arrested for his supposed involvement in the "attempted coup" of November 25th, following a report by the Revolutionary Council of the AFM implicating him in a 'conspiracy'. The Report also names practically every section of the Portuguese left, even including the Communist Party; it is clearly a set-up document designed to establish sweeping powers of arrest.

With last week's events, the Azevedo 6th Provisional Government stands poised to take its post-November 25th clampdown one stage further.

Its first move was to regain control of the army, dispersing strongholds of the left and smashing the soldiers' democratic organisations. Strict military discipline was imposed. COPCON, which had so often in the past year refused to act against strikes and demonstrations, was disbanded. Also abolished were the Lisbon Paratroop regiments, the Military Police,

by Neal Smith

the Light Artillery Regiment (which has quashed the March 11th attempted right wing coup) and other left wing units.

At the same time, right wing officers have been re-instated in the army. Majors Monge and Bivas have both been re-instated, although both were implicated in 'March 11th'. There have, too, been wholesale releases and 'escapes' of right wing prisoners, including former secret police officials of the Caetano/Salazar regime. About a fifth of the 1200 PIDE agents held have been let out, and more releases are under way.

'All those prisoners released are rightists'

And it's not just the little fish that have got through the net. PIDE chief Santos Junior is now free. Another recent ex-prisoner is General Kaulza de Arriaga, who has even been tipped as a runner for the Presidency. "So far as we could make out" writes Tom Litterick, MP, in this week's Tribune "all those prisoners released are right

wingers; ... those who have so far managed to "escape" seem also to be Right wingers".

By contrast with this indulgence "Military officers holding the political expressed bitter hatred and contempt for the prisoners of November 25th, the men who were actively involved in the original overthrow of fascism in Portugal."

On another front, the right wing has reasserted its control of the media. With most of the newspapers in debt to the nationalised banks, the government has used the banks to force through the sacking of editorial boards and the dismissal of journalists. The boards of all the left-wing Lisbon papers have been replaced by supporters of the Socialist Party or the PPD. A new right wing daily, O Dia, has appeared in Lisbon, and Republica has been forced to close.

The radio and television stations have also been restored to the Right. And Radio Renascenca, formerly under workers' control, was seized by police on December 28th and returned to its previous owners, the Catholic Church. And a Setubal paper under workers' control has also been returned to its former owners.

Old organs of state repression not disbanded after Caetano was thrown out are now coming into their own. The Republican National Guard (GNR) has been particularly active, restoring landlords in the countryside



Otelto Saraiva de Carvalho

and conducting raids on factories, farms and neighbourhood councils. There have been many arrests of militants and revolutionaries without warrant, raids and searches of the offices of revolutionary parties, and attempts to evict squatters.

Troops and police have also been used against pickets and demonstrations; four demonstrators were shot by Commandos outside and military prison in Oporto, and on January 21st a striking shopworker was shot and four others wounded.

Behind the repression lies the 6th Government's fear of an enormous working class fightback against the new measures of economic austerity that are being introduced. Prices have been massively increased, whilst wages have been frozen. Fares on public transport have been raised by 75%. Many staple food items, such as dried cod, are now too expensive for the average worker to afford. Purchase tax has been increased on cars (20%),

luxury goods (40%) and alcoholic drinks (80%). The price of cigarettes has almost doubled, imported food prices have gone up by 20%, and there are serious shortages of meat.

Against all this, wages are to be frozen until the end of February — for those that can get a wage at all, and are not among the 20% of the workforce unemployed.

While the great 'democrats' of the Socialist Party and PPD, riding high over the repression, jockey with the military for a better deal out of the next elections, the Communist Party has been trying to deflect any blows coming its way onto the revolutionary left. Financial Times reporter Paul Ellman describes how "Dr. Alvaro Cunhal, the Communist leader, has stepped up his own campaign in recent days against the non-Communist Left, warning that they have learnt nothing and would like to take Portuguese politics back to its pre-November state."

Portuguese workers still retain their capacity to fight back. The evicted Radio Renascenca workers aim to publish a bulletin of workers' struggles, and are planning to set up a transmitter van to tour the country broadcasting interviews and discussions with local people. The attempts to dislodge squatters from occupied housing have so far failed because of the stiff resistance of the squatters and their supporters.

The fight back will not be easy. It is absolutely vital that socialists in this country do not prove to be 'fair weather' supporters.

We urge all Workers Action readers and supporters to participate in the National Conference of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class in London on March 13th. Details can be obtained, with delegate forms, from PWCC, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC1.

Spain after Franco LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT DOSE OF REFORM

A constantly shifting total of something like 20,000 workers are on strike in Spain. Their demands centre round wage increases, but also include the legalisation of trade unions that are free from state control, the ending of wage freezes, and the release of militant workers arrested by the government.

Major sections of industry in Madrid, in Barcelona and in the mines of the Asturias have been shut down.

In this way the workers are asserting — still, as yet, cautiously and peaceably — their will to end the crushing oppression and poverty that was associated with Franco's dictatorship. They are also testing out in practice the liberal and democratic pretensions (such as they are) of the new government.

The new monarchist government clearly wants to act slightly more cautiously against workers' struggles than the Franco regime would have done. But it certainly shows no drive, and no wish, to seriously dismantle the authoritarian structure of Francoism.

They responded to the postal workers' strike by issuing a decree which conscripted the strikers into the army and therefore put them under military discipline. When 30,000 people tried to assemble on 21st January for a demonstration demanding democratic rights, they were dispersed by police. Some 150 workers' leaders have been arrested — on charges of 'plotting a general strike'.

There is still only one legal political party in Spain, and the government insists that under no conditions will it make the Communist Party and the revolutionary left organisations legal. Rights of self-determination for Catalonia or for Euzkadi (the Basque country) are also firmly denied by the government even in its most 'democratic' statements.

The existing Cortes (parliament) an entirely Francoist body, will remain in office until March 1977.

However, the government is aware of the advantages of a more 'democratic' face. They are eagerly negotiating for Spanish membership of the EEC. On January 16th they turned a blind eye when the Spanish Socialist Party held a press conference (which they could have banned) with visitors from the Socialist International (the gathering which the British Labour Party is affiliated to). The more astute members of the Spanish ruling class — people like the 'Opus Dei' group of rich and influential Catholics — have no doubt noted the help which the Socialist International has given Portuguese capitalism through its support of the Socialist Party there.

Rigid

The Franco regime was imposed in the 1930s as a last-ditch regime of extreme repression, based on the military crushing of the working class in the civil war. Forty years later it is too rigid, too inflexible, too brittle to deal with a new generation of the working class rising in struggle.

What Spanish capitalism needs is a gradual, cool, step-by-step transition to a more normal form of state, retaining all the essential defences of capitalist domination but with more room for manoeuvre and concessions.

In line with this project the government have promised to extend the franchise (only a third of the population now has the vote), to allow genuine trade unions, and to legalise political parties to the right of the Communist Party.

Success for the government depends on it being able to deliver these reforms in doses big enough to blunt workers'



but still the soldiers are sent to bust strikes

militancy, but not so big as to encourage workers to go forward in struggle for more advanced demands.

It is not very likely that they will be able to keep the whole process so well regulated. Already in the years before Franco's death, the Spanish workers had repeatedly defied the laws which make strikes illegal. There were many major struggles, such as those of the Asturian miners, and the waves of protest strikes against the execution of Basque nationalist and anti-fascist militants.

Example

And in the last 18 months they have seen the example of the workers of Portugal sweeping out the remnants of the Caetano regime and going on to fight for, and in some cases gain, workers' control.

The example of Portugal also shows, however, that it is not enough just for workers' struggles to go to the point of disrupting the plans and projects of the ruling class. Unless the working class can organise itself to seize power in society, the capitalist class will retreat, reorganise its forces, and reassert its control — and

very possibly in as brutal a form as ever before.

And for the workers' struggle to go forward to the point of workers' power, the first essential is that the working class be organised as politically independent of the ruling class. In Portugal the workers have been tied, through the Socialist and Communist Parties, to the Armed Forces Movement and to the top officers of the ruling class army.

But there is no need to go even as far as Portugal for examples of the disastrous effect on workers' struggles of class collaboration.

Spain itself provides the classical example.

Dictator

In January 1930 the dictator Primo de Rivera resigned; in April 1931 the monarchy fell. Wave after wave of workers' struggles resulted only in a Popular Front government in February 1936.

The Popular Front had the support of all the workers' parties, even the Anarchists and the POUM (a party often, though wrongly, called "Trotskyist"). But in terms of its policy, the decisive members of

the Popular Front were the bourgeois politicians who led it.

The army officer caste gathered its forces under the protection of the Popular Front government and, led by Franco, launched civil war against it.

Limits

The Stalinists and Social Democrats who dominated the Republican camp in the civil war insisted on fighting against Franco's army only within limits acceptable to the few bourgeois politicians — "a shadow of the bourgeoisie", Trotsky called them — who remained on the Republican side. Far from using revolutionary agitation to rally workers and peasants against Franco, they suppressed workers' control, put down peasant land seizures, and denied national independence to Morocco.

In the end the Stalinists resorted to jailing and murdering the Anarchists and POUM-ists. The result was Franco's victory — and 36 years of bloody repression against the working class, including the Stalinists.

Doubtless no exact repetition of those events is possible. We

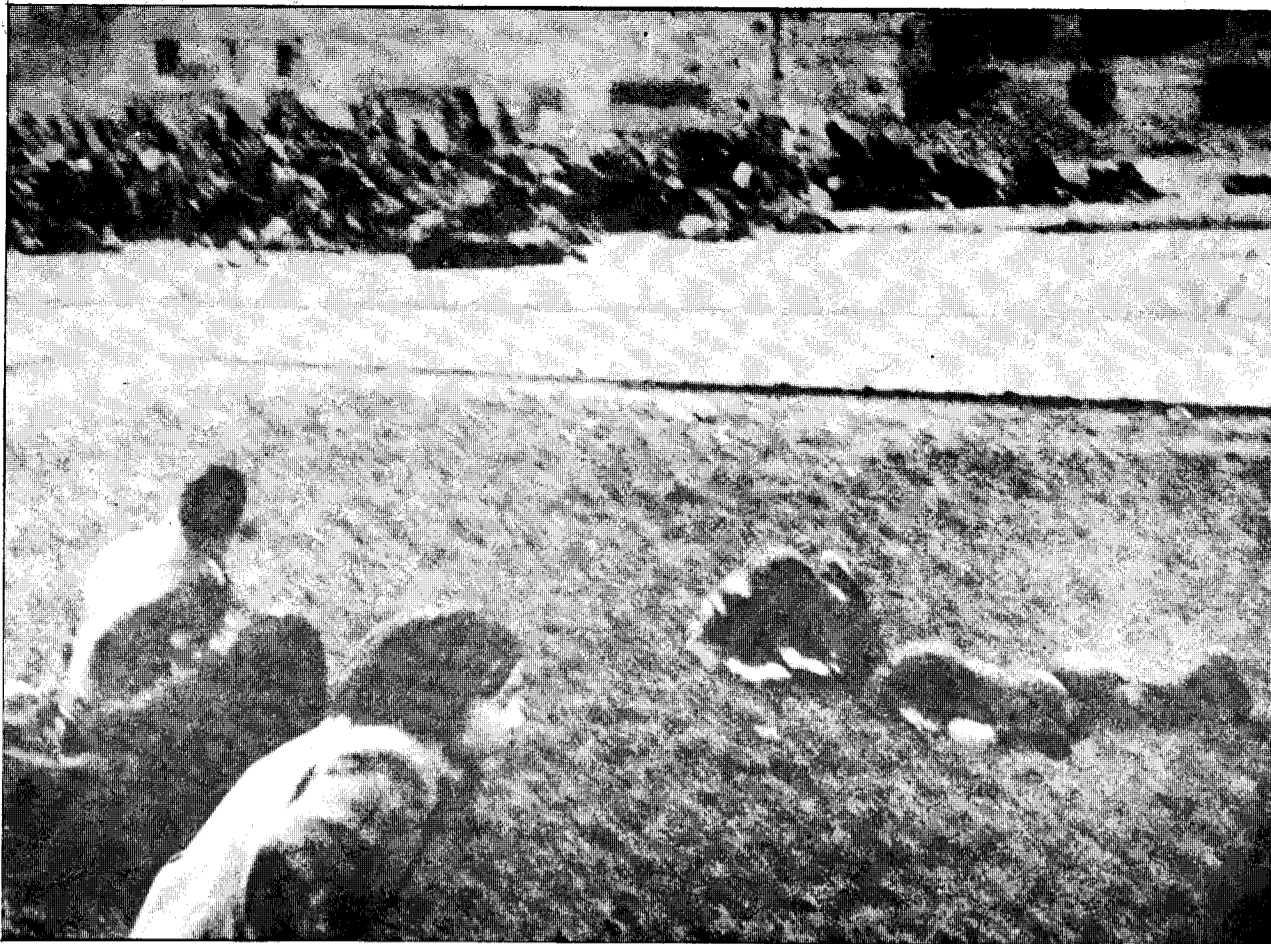
do not live in a world dominated by the crushing by Nazism of the German working class. France's general strike of May 1968 would more accurately symbolise the period we are living in. Nor is Stalinism any longer the disciplined monolith it was in the '30s.

Chile

Yet the politics of class collaboration have not lost their power to derail the working class and lead it to disastrous defeat — as Chile testifies.

The Spanish working class is already burdened with two Popular Front groupings — the Democratic Junta, including the Communist Party, and the Democratic Convergence, including the Socialist Party — both of them engaged in pleading with the monarchist government to bring in a bit more democracy a bit more quickly.

The fate of the Spanish working class will depend on whether the sizeable revolutionary forces to the left of the CP are able to organise themselves into a party which can fight seriously for working class power and against all forms of Popular Frontism.



BLOODY SUNDAY

Jan. 30th 1972

14 shot by British Army

“ ON 30th January thirteen people died on the streets of Derry. That day is now known throughout the world as 'Bloody Sunday'.

The question remains: why did it happen? Did the IRA use the cover of 20,000 people to engage in a fight with the British Army? Did certain members of the British Army go berserk? What part of a military plan carefully worked out beforehand?

I cannot claim to be neutral in the argument. I saw the army open fire. The facts may be unpalatable to many of the British people. They are, nonetheless, facts.

Nobody will convince me that the

Paratroop Regiment is incapable of discipline in crisis. The British people do not pay vast sums of money for the upkeep and training of a crack regiment that loses its head at the sight of 20,000 unarmed marchers.

I know the IRA did not open fire. That I am prepared to swear. We are then left with the question of the British Army's military strategy. The British people may believe 'their' army incapable of such cold-blooded murder.

Let's get the facts straight. The British Army may well be composed of their sons, men and boys from working class families, individuals who join the army for many and varied reasons. That is not to say it is the army of the British people. It is the

armed force of the British ruling class. It serves the political and economic interests of that class only.

The function of the British Army in Northern Ireland is not to maintain the peace. We have never, in the fifty years of Stormont rule, had peace. While Stormont exists we can never have peace or justice.

The British Army is not protecting the Catholic community. What then is it protecting in Ireland?

It is protecting the economic and political interests of British imperialism. It is protecting the investment of ICI, Chemstrand, Courtaulds, Rio Tinto Zinc and all the other parasitic capitalists making their wealth out of the labour of Irish people, North and South.

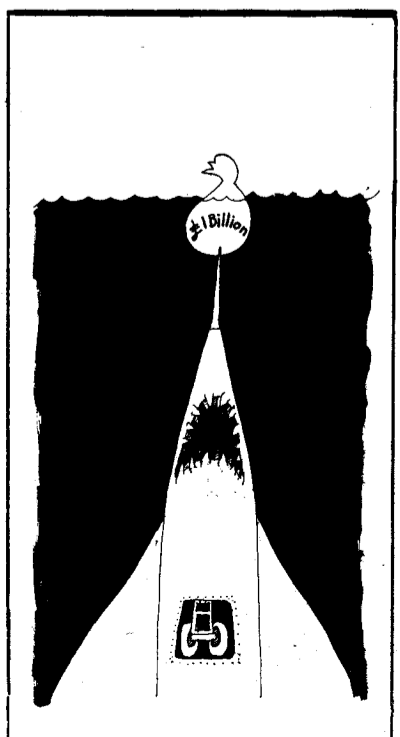
The same army, were it ordered to do so, would defend the power stations of Britain against miners' pickets. It would do so with equal candour and callousness. Whether you, the British people, are prepared to face and stomach the facts or not, the facts remain.

The ruling class respects and recognises only its own power. In defence of 'democracy' and 'peace' they will break every democratic right, every law, every concept of peace and justice they themselves ever set up.

In Northern Ireland we have been bated and beaten on the streets. We have been intimidated, interrogated, interned. We have had our Bloody Sunday. It has not been the first Bloody Sunday. It may not be the last.

What happened in Derry on 30th January was done in the name of the British people, in the interests of the British ruling class. Condone it or fight it. You cannot stand in the middle.

Bernardette Devlin
February 1972



'RIGHT TO WORK' MARCH A STATEMENT

IN TRADES COUNCILS and trade union branches all over the country, the question is being debated of whether to support the Right to Work March from Manchester to London.

It is vital that Trades Councils, trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, Labour Parties and LPYSs should be brought together in a determined fight against unemployment. Marches and protests do have a role to play in that work. The crucial task for revolutionaries, however, is to fight to equip the campaign with an effective socialist policy.

IS - who, through their 'Rank and File Organising Committee', have organised the Right to Work March - have got everything upside down.

In organising the campaign - where flexibility, openness, and a broad approach should be the keynote - they have opted for building Right to Work committees defined not by the general needs of the struggle but by IS's own predetermined venture, the March. The March is, in fact, mainly a publicity and recruitment stunt for IS. In several areas - Birmingham, for example - the Right to Work committee is a shadow body of thinly disguised IS members which is counterposed to more serious labour movement campaigns.

But where sharpness, clarity, and rigorous dividing lines have to be the first necessity - in defining a strategy against unemployment - IS have opted for flabbiness. Their main slogan is 'No Return to the 30s'

- one which every right-winger could agree to in a general way, but which is, moreover, misleading. Capitalism is not about to collapse into a 1930s type Great Depression, and scare-mongering is harmful.

The miserable nature of IS's policy against unemployment is illustrated in the centre page of the latest Socialist Worker. We are instructed as to 'how to save jobs' in six easy steps. "Stalemate. Then the man from the Right to Work committee arrived. And then - victory!"

Workers Action's attitude to the Right to Work March can therefore be summed up like this.

1. We regard it as a contribution to the fight against unemployment, but as a confused and sectarian effort which can be positively counter-productive to the extent that it counterposes itself to the task of building a militant working class united front against unemployment.

2. We do not oppose support for the Right to Work March.

3. We do, however, seek to protect labour movement organisations from being used by IS under the pretence that an IS venture is in fact a broad labour movement campaign.

4. We approach militants involved in the Right to Work committees to try to involve them in the activities of broader labour movement campaigns, or in efforts to build such campaigns through the Trades Councils, union branches, Labour Parties etc. where they do not already exist.

PAYING FOR THE MESS...

Which class will have its way?

The spectacle of the trade union leadership arguing it out as to the most suitable successor to the £6 limit is obscene. In their speeches, and in their TV appearances, they start from one simple premise. Our country, they say, is in a mess. The workers must sacrifice, pull in their belts, and help Britain through. This is the argument that unites the bosses, the Labour Government, and the TUC leadership.

The TUC no doubt wish the price to pay was not so high. They would prefer less unemployment. They would prefer to soften the blow. But they do not challenge the argument that in one way or another the workers must pay for the crisis.

We totally reject that argument. The labour movement should take no responsibility for the crisis of British capitalism. It is one particular floundering section of a world economy dominated by unemployment, inflation and uncertainty.

All the talk about our wages causing inflation, about how the workers have caused the mess, does not stand up. The £6 limit has not stopped and could not stop inflation. In fact it only ensured that our wages fall behind inflation. Any slowdown in inflation will mean an even bigger cutback in our wages. And the latest unemployment figures make it absolutely clear that the £6 limit has in no way halted the loss of jobs - just the opposite!

The bosses' policy for the crisis, at present executed by a Labour government, will mean continuing unemployment, further cuts in real wages, and the dismantling of already inadequate social and welfare facilities used by workers. Jack Jones and the Labour government tell us this is only temporary. But the bosses intend any advantages they gain over the working class to last, even when a partial boom develops in the British economy.

The capitalist class obviously recognise that it is far better for them and far more difficult for workers if the Labour government and sections of trade union leaders implement and argue for these policies, rather than the openly capitalist party, the Tories, trying to get away with it. As part of the same approach, they are encouraging all kinds of tripartite and participation schemes at all levels to embroil the trade union officials in particular.

Interests

But the working class has its own interests. We have no interest in wage cuts, dole queues, and collapsing schools and hospitals. Workers Action argues that we have to take up the fight to insist that workers will not pay for the crisis. We argue for a series of policies which sketch out the beginning of a workers' response to the crisis.

Most importantly we argue for:

- The rising scale of wages. As long as inflation continues at present rates, workers must fight for automatic increases to compensate for every 1 per cent rise in the cost of living - calculated by working class organisations, not from the government's official index. We will have to fight for this not only against the bosses but against the wage-cutting policies of the major sections of the trade union leadership. We demand of the Labour government that it should drop its £6 limit and immediately implement the rising scale of wages as a legally-binding guarantee of workers' living standards.

- Where redundancies are threatened, work should be shared under trade union control with no loss of earnings. Firms that cannot maintain employment should be nationalised with not one penny compensation. The Labour government should stop subsidising the Ricardos and the Ferrantis. They should immediately legislate a 35 hour week.

Access

- Workers must organise to open the accounts, books, and proceedings of the bosses, the corporations, and the state. Only by fighting for access to that information can workers equip and organise themselves to control those aspects of production and planning that directly affect them.

- We oppose trade union involvement in participation schemes at all levels. We are for the total independence of trade union organisations to defend and improve the standards and interests of workers.
- We are for broad workplace and trade union branch-based campaigns in the areas to fight cuts and unemployment. These campaigns should not be discussion shops. They should fight to make Labour councils follow the example of Clay Cross, defying the government's pro-capitalist policy and refusing to implement cuts. They should organise support for workers in struggle. They should take up the special problems of less organised and specially threatened groups of workers, particularly women workers, youth and blacks.

We recognise that in every struggle, defending standards and levels is not enough. The bosses have their programme for the crisis, and the working class needs its own programme, too. Otherwise we will always be on the defensive, one step behind the bosses.

In the present situation, or the foreseeable future, there is no question of just turning back the clock, of returning to the good old days of rising wages and free collective bargaining. Immediately we can and must fight for positive policies to make the bosses pay the cost of the crisis. If we win some victories, the bosses will not lie down and die - they will launch a fight-back. Battle will be engaged anew - for higher stakes. We must prepare to win next time round, whether we win or lose this time.

That is why the key question for us is to build a leadership in the class around our paper that can not only push the struggle forward, but argue clearly and consistently that the question is not just defending existing standards but which class will have its way.

'I will fight the expulsion' says LP activist

On 21st January, the General Management Committee of North Islington Labour Party voted to expel Keith Veness, leading local Labour activist and a long-standing member of the Party.

His 'crime' was an interview in the local 'Islington Gutter Press'. It was a public, black-and-white statement of views shared by many members of the North Islington party.

The constituency, said Veness, is dominated by the MP, Michael O'Halloran, and a network based on the Roman Catholic Church and its roots in the local Irish community. "O'Halloran's supporters", Keith Veness told *Workers Action* last week, "don't really care what political line the Labour Party has" — as long as they retain their positions: but they generally side with the right and receive the support of long-standing right wingers in the Party.

Exactly where O'Halloran stands politically is hard to say. For example, he has sided with both pro-Common Market and anti-Common Market camps. What is easier to say is why many local Party members are dissatisfied with their MP.

Islington borough councillors have been holding meetings with the MPs from the borough's three constituencies. George Cunningham and John Grant, Labour MPs for Islington South and Central, have attended regularly. O'Halloran has never attended. The council held a public meeting to explain its policies. Grant and Cunningham spoke at the meeting. O'Halloran didn't turn up.

"But gradually ... the Left has gained in strength ... a lot of younger people moved into the area". However, Keith Veness told 'Islington Gutter Press', this makes no difference as long as the Left does no more than pass resolutions unconnected with any action. "If you've got an MP who's no good — and our MP is no good — the real answer is to get rid of him".

The constituency GMC responded at its meeting on 21st January by voting to expel Keith Veness.

However, Keith Veness told *Workers Action*, O'Halloran's supporters were unable to point to any rule of the Labour Party he had broken. He has appealed to the NEC against the expulsion. He is also pushing a complaint to Transport House about the election of officers and GMC delegates at Highview ward AGM this month. No less than 13 people who were not paid-up members of the ward were allowed to vote, he says!

Another complaint is going in from Junction ward, which has been instructed by the Constituency EC to reconvene its AGM, after disputes as to who was entitled to vote there.

Keith Veness does not regret his statements to 'Islington Gutter Press'. "In the long run you have nothing to lose by saying the truth", he told *Workers Action*. He sees a move against the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party as the necessary conclusion of a fight against right-wing policies, both in the trade union movement and in the Labour Party.

In the 'Islington Gutter Press' interview, Keith Veness describes how on two issues that fight on policies has made some impact in North Islington Labour Party. Despite the fact that O'Halloran supporters have claimed Keith Veness's attack on O'Halloran was "anti-Irish", Veness was in fact a delegate from North Islington Labour Party to the Troops Out Movement labour movement conference. O'Halloran would, said Veness, "support self determination for the Irish people, but it depends what it means in practice — to me, in practice, if you're for self determination of the Irish people that means you support the Republican movement and you struggle against the British Army."

On abortion, "a number of us put a resolution up condemning the White amendment and anyone who supported it. It was interesting, because a lot of Irish Catholic women who usually vote the O'Halloran line came out against it very firmly ... The motion was passed; not only that, we agreed to support the demonstration against the thing and a lot of those Irish Catholic women came on the demo."

Now the basic issues are whether the Left can get further than passing the occasional resolution; and the question of democracy in the Labour Party. "It's no good playing a football match", Keith Veness told *Workers Action*, "if the other side controls the referee ... The left does need to organise itself, and openly say it is organising".

STEEL SELL-OUT Union leaders agree to cut 44,000 jobs

What the agreement really means

THE new agreement lays down that all negotiations on manning levels and working arrangements will be conducted at local level. And the BSC has agreed to go back to the agreed guaranteed week situation and to end its other unilateral actions.

They also state that while the redundancies will mainly be in older plants, no plants will be closed down completely.

What do these promises and agreements mean?

WORKERS ACTION argued two weeks ago that BSC had the return of the guaranteed week marked out as the concession it would make to the steel unions. BSC long ago calculated that it could swap this 'step down' for an agreement on flexibility, for a promise by the union leaders to police their members, and for what they called in a previous document "general voluntary help in relaxing the guaranteed week."

But it has had to go back on one proposal on its shopping list, the scrapping of the cost of living clause from the existing wage agreement.

TRICKY

The tricky part for them is the local level negotiations. It's a get-out for the union leaders, and could serve to channel action into arguments about the viability of individual plants and against the retention of steelmaking at other plants. But it does put the ball back at the feet of the only people likely to fight: the rank and file workers.

It is important that these negotiations aren't just left in the hands of local officials.

The agreement to end unilateral actions could be important — in any other context. If it meant that the BSC couldn't move without the unions' say-so, and that the unions wouldn't give their say-so to anything that was against the interest of the members ... then it would be a real victory.

Unfortunately it means little more than the leaders' wish to be given a little living space too.

Probably the most cynical part of the whole agreement is the statement that there will be no complete closures. This promise is simply going to be broken. It is there to produce disunity within plants, to add to the disunity that exists between plants. BSC hope to get workers picking on each other, with each section arguing that it should be the one that doesn't shut. The promise is a lie anyway: if they can use it to disarm workers, most of the plants in line for closure will be closed.

ANGER

The issue that has sparked most anger and action — the scrapping of premium shifts — produced what looked like a compromise. Where the men demand that this payment — the business end of the wage packet — be regular and stable, BSC (which brought it in in the first place) want it only when they need it. The so-called compromise? The unions have agreed "in principle" that premium weekend shifts should be worked only if justified by the order book. That is, exactly what the BSC wanted...

Survey by Andrew Hornung and Tony Duffy

In response to the steel crisis, Bill Sirs has offered silly ideas about employees buying shares and Ebbw Vale have offered to take wage cuts if management will do so too.

But the so-called left have replaced these non-starters with non-starters of their own.

The most unserious of all these 'left' policies, however, is the one put forward week after week in *Socialist Worker*, the paper of the International Socialism group. Their 'answer' to this massive attack on 220,000 workers is to urge them to support the IS's four hundred mile footslog, the Right to Work march. Such touching concern to find occupation for steelworkers when they have lost their jobs!

Dangerous

The Communist Party's policy is much more serious ... and much more dangerous. They summarise their policies in the *Morning Star* of January 17th as follows: "Stop all imports of steel and reject any Common Market limitation on British production; Parliament should assist the industry by injecting money to produce steel for increasing stockpiling to meet demand and avoid bottlenecks when the economy expands; Reflate the economy and increase demand; and guarantee that there will be no steel redundancies without first providing alternative work at comparable pay in areas where there may be closures".

This, of course, isn't a policy for action. This is a policy for Parliament. At best it is something workers can demand their MPs do when they are lobbying Parliament. What is needed

is a policy that workers put into practice; not one that they ask for but one that they themselves actively implement.

The Communist Party's policy focuses on what ought to be the concerns of the bosses, not the workers — "British production", "reflation", and so on. But the BSC's attack is not an attack on "British production"; it is an attack on steelworkers, as part of an attack on the working class.

The focus therefore ought to be the needs of the working class. Workers have no particular interest in either "reflation" or "deflation", in high production figures or low ones. We don't make a fetish of the product, the production figures, the rotten hours, the unsocial shifts, the dangerous jobs, or anything. Our interest lies in improving our conditions of work and improving our standards of living.

A fight for "British production" wouldn't even guarantee jobs anyway, given the trend in plant modernisation. All it would do — and this is what the "import control" nonsense is about — is get us to see our interests as lying with Finniston's and the other bosses and against those of the foreign capitalists and foreign working classes.

Division

But why should we be used by our bosses to compete against foreign workers? That would serve our interests as little as competing against other British workers. Such a policy can only create division where there ought to be unity.

Jobs are not guaranteed by high production figures, nor are wages.

What the CP's policy does is accept as sacrosanct the length of the working day and the number of shifts. Instead we should be arguing that if there's not enough work for 220,000 on the present length of the working week, then we'll cut the number of hours we work. The bosses want us to cut the workforce. Our reply should be simple: shorter hours with no loss of pay. (And no covering for voluntary redundancies).

That means a policy of work sharing. Of course we can't trust the British Steel Corporation with working out such a policy, even if they agreed. Work sharing is something that has to be planned and imposed by the shop floor workers themselves, who must also organise to strike and occupy in the event of the company ref-

STEEL boss Monty Finniston disclosed BSC has altered the way the Corporation balance sheet. Perhaps he was hoping to get onto the Government.

Later a dispute arose as to whether the Wales losses were accurate, as he wh statistics to create yet another diversion.

Any steelworkers who still had confide have been waiting for them to refute or c didn't.

Workers need to know what is going on in head offices. But the worker director s information.

Steelworkers must demand that the t demand the right to inspect every aspect managing of the Corporation's work. But t that workers can exercise a veto over the m

Angry steelworkers lobby ISTC chief Bill Sirs (centre)



Builders strike at steel complex

While negotiations are taking place for thousands of redundancies due to their story of an £8 million a week deficit, British Steel has £1,500 million left on a plate for sub-contractors at the massive Redcar Steel Complex to share between them.

Over 32 sub-contractors at the site are in a position to cream off up to £2 an hour for every man they have on the site. Some of them are labour-only firms who just supply men. These firms provide no tools, no technical advice — in fact, nothing other than bodies. They are also going into other

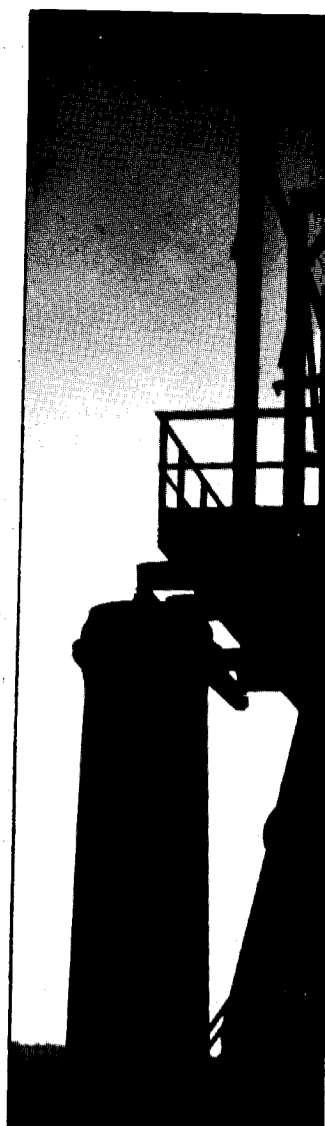
steel works, doing sub-contract work. These labour-only firms have been kicked off a number of sites, but reappear under new names.

The site shop stewards' committee at Redcar works have quite a job on their hands holding together scores of different companies, all with different wages and conditions. At the moment they have been out on strike over some of the contractors and sub-contractors telling men they couldn't hold a meeting before 3.30 on any day. They

were told that if any of the meetings were held before 3.30 they would be taken off pay and lose their weekends.

The strike has been solid for the first week; there is a possibility of some settlement as we go to press. As one of the strikers, Dave Brodie, told *Workers Action*, "We are staying out until the management starts to behave itself".

In the interest of curbing blatant parasitism, and in the interest of effective union organisation, it is vital that these labour-only sub-contractors be thrown off every site, and replaced by one single employer. Tony Duffy



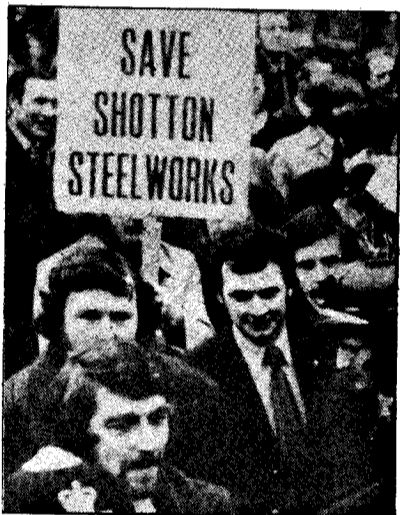
14 days to fight in — then the crunch

by Paul Ellis

BILL SIRTS and his fellow steel union leaders didn't win much last Thursday. They did win a fortnight's "stay of execution", however. And while these leaders couldn't organise a fight in fourteen years let alone fourteen days, the rank and file can use this small breathing space to mount a massive fight against the BSC's plans.

The 6,000 workers in South Wales who struck against the plans showed their willingness to fight. Calls for national action have come from Corby, from Scotland and from South Yorkshire.

That means that the timid "reference back" can be turned into a hard hitting fight back. Sirs and Scholey are both worried that the reference back puts the ball at the feet of the rank and file steelworkers. It is a cause of worry for them. It should be a cause of optimism for steelworkers.



The time has to be used to organise locally and nationally. The best lead has come from the Lackenby Allied Crafts' Committee: they called for a conference of workplace representatives from the whole country. That is now a matter of urgency.

But organisation isn't the only problem steelworkers face. They are in a situation where no fighting policy has developed. It isn't only Sirs, Smith, Evans, Donnet and the rest who have no alternative to wage cutting and job cutting, and who therefore "agree in principle" to everything the BSC wants.

In most plants the local representatives haven't come up with anything better.

We have, for instance, union leaders at Ebbw Vale putting forward a plan for cutting staff wages more than shop floor workers' wages, in order to get the savings the Corporation wants. The AUEW convenor at Ebbw, Graham Healey, has said "I think our workers would be prepared to do this [wage cutting] as long as they could see it was being done right across the board, with everyone in the industry according to their pay scale."

A policy like this divides the workers and plays right into the hands of the BSC. It accepts their case that workers should shoulder the burden for the crisis in the industry. But this is the very thing we have to reject. We have to start off from the standpoint of saying: we didn't get the industry into this mess, why should we suffer to get it out?

The biggest cause of division in the industry is the way each plant tends to argue for itself to be saved and to hell with the other plants. "Save Shotton", "Save East Moors", "Save Shelton"... Name the works and you have the slogan. This parochial approach is likely to be strengthened by the plant-by-plant discussions that will now take place. **Workers — unions militantly start arguing now for a national policy of no cutbacks and no wage cuts.**

...using to pay the full wage.
At present the steelworkers' full wage is made up of lots of different bonus and premium payments. We must demand that whatever alterations there are in shift working etc. there should be no loss of pay. Demanding that weekend working be kept is all right so long as it is weekend working that guarantees the pay. If we can fight for full pay without the weekend working so much the better.
Our policy can be summed up in the words, cut the hours, not the jobs; no cutbacks; no loss of pay. That isn't a policy for Parliament, it is policy for a fight with no holds barred against the BSC. In the service of that policy we need every weapon in the workers' arsenal: the strike, the flying picket, the plant occupation.

...that the costing and pricing of the plant's profitability shows up on the Board divert attention away from the Board's same Finniston's figures for South Wales, piled out another barrow-load of

...ence in their Worker Directors may confirm the figures. Of course, they

...at Steel House and the various plant systems is useless for getting such

...BSC open the books. They must be part of the planning, accounting and this isn't for information only. It is so management's plans.

BSC and ISTC get together on dummy-run

SOME 220,000 steelworkers are wondering what the new sell-out by their unions will mean in practice. 2,900 of them know already.

They are the workers at Staffordshire's Round Oak works at Brilerley Hill, where the ISTC and BSC have gone through a dummy-run of the new agreement.

Round Oak works is owned jointly by BSC and Tube Investments. After a hefty capital spending programme, it was found that orders were down to 50%, and that the guaranteed week agreement was going to come out expensive.

With the agreement of the ISTC, the guaranteed week was suspended temporarily and the workers laid off for periods of up to a week. With wages dropping to nothing and make-up money going for a burton, the ISTC and BSC and Tube Investments called a fourth party into the plant: the local security office. They agreed to make hardship payments to laid-off workers.

The press cover-up of the whole...
...and no wage cuts.



Pierre Jemayel (centre), leader of the fascist Phalange

War in the Lebanon... FRUITS OF IMPERIALISM

THE CIVIL WAR now raging in Lebanon is no more a simple 'religious war' than is the conflict in Northern Ireland. It is a direct result of the division of the Middle East by Britain and France.

Historically the Lebanon has always been linked to Syria — for many centuries they were closely connected under the Arab Caliphate and then the Turkish Ottoman Empire. A separate Lebanon did not come into existence until it was artificially carved out of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the last century, creating an enclave under French control with a Christian governor.

As the economy of the Syrian and Lebanese area developed, France increased its influence, until at the start of the First World War these areas were regarded as being in the French 'sphere of influence'.

But Arab nationalist sentiment was growing; during the First World War, there was a widespread belief in the area that the Nationalists would be rewarded for their support of British and French imperialism in the war by the declaration of an Arab independent state covering the area of 'Greater Syria', including the Lebanon.

Secret

They were to be cruelly disappointed. The secret Sykes Picot agreement of 1916 between Britain and France divided the whole area into British and French spheres of influence. And this laid the basis for the decisions of the League of Nations in 1920, which divided up the Middle East into a series of artificial states under French and British 'protection'.

To the Arabs, the creation of the

states of Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Palestine and Iraq appeared as an absurdity contrary to all historical, cultural and religious traditions.

The Lebanese state set up by the French contained many different religious and ethnic groups. The most important were the Maronite Christian sect and the Moslem Sunni community. The Maronites constituted the majority of the population, and held the key positions in the economy and the government. Just as "Northern Ireland" was carved out of Ireland to give the Protestant minority a gerrymandered majority in their own artificial statelet, so in Lebanon the divide-and-rule tactic placed the Maronites in a dominant position within a carefully selected 'constituency'.

Strikes

Between the wars, Arab nationalist feelings continued to rise; general strikes and uprisings forced a series of concessions from the French, especially in Syria. By the end of the War, Lebanon was virtually an independent state, although the French retained control of the Army. After a last-ditch attempt by the French in 1945 to regain control (which included landing a contingent of troops in Beirut), France finally conceded total independence under a government headed by Bishara al-Khoury as President.

Al-Khoury was the leader of the Maronites, and also of a nationalist liberal party, the Constitutional Bloc, in which Moslems participated. Following the granting of independence, the Constitutional Bloc drew

up a constitution which established a form of 'power-sharing' between the Christian and Moslem communities. The government was to receive its support from local 'chiefs' who controlled various parts of the country through traditional religious and social relationships. The largest community, the Maronites, were to have the post of President, and the Sunni Moslems that of Prime Minister.

With a new rise in Arab nationalism, this uneasy balancing act became increasingly difficult. After the 1952 Egyptian revolution Lebanon began to polarise between Lebanese nationalists (mainly Christian and right wing) and Arab nationalists (mainly Moslem and left leaning).

This polarisation was the root of the present conflict.

Reflecting the sharpening divisions, al-Khoury was replaced by the more partisan Maronite leader Camille Chamoun, who in 1957 accepted the Eisenhower Doctrine giving the USA the right to interfere in the Middle East to 'protect it from foreign subversion'.

Chamoun's opponents formed an opposition called the National Front, which was repressed and driven underground by Chamoun. But the formation of the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria in 1958 brought 'Nasserism' to the very frontiers of the Lebanon, and when an oppositionist newspaper editor was assassinated in that year, it sparked off an insurrection led by the National Front.

All the Moslem areas became armed rebel strongholds receiving arms from Syria; the Lebanese army refused to intervene. Its commander, General Chehab — a Christian 'moderate' — defined the role of the army as being simply to 'hold the ring' for the combatants. Although the majority of the officers were Christian, and therefore sympathetic to Chamoun, most of the rank and file soldiers were Moslem. Obviously Chehab was worried by the possibility of a rift in the army.

Marines

As the insurrection was continuing, the pro-US regime of Nuri Said in Iraq was overthrown and replaced by an Arab nationalist government. The US, fearing the complete loss of its influence in the area, landed 10,000 Marines in Lebanon and forced through an agreement which gave some concessions to the Moslems whilst preserving the Maronite domination of the Lebanon.

General Chehab was installed as President, and tried to conciliate the Moslem community. But it wasn't possible, then as now, to resolve the basic conflict between the wealthy, pro-imperialist Christian community and the poor Arab nationalist Moslem community.

Eighteen years later, the conflict continues. In the last few years an added impetus to the Moslem struggle to gain equal rights has been the fact that they now constitute a majority of the population (through higher birth rate and by the addition of the Palestinian refugees), but still only have minority rights.

The fighting is not, then, really a matter of religious differences, but comes from a situation in which the majority of the population — defined by their religion, but cohering together for other reasons as well — are deprived of even their full bourgeois democratic rights. It is our duty to support them in the fight for these rights against the reactionary Christian elements and their

Phalange aim: 'Crush Palestine's freedom struggle'

THE CONFLICT between the Maronites and the Moslems in the Lebanon has been heightened since 1967 by the presence in Lebanon of the Palestinians, who were driven out of what remained of Palestine (then under Jordanian rule) by the Israeli occupation during and after the 1967 June war.

Most Lebanese were sympathetic to the refugee Palestinians; left wing Moslem leader Kamal Jumblatt (a founder of the opposition National Front) argued that the Lebanese should give all possible support to the Palestinian guerrillas. But the wealthy Maronite leaders such as Chamoun and Pierre Jemayel wanted the guerrillas excluded from the country.

During 1968, Israel bombed and attacked various parts of the Lebanon for 'harbouring' Palestinian guerrillas. These raids have continued to the present day, being particularly focussed on the border areas where the Palestinian refugee camps are, but also including an Israeli commando raid on Beirut.

MILITIA

With the defeat of the Palestinian forces in Jordan during 'Black September' 1970, many more Palestinians found their way to the Lebanon after being driven out of Jordan into Syria. By the early 1970s the forces of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the Lebanon were too strong to be defeated by the Lebanese army, and it was at this point that the right wing Christian Phalange formed

its own militia to combat the forces of the guerrillas.

The Palestinians since 1970 have used the Lebanon as their main base for operations against Israeli-occupied territory. The Israelis have responded by stepping up their attacks on the refugee camps, often wiping out dozens of women and children and destroying hundreds of homes in reprisal for a single Israeli death. The Moslem nationalists and socialists, led by Jumblatt, called for a restructuring of the Lebanese state to give power to the Moslems and provide military support for the Palestinians by boosting the strength of the Lebanese army.

REACTION

The terrified reaction of the Maronite community to this has been to elect the present President, Franjeh, who promised 'strong government' and an end to the presence of the Palestinian guerrillas. To achieve this he has been forced to rely on the Phalangist militia.

Now, with the setbacks suffered by the Phalangists at the hands of the Palestinians and their supporters, he has turned to the Lebanese army for support.

If Franjeh and the right wing are successful in winning the present war, it will not only guarantee the maintenance of the sectarian Lebanese state, but will be yet one more blow against the Palestinian people — a blow from which they will find it very difficult to recover.

As Langwith pit faces closure, miners are saying: **No return to the '60s!**

Q — Why do you think the miners voted to accept the £6 limit?

A — Well, in the first place there is the miners' traditional loyalty to the Labour Party. That's still a big factor. But there was also the way the ballot was held. The members were balloted shortly after the pit holidays when collieries are closed on a staggered basis to ensure continuity of production. It was done when the pits were in a state of disarray, and there was a minimal time for discussion or campaigning against the pay limit. The miners were overwhelmed by the joint propaganda drive of the Government, the TUC, the Press and the NEC right wing. And frankly, I don't think the split in the Union put forward a coherent policy in terms of the need for the whole working class to oppose the pay limit. They just said miners shouldn't have their pay limited, and many men saw that as posing the danger of becoming isolated from other workers.

Also, many miners genuinely believed the Government's pledge that the limit would cut unemployment.

Q — What's changed since the ballot was taken? Is there a different attitude now?

A — Well, for a start the loyalty to the Labour Party has taken a big battering. You hear miners say they prefer a Tory government because

received repeated assurances of full employment, is beginning to look shaky. With 32 million tons of coal lying on the floor in various places and stocks going up by 2 million tons a month, some miners are beginning to be apprehensive about their jobs, and perhaps with good reason.

JR — Do you think there's a possibility of pit closures?

SA — The miners still have some memories of pit closures in the '50s and '60s, which was a comparable time as far as coal stocks went. Despite Joe Gormley's protestations and soothing words, the rank and file still view mounting coal stocks with trepidation.

JR — Are they in fact justified in their fears?

SA — At Langwith Colliery in Derbyshire there has been a consistent struggle against closure for some months. This has now come to a head with the NCB announcing that they are not prepared to keep it open any longer. The union contends that there are at least three years of coal reserves there. The NCB doesn't try to disprove this, but maintains that to extract it would be 'uneconomical' (the bogey word of the '60s). They claim for instance that the other seams in the area are too dusty and that dust extraction equipment would cost too much.

JR — What action has the NUM taken?

SA — The Derbyshire area had a total overtime ban in protest at the closure and called for a national ban. But the NEC of the Union have called off this action while they negotiate with the NCB to get the Board to take tests at the pit. So, for the present, this action has stopped.

JR — Why should the threat to this pit be seen as a threat of possibly more widespread closures?

SA — There is a feeling that the NCB may be using Langwith, which is a 'borderline case', as a test case to set a precedent. The NCB's press statements about discoveries of coal in the Vale of Beaver in Leicestershire also indicate that they intend to man any workings in that area with miners from Notts. and elsewhere in the East

Midlands. The Notts. area for one is certainly not overmanned at present, so the only way they could get an experienced workforce from this area is by closing or running down existing pits.

JR — What do you think should be done to stop such moves?

SA — The Langwith struggle should be supported at all costs, even if on the unofficial basis given that the NUM leadership may be unprepared to do anything to embarrass the Labour Government. If necessary, all-out

strike action should be strongly considered.

If even then we are unsuccessful in keeping the pit open, pickets should be deployed to prevent the NCB moving capital assets like expensive machinery and so on. This struggle is not only one against possible future unemployment, but also a challenge to the divine right of NCB bureaucrats, many who have never even seen a pit, never mind worked down one, to toy with the livelihoods of working people in order to balance their capitalist account books.



Photo by John Sturrock (Report)

Steve Abbott of Notts. NUM talks to James Rogers

then the union fights to defend us. People are also saying there should be another ballot.

It's now clear to miners that far from cutting unemployment, the period since the introduction of the £6 limit has seen unemployment soaring. Even the mining industry, which has

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

OUR DEMANDS

● **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 exploits property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism 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.

● 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.

● 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-marketiers 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.

RACIST LYNCH- GANGS BUSY IN NORTH LONDON

ONE MAN threatened with a 12-bore shotgun on his way home from work. Three teenagers injured by shotgun blasts from a passing car. A man threatened with a pistol from a car which pulled up beside him in the street. Another youngster beaten up by a gang of six men and left unconscious in the street.

If it had happened in Belfast or South Armagh you might have heard about it, especially if it can be used to argue the need for Britain's army of occupation to be there as a "peace-keeping" force.

But these attacks happened in London. The victims were all black, the attackers white. And these vicious attacks are just a few of an increasing number being made on black people by racist thugs.

Lu Garvey, a North London youth worker, gives this account: "A grey Cortina drove up from behind and slowed down a few feet from me. When I looked round I saw three white men. The one in the front passenger seat was holding a shot-gun with the muzzle pointing at me through the window.

"Look at that nigger!" he said as the car drove up beside me and stopped. 'Look at that nigger!' he repeated while he turned to the driver who also laughed and said 'Nigger'. By this time I was looking down the barrel of the gun.

"The one holding the weapon turned to the driver and asked 'Should we do it?' but instead of answering to the question — whatever was meant by it — the driver began to chant 'Nigger!', 'Nigger!', 'Nigger!'. Then the other two including the man with the gun pointed at my face joined in, chanting 'Nigger!', 'Nigger!'."

Lu Garvey reckoned his life was saved from these hysterical racists by the arrival of a woman in the street; they drove off at great speed.

In Camden, three black school students (aged 14 and 15) were injured by a volley of shot fired at close range from a car. And a black New Southgate worker on his way home had a similar experience, when a Jaguar pulled up beside him and he found a gun pointing at him — followed by a stream of racist abuse.

The similar pattern of attacks points to a linking organisation. The National Front has included in its membership at least one man convicted of murdering a West Indian (Brian Hosie, who was carrying an NF membership card at the time of his arrest). Others have done time for violent attacks on immigrants.

One curious new element is the flavour in these incidents of American Southern States racism. (When one of the incidents was reported to the police, "the sergeant on duty told me as he stirred his cup of tea: 'You are lucky you were not in the United States. You would probably be dead by now.'") Films like *The Klansman* and *Mandingo* no doubt have their influence on people with minds sick enough to wish to emulate the Ku Klux Klan and thick enough to miss the films' condemnation of it.

But members of the Front or the British Movement won't have had to rely on the commercial distributors for their injection of such a virus. A visit was arranged last year for a Klan Grand Wizard, and the small fascist group the 'League of St. George' brought Dr. Edward Fields over here to speak. Dr. Fields is Secretary of the National States Rights Party, a political front for the Ku Klux Klan.

North Tyne Housing Campaign Calling all tenants

Destined to be remembered as the man who in the same breath told the nation "The Party's Over" and went out and bought himself a nice little place in the country, Anthony Crosland announced on January 7th the axing of another £83 million from government money for council house improvements, mortgages and the municipalisation of old private property. And that's on top of the cuts councils have already made.

During 1975, Labour-controlled North Tyneside Council had already exceeded all expectations in the

diligent and thorough way it went about doing the Government's bidding. It achieved:

- * Two rent rises (approx. 40% increase on all rents).
- * Dramatic cuts in the number of houses being built (original manifests 3,000 a year, latest capital plan only 600-1,000 a year).
- * Delays in slum clearance.
- * Complete axing of municipalisation programme.
- * Chopping of mortgages for working people wanting to buy older houses.
- And helped bring about massive

unemployment of building workers.

When faced with the question of why it has so viciously attacked the working people who put it into power, the council's only reaction has been to shrug its shoulders and say "What can we do — the Cuts have to be accepted."

At a meeting held in November in North Shields and attended by over 150 trade unionists, unemployed building workers, tenants' and residents' groups, as well as members of local Labour Parties, it was decided that if the Labour council wasn't prepared to stand up and fight for

decent housing, then working people had to do the job themselves.

Paul Davison, an unemployed building worker elected to the Campaign Committee, said "our aims are simple. We have been living in bad housing long enough and we won't stand by and see our chances of decent home vanish into thin air. We are campaigning to get North Tyneside Council to fight for modern homes for all.

The Committee serves to bring tenants, Labour Party members, building workers and all trade unionists together to fight for better housing conditions.

The Campaign Committee has demanded a meeting with the Labour Group of the Council over abandonment of any semblance of housing policy to meet the needs of working people.

It is also arranging meetings in many areas as possible, encouraging tenants and residents to join the fight. At present the campaign is going out to contact tenants and residents throughout North Tyneside who are:

- * living in unimproved council private houses;
- * living in delayed slum clearance;
- * on the housing waiting list and homeless;
- * living in old houses where landlords won't do repairs.

North Tyneside Housing Campaign would like to hear from any other groups fighting housing cuts elsewhere in the country. For copies of the Campaign's programme of demands and a report of the housing conference in North Shields, please write to North Tyneside Housing Campaign, 44 Alma Place, North Shields, Tyne wear.



8 axed cadet nurses start a fight-back

"THE hospital service in Manchester has taken a hammering with cuts over the last year. The closing of half the wards at Pendlebury Children's Hospital during the summer, the cancelling of the Manchester Royal Infirmary building programme, non-replacement of staff in many hospitals, are outstanding examples. Someone, somewhere, has got to say 'right, we've had enough'."

This is how Eddie Coyle, secretary of the Manchester Fight the Cuts Committee, describes the situation in Manchester's hospitals.

Now somebody has said — ENOUGH! The MFCC has called for a mass

picket outside Crumpsall Hospital, North Manchester, to demand the reinstatement of 8 sacked nursing cadets.

When the nurses were taken on they were told that if they got 3 'O' levels at Moston College they would be able to do SRN training. But during the year the requirement was raised to 5 'O' levels (even though they could only do 4 at the college!). Cadets without the 'O' levels usually go on to do SEN training — but the course has been cut.

The nurses were called in by management and asked to hand in their resignations, thus forfeiting their right to dole for 6 weeks...

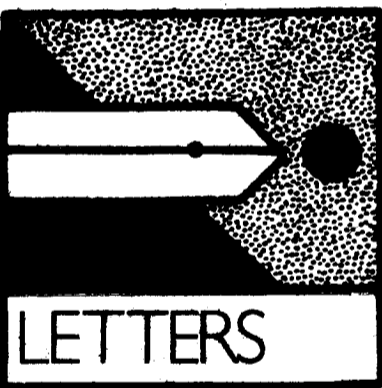
In their zeal to save a bit of money,

Crumpsall's management has picked on one of the most vulnerable sections of hospital workers — and done it in a particularly underhand way. Julie, one of the cadets who commented "They've had a vital two years off us when we've left school, like apprentices, and now we've just been sacked", sums it all up nicely: "Domestics, auxiliaries, and student nurses should all be on the picket, because if it's happening to us now, it's not going to stop there. They must support us to save themselves. It's because of the cuts they've sacked us — it'll be them next."

None of the cadets is older than 18, and their chances of a job in the present economic situation are grim. They are fighting to keep their jobs — and the Fight the Cuts Committee is with them all the way. It is appealing to all its supporters to invite a speaker from Crumpsall to a meeting in their workplace, the day of the picket, and for as many people as possible to turn up on the picket itself.

JACK SUTTON

(Contact MFCC at Union Office, St. Mary's Hospital, tel:224-9366 ex.400)



THIS 'LOVE' STINKS!

THANK you for last week's centre page on women's rights. It clearly showed how fragile is our grasp on reforms and advances as long as our basic position remains the same.

"We love and value our women workers, but are old fashioned enough to believe that men have homes and families to support and should be paid more than they are."

This "old fashioned" gent is Frank Robson, President of Leicester District Manufacturers Association, and his little homily followed closely on a wage settlement recently giving men £8 and women £3.50. Doesn't it stink!

Frank Robson and his class "love" to employ women as cheap labour. They "love" to send women out of the factory gate first because, with 'old fashioned' ideas like those above blowing people's minds, it makes a little shake-out so much easier.

To back all this up they drag out all the dusty old theories of maternal instinct and maternal deprivation, of man the hunter and breadwinner and woman the housekeeper working for pin money. That is, until they need us again in a boom or a war, and then the theories change: out goes maternal deprivation, in comes patriotism.

Rather than the sickly "love" of the bosses who exploit us and then shove us back home when it suits them, we need our class, men and women, united to say to hell with any low pay, any unemployment and any discrimination.

JANE BRUTON
LEICESTER

TUC recall: unjust to IMG — and not hard enough on them

Congratulations to the author of your article on the IMG in Workers Action No.2. To be unjust to the IMG — an organisation which rarely gets anything right — is quite an achievement. Yet the author manages it!

He (or she) is quite right that left trade union bureaucrats and Tribunites use the focus on a recall of the LP or TUC conference to evade the struggle here and now. And here and now is where it should be conducted. "There'll be revolutionary fire in the sky, by and by; meanwhile let's petition the powers that dominate and sell out the labour movement". Implicitly this approach means: do nothing until the great battalions are lined up and convinced.

The IMG certainly falls into this trap and deserves criticism.

But why counterpose fighting now to fighting for a recall of the 'parliaments' of the organised labour movement — the Labour Party Conference and the TUC Conference? The reformists counterpose the two because they wish to avoid fighting now. But we do not have to simply invert the reformists.

It is possible to fight now, mobilise now, raise demands now — and still fight for the recall of the TUC or Labour Party conference.

Obviously it is necessary to pick the right time to use a demand to recall the TUC. If we made that demand every week of the year, it would be no use to anyone! You may be right that it is inadvisable to agitate for the recall of the TUC right now — though the recent unemployment figures surely should cause a reaction even among the most complacent workers, denting the illusions of some who took as good coin the TUC leaders' talk of the £8 limit being necessary to save jobs.

But your article goes wrong in seeing the forces and the options involved as static quantities. There is great volatility in the working class. The same people who complied with the Labour Government 3 or 4 months ago can quickly come to feel very angry at the results. This can be reflected in elections for a recall TUC or LP conference.

In the labour movement nothing is static now — yet the image of being tried by the same judge, used in the article, implies absolutely fixed

quantities, attitudes and relationships.

A revolutionary organisation which calls for a TUC or LP conference doesn't just call for a given body of men and women to meet. If it is not bankrupt, its campaign for a conference is linked to a campaign for definite policies. People will support the call not because they have a mystic faith in the TUC or LP conferences, but because they support those policies and will fight to push them through the conference.

The revolutionary organisation does not petition. It fights. It advocates policies for action. And only on that basis does its call for a conference have any meaning.

Here your article lets the IMG off the

hook. The main thing wrong with the IMG is not their slogan for a recall of the TUC, but their flabbiness of policy. Often — as on the question of imperialist wars, of arms spending, of 'reflation', of public spending — generally, they lapse into glossing up the Tribunitic slogans with Marxist jargon. As the article does point out, clear policies of any sort have become secondary, for the IMG, to boosting the mirage of a great united-left 'movement' against 'the Wilson-Heak clique'.

Next time you attack the IMG, attack them where it hurts: in their policies (or lack of them...).

BERNARD JAMES
SOUTHAMPTON

NOT PEASANT...

IT'S GOOD to find in a non-ICL paper a friendly and on the whole accurate report on the rally in London to launch the International-Communist League. Perhaps it will seem ungracious, carping and pedantic to make a couple of corrections.

Your reporter Hudson Pace quotes me as talking of "mainly-peasant revolutions (such as China)". Probably I used such a descriptive phrase. However, in cold print, in isolation, the bald empirical description must appear as more than it was in the speech, and be taken as a theoretical explanation of these revolutions. As such, the phrase quoted is a piece of theoretical nonsense, which NO-ONE in the ICL would agree with.

Second, the outline of my exposition on the question of the revolutionary party most probably accurately records a one-sided account in which 'bent the stick' against the instrumental view of the revolutionary party. My fault, not Hudson Pace's.

Could I correct myself, however? The revolutionary party is not just ideological combat grouping. It is fundamentally that, but not JUST that. It is concerned with administrative tasks all the way from organisational publication of leaflets to the preparation for armed insurrection. The central point I was trying to make was that all such tasks flow from a party which is regulated by its ideological function.

SEAN MATGAM

£200 A MONTH FIGHTING FUND

ADD ON to the £72.33 that came last week £13 from a Supporters Group in Nottingham, £30 from a group of teachers in the East London Supporters Group, and £60 from a student who has just got her grant. That makes an amazing £175.33 in just two weeks towards this month's target. Post now to hit the £200 by Saturday, to 49 Carnac Street, London SE27. Cheques payable to WORKERS ACTION please.

Chrysler plans meet resistance from ASTMS

by Dave Hughes

fighters against compulsory redundancy. To do this they must put the question of factory occupations, and of support for section occupations, back on the agenda.

There must be no covering for jobs left by workers volunteering for redundancy. Sections implementing "no covering" must have the automatic backing of shop stewards' committees and the combine committee.

But Chrysler workers face a whole series of problems in addition to the threat of redundancy. Policies must be hammered out now to deal with them.

Management intend to force up track speeds and manning levels. They do this, of course, to get as much out of every worker as possible. This will pose the question of who will control speeds and manning levels. Not only

must Chrysler workers resist all speed-up, all reduction in manning levels. They must fight to place them directly under shop stewards' control. If there is not enough work, then the workers themselves should share out the work and set the pace of work, fighting management all the way for no loss of earnings.

Chrysler workers face also a package of 'participation' arrangements brought in by the company before the redundancies. This should be opposed.

The workers of Chrysler need to know what is going on the company, in each plant, nationally and internationally. The House of Commons Select Committee has clearly failed to unearth the real nature and history of the deal struck between the company, the Labour Government, and the Trade Union leaders.

That's why the opening to workers' representatives of the accounts, the

minutes and the meetings of management and government is vital. But Chrysler workers need that information not so that they can participate and help in the company. They need it to protect their own interests, to arm the shop floor to defend itself.

Support the strikers at Blackmans

The strike at Keith Blackmans, Tottenham, reported in last week's *Workers Action* is still going strong. The strike is still very solid, apart from a couple of non-union blacklegs and the ASTMS workers. At a mass meeting last Friday the strikers decided to increase the pressure by intensifying the pickets outside the factory, and by sending deputations to other GEC plants around the country for support. If one of the larger GEC factories can be persuaded to call a Combine Committee meeting to organise national support, it will be a very important boost for the Blackmans workers.

The attitude of the management still remains intransigent. They have told the local union officials that they 'intend to win this one' — no doubt remembering their defeat last May. One of the tactics they are using to defeat the strike is to deny the strikers their right to Social Security.

Despite the fact that the strike was started by the management's lockout on January 14th, the bosses have told the Social Security that it is not a lockout but a strike! On this flimsy pretext the Social Security have refused to give the strikers any money.

Despite these problems the mood of

That is why we argue for the complete independence of Chrysler shop floor organisation from management. Chrysler workers have no interest in being drawn into helping manage the weakest link in Britain's car industry. They do have an interest in building up their power to say yes or no to what they produce and how they produce it. They do have an interest in controlling speeds, hiring and manning levels.

Fighting on these policies, a new leadership in Chrysler can lead a battle against the sackings that are on the way.

the strikers is one of confidence. They are determined to stick it out until they win. What's more, they are widening their demands to include 'no redundancies' as well as the reinstatement of the sacked shop steward.

Blackmans is an important fight in the struggle to preserve the strength of union organisation and against planned redundancies. *Workers Action* urges all its readers to give any possible support to this strike. Donations and messages of support can be sent to Jim Pickering, AUEW, Suite 3, Second Floor, 128-136 High Street, Edgware, Middlesex.

Pete Smith (AUEW)

Last Sunday the Indian Workers Association of Great Britain organised a 2000-strong rally and demonstration "to launch a massive campaign against the continued imprisonment and torture of political prisoners by Indira Gandhi's regime". In India strikes are illegal and any protests have been swiftly and violently suppressed. The demonstration marched to Downing Street and to India House, where a letter of protest was handed in.

Andy Swift

NOW THEY'VE GOT A RESIDENT SCAB AT SAYERS

Twenty workers at Sayers Confectioners, Lorenzo Drive, Liverpool, engineering section, have been out on strike since November 10th in protest against management victimisation of an AUEW shop steward and two other AUEW members. Also but with them are 16 van drivers (TGWU) who were sacked following an earlier victimisation dispute.

The management's drive against shop stewards at the bakery seems to be connected with the workers' setting up a Joint Trade Union Consultative Committee involving all four unions there, AUEW, EPTU, Sheet Metal Workers, and TGWU. The history of Sayers' attempts to weaken the organisation of the workers goes back to March 1975. Photocopied notes from an inner management meeting showed a long term perspective to solve the "Electrical Union problem" by getting rid of "Harry" (Rimmer, the EPTU steward).

The next stage in Sayers' assault on the trade union structure was in June to November 1975. TGWU steward Frank Smith was sacked after he was convicted on a dubious theft charge concerning 76p worth of food. Rro. Smith claimed that Sayers had framed him in order to find an excuse to sack

him for his activities as shop steward. (He was prominent in the planning of the Joint Trade Union Committee.)

The Sayers van drivers then decided to strike from November 5th until Frank Smith was reinstated. They were soon joined by the engineering workers. Unfortunately the strikers were split and intimidated by a management "return to work or face the sack" letter, and most of the drivers and all the engineers returned to work a couple of days later.

But following the Monday return to work of the engineers, Sayers sacked the AUEW steward, Bro. Connolly, and two other AUEW fitters, on a technical interpretation of their "return to work" letter. The engineering workers walked out and have been on official strike ever since, demanding the three AUEW men's jobs back.

Sayers remain as stubborn as ever and are using assorted scabbing methods to beat the 24 hour picket line. They are employing NORSEC security guards and dogs, and even have one scab fitter living on the premises in a caravan!

The strikers ask fellow trade unionists to black Sayers goods in canteens and shops, honour their picket line, and send donations and messages of support to: Sayers Engineering Strike Committee, do Harry Rimmer, 118 Allerford Rd, Liverpool 12.

Jon Riley

Increased productivity makes 700 clothing workers 'redundant'

Seven hundred clothing workers in Darlington and Gateshead are to be made redundant on Friday February 13th. The Leeds-based United Drapery Stores, who own the 'Alexandre' factories, are to close them. According to the owners, the reasons for closure are: "increased productivity in the group's larger units".

The union officials are playing a particularly scandalous role in the affair. Instead of leading a resolute fight against the closures, they are busy making excuses for the behaviour of the UDS bosses. For example, Albert Burton, a Middlesbrough based official, speaking of modernisation at the John Collier factories, produced this gem: "This capital investment has to be encouraged so that the industry can meet foreign competition, but it is difficult to explain the meaning of progress to 700 people who have lost their jobs".

All the officials are doing — with more zeal for "meeting foreign competition" than saving workers' jobs — is checking in local shops to see how many foreign clothes are sold.

Workers at the Alexandre factories must know that these antics of the union officials will not save their jobs, or the jobs of any group of workers in the clothing industry. The only way to save these jobs is for the workers to occupy the factories, demand that there be no redundancies, and call on local trade unionists for support.

Lol Duffy

Cardiff cuts protest

40 people picketed the offices of the South Glamorgan County Council in Cardiff on Friday in protest against the proposal of the Education Committee to cut £771,000 off spending on education. Represented on the picket were delegates from the students' unions of all the main colleges in Cardiff, as well as from the NUT, ATTI, ASTMS and the South Glamorgan branch of NALGO. Anne Armstrong, president of Rumney Technical College, told *Workers Action* why she and other students from the college were supporting the picket.

"We were delegated to come here by all the students. The college facilities are totally inadequate. We've got a canteen that takes 114 students, but there are 900 to 1000 in the college. We think education is a right and we are against all cuts in social expenditure. This should not be used as a solution to the crisis".

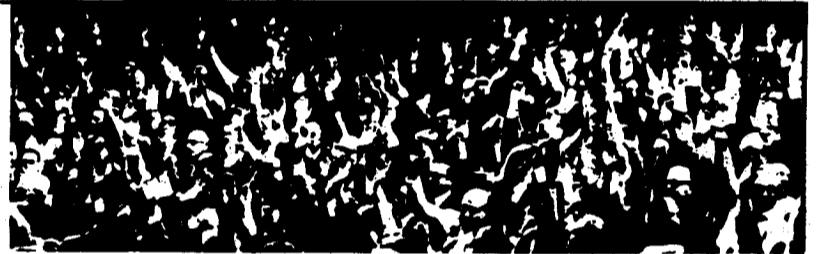
Pete Keenlyside

Nursery sit-in

Three years ago Enfield students were the first students at a Polytechnic to win the right to a nursery. This was done by seizing the director's office and turning it into a creche. Now the college authorities are trying to take this away from the students.

They have done this, not by closing the nursery, but by raising the fees so that only very rich parents can afford it. The rates were already high, being £2.95 a day — now they are being raised to £4.95! Over the academic year this is far more than the grant of a married woman student. The college authorities refused to negotiate, and barred from the nursery one child whose mother could not pay the increase.

After a students' occupation, that one child has been readmitted — but unfortunately the higher rates still stand.



DON'T SIGN MODEL RULE 14

In the last issue of *Workers Action* we reported how the South East Regional TUC had refused to support the Women and the Cuts conference.

Last September, after the South East Regional TUC had supported the No Cuts in Education march, they came under pressure from the TUC General Council to drop support for activities which might embarrass the Labour government. At that time all the General Council could do was apply pressure. But now they have managed to enforce their wishes on the Women and the Cuts conference, despite the fact that the South East Regional TUC has supported the Working Women's Charter and is sympathetic to the conference.

The General Council have done this by altering the rules of Trades Councils and TUC regional bodies. Under the old Rule 14 Trades Councils were prevented from "co-operating with or subscribing to the funds of the Communist or Fascist Parties or any subsidiary organisation of those parties, or any individual organisation which has been proscribed by the General Council". Now the General Council has circulated a new Rule 14. Co-operation or support is ruled out for "any organisation whose policy or activity is contrary to those of Congress". What's more, the only political party the Trades Council can relate to is the local Labour Party.

The last few years have seen many Trades Councils support important fights against Labour government and TUC policy — like the 26th November anti-unemployment demonstration which was sponsored by the North West Regional TUC. Len Murray sent out a circular denouncing that 26th November demonstration. Now the TUC bureaucrats have resolved on harsher action to restrain militancy.

All Trades Councils should protest at this further restriction on their rights

THE UNIONS



to decide on policy and action. Unfortunately there will be many who will simply accept the TUC's document. In many areas members of the Communist Party will be arguing for acceptance of the document, for it removes a stigma from them and gives them ammunition to use against the revolutionary left. Manchester Trades Council, for example, has agreed to accept the new rule in the spirit of "it doesn't really matter".

It is possible that some left wing Trades Councils may be able to accept the new rule 14 in words and ignore it in practice. But the rule gives the right wing in the trade unions and the bureaucrats of the TUC an extremely powerful and dangerous weapon. Other Trades Councils should follow Haringey, which has sent a letter expressing their disgust to the TUC and agreed to fight the ruling through the Greater London Association of Trades Councils.

Management sacking plans are meeting resistance in the Coventry plants of Chrysler. 800 white collar ASTMS members have been operating a work to rule and overtime ban in opposition to all compulsory redundancies. This is likely to cause the company problems. ASTMS members supervise the paying out of the redundancy money!

Millwrights and electricians at the Stoke plant have made it clear that they will accept no redundancies and are prepared to fight them.

The Chrysler management have not won yet. New elections are set for shop stewards and convenors. They are to fill the gaps left by those "redundancy volunteers" who led the fight to accept the deal and then walked out of the plants.

The tide can be turned by the election of a new shop floor leadership in the plants committed to fighting redundancies with policies in the interests of all Chrysler workers against management.

It is vital that the new leadership

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.

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 W C2.

WVC national conference planning meeting: 7.45pm, Thursday 5th February, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, London N1. All Charter groups and supporting organisations invited to attend to discuss perspectives for conference.

Rochdale WVC group: Teach-in on the anti-discrimination and equal pay laws. 7.30pm, Sunday 1st February, at the Labour Party Rooms, 14 Smith Street, Rochdale.

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

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.

Manchester Angola Solidarity Committee programme of events: Tuesday 27th January, 7.30pm — public meeting with film and exhibition, at the West Indian Centre, Carmoor Rd, Manchester 13; Friday 6th February, 8pm — Manchester Centre for Marxist Education meeting at the Star and Garter, Fairfield St, Manchester; also midday meeting at Salford University Union (27th January), Manchester Poly 29TH January), and Manchester University Union (2nd February). For further details, contact Manchester ASC, c/o Shanti, 178 Oxford Rd, Manchester 13; phone 273 5111 ext. 56.

North London Workers Action readers meeting: The fight against cuts and unemployment. 7.30pm, Wednesday 28th January, at 'Centreprise', 136-8 Kingsland High Rd, London E8.

Young Socialists day school on Portugal: 11am to 6pm, Saturday 14th February, at North London Poly Students Union Film Theatre, Holloway Rd, London N7. Sponsored by Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee, Angola Solidarity Committee, and Hornsey, Norwood, and Vauxhall Y.Ss. Admission 20p: all welcome.

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