

WOMEN'S ACTION

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"They simply went crazy, beating the marchers, tearing at their hair, hitting them anywhere with sticks and truncheons."

This is how a witness described last Friday's attack by the police on the Right to Work march. In a savage and unprovoked assault on the marchers and their supporters the police injured many and arrested forty four of them.

The next day the press described an 'attack by the marchers on the police! Their sympathies were entirely for the supposed police 'victims' of a 'riot started by the marchers'.

These same marchers had walked all the way from Manchester without a single arrest. As they pointed out, they were looking forward to a rally the following day. Are we expected to believe that a mile from the end of the march these eighty-odd tired marchers suddenly went berserk and threw themselves onto a busload of police?

The attack came as the marchers were walking back to the main road from the Staples Corner fly-over site. As they turned off the ramp onto the Edgware Road they were met by a group of police. According to a police spokesman the following day, all the police were trying to do was to prevent the marchers 'putting themselves at risk' in the traffic. And how did they go about ensuring the marchers' safety?

Fight

Frank Jones, who was carrying the lead banner, was suddenly attacked and knocked to the ground. Police moved in and fighting broke out. Within seconds police reinforcements came charging out of West Hendon police station near Staples Corner and laid into the marchers. Finally the march was allowed to re-assemble and it started off again.

As it approached the police station more police ran from a coach parked opposite the station and rushed the marchers. There was another fight and five people were arrested.

Again the marchers reassembled and moved off along the rest of the route. Ahead, the police had blocked the road with a bus and vans. As the marchers neared the road block, they were again attacked. This time the police were clearly aiming to get John Deason, the march organiser. They waded in, truncheons swinging. Deason was arrested and badly beaten up. Other marchers were arrested and also beaten as they were taken away.

Paul Bryden was hit on the knee by a night-stick. He's now limping with a dislocated cartilage. Mike Lynch, an unemployed miner, was beaten unconscious. Bobby Buirds collapsed as he was put in the police van.

The presence of numerous police officers on the scene shows that this was not just a case of a few wild men among the police. And the marchers were attacked three times. It seemed to be a concerted attempt to intimidate and harass. Even after the march

COPS GO ON THE RAMPAGE



Photo REPORT

ended, the harassment went on. Four injured marchers were released on bail from Golders Green police station and went to the Royal Free Hospital for a check-up. They were followed there by the police, who asked them to go back to the station for further questioning...

A variety of charges has been brought against the victims of this police attack. There could be heavy fines, even jail sentences. A defence campaign has been set up.

WORKERS ACTION stands in full support of the victims of this premeditated assault and battery by the police. Despite the political disagreements we have about the value of the march itself and the policies of its supporters, we stand firmly behind the defence campaign for these arrested brothers and sisters. The labour movement must not allow this attack to go unchallenged.

All charges against the marchers should be dropped. The trade union movement should mount a full inquiry into the incident. And we should demand that charges be brought against the real 'men of violence', the police.

Inside

Fighting the dole in the 20's

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The way forward against unemployment

Friday 26th March. Pre-Labour Movement Assembly meeting jointly sponsored by International Communist League, International Marxist Group, and Workers' League. "Strategy against unemployment - The Revolutionary Alternative". 8pm at the 'Albany', near Great Portland Street station. (Not the 'Pindar of Wakefield' as advertised last week)

10 days to save Trotter

FOR two years, Desmond Trotter has been in jail in Dominica under sentence of hanging for a crime he did not commit.

Trotter was the leader of the radical Movement for a New Dominica, which organised black youth and workers on the island to fight against the repressive regime there.

When a white tourist died during a carnival, the police used this as an excuse to frame Trotter on a murder charge. All the evidence against him was rigged or planted. The body of the supposed murder victim did not have a bullet wound when it was brought into hospital. This did not deter the police - they still alleged that Trotter shot the man!

Many independent witnesses testified that Trotter was confined to his bed with a severe attack of asthma when the man he is alleged to have shot died.

The campaign to free Trotter has received massive support in the Caribbean and among the black community in Britain. Dominica is an Associate State of Britain. This gives Britain responsibility over defence and external affairs.

Despite this connection, the British government has refused to intervene. In the words of Labour MP Sid Bidwell, the "need only to raise their little finger to stop the hanging". Yet the Foreign Office has consistently denied that the government has any responsibility in this affair.

Last Thursday one of Trotter's last chances of a reversal of his sentence was quashed. He had appealed to the Privy Council, but they refused to even consider his appeal.

His last hope now is that the governor of the island, Sir Louis Cools-Lartigue, will exercise his prerogative and commute the death sentence. But this seems unlikely without pressure from the British government.

As Trotter's appeal was being rejected, new confirmation came of the nature of the frame-up. The main prosecution witness was a 16-year old barmaid, Camilla Francis; coached in her evidence by the police, she claimed that, though she had never met Trotter before, he boasted to her of having killed the tourist.

Now she has said that she will retract her evidence if she is given immunity from prosecution for her perjury.

She was the only witness brought forward by the police. Obviously at the last moment she has got cold feet and does not want to be responsible for the death of an innocent man.

Trotter's trial was a farce from beginning to end. Its sole purpose was to remove this leader of the Movement for a New Dominica from the political scene. Yet even from jail Trotter still carries on the fight. His letters from prison have explained his case and the cause for which he and his brothers and sisters were fighting; and he has expressed his happiness - from the death cell - at the news of the victories of the MPLA in Angola.



If something isn't done quickly, the hangman's noose will end Trotter's fight. There has been some support from him from the labour movement. A number of MPs have pleaded his case. But it is still only a fraction of what is needed to secure his life and his freedom.

Time is rapidly running out. Less than a fortnight is left before the execution is carried out. If the labour movement does not act urgently it will be a passive collaborator in the murder of this young black revolutionary.

ACT NOW. Send resolutions and letters demanding that the British Government intervene to Ted Rowlands, Under Secretary for the Colonies, House of Commons, London SW1
Neal Smith

April 3rd: ALL OUT

IT IS LESS than two weeks now to the National Abortion Campaign demonstration on April 3rd.

Over 20,000 came out for the last NAC demonstration on June 21st last year, demanding "A Woman's Right to Choose", "Free Abortion on Demand", and the defeat of the James White Amendment, then before Parliament, which sought to restrict abortion facilities.

Since then the James White Amendment has lapsed with the end of the Parliamentary session. But Health Minister Barbara Castle accepted most of the proposals from the Select Committee set up to consider that Amendment. And the cuts in the National Health Service have also made it more difficult for women to get abortions.

Parliament has reconvened the Select Committee, opening the way to further restriction on abortion rights. This has given heart to anti-abortion organisations such as SPU and LIFE, which have stepped up their activities.

Several MPs with moderate liberal views on the abortion issue have withdrawn from the Select Committee in protest. They are giving some support to the project of an alternative committee to collect and distribute 'counter-information' on the abortion issue.

But the April 3rd demonstration is crucial in the fight back. Trade unionists and Labour Party activists, women and men, should work hard to make it even bigger than June 21st!

FRENCH LOCAL ELECTIONS GIVE THE LEFT A BOOST

THE RESULTS of the second round of the French cantonal elections show a pretty dismal picture for President Giscard d'Estaing and the motley collection of right wing parties that comprise his parliamentary majority.

Overall, the Union of the Left — the Socialist Party, the French Communist Party, and the Left Radicals — polled 52%. When the votes of the PSU (Unified Socialist Party) and the extreme left are added, the total left vote was 56.1%.

In the French electoral system, a candidate must obtain more than 50% of the vote to be elected on the First Round. Otherwise there is a Second Round with the bottom candidates eliminated. In the Second Round, the Union of the Left put up only one candidate in each seat, the best placed to win, while in the First Round each party stood separately. The Socialist Party gained from this and got 30.2% of the vote on the second round as against the CP's 17.6%. In the first round the SP got 26% and the CP 22%.

In a situation of Popular Front politics, the extreme-left has lost ground everywhere, except in the Antilles (Martinique and Guadeloupe). By contrast with the strong showing of the Union of the Left, the atomised nature of the French right was exposed. Only the Gaullists obtained more than 10% of the vote (11.6%). President Giscard d'Estaing's Independent Republicans obtained only 9%. The Socialist Party and the CP are now far and away the biggest political parties in France.

Swing

While the Socialist Party has been the major beneficiary of the swing to the left, the CP has made some significant gains. In the Paris region, it has won an absolute majority in the Regional Councils of Essonne and Val de Marne to add to its long-standing bastion of Seine-St Denis.

The Socialist Party's major gains have been in the South and in the Massif Central, where it has won control of ten Regional Councils. Even in a good year for the left — and this was its highest percentage of the vote since the Second World War — the government has managed to keep control of most in most of Northern

FRENCH STUDENTS

AFTER YEARS in the doldrums, the French student movement reared its head again last week with a nationwide student strike and two large demonstrations in Paris.

The students' anger was directed against proposed government reforms in the 'deuxieme cycle', the third and fourth years of a French university degree. Coming against the background of the government's substantial defeat in the cantonal elections of March 7th and 14th, a mounting wave of industrial action in support of wage claims by the trade unions, and massive discontent among the small peasants of the south, it has a more generalised significance as part of a growing movement of opposition to the Giscard d'Estaing government.

The government's new university reforms intend to make the "deuxieme cycle", highly competitive already by British university standards, even more competitive. In some faculties, notably teaching, where graduation depends on the availability of a job in the state education system, the number of posts for graduates is to be cut still further. Graduate underemployment is already chronic in many fields.

Last week, on the 17th and 18th March, the student union, UNEF, after more than a month of agitation, called a nationwide student strike. Although the response was uneven, the call was answered in higher education institutions throughout the

and Eastern France, including the major industrial regions of Alsace, Lorraine, Ardennes and Rhone. This reflects the fact that in North-Eastern France a considerable section of the working class continue to support the parties of the right, as they have traditionally done.

While the Regional Councils have little power under the highly centralised French system, the significance of the election results, as the first test of popular opinion since the election of Giscard d'Estaing as President, should not be underestimated. Coming against a background of economic difficulties and growing social discontent, they point to a tough period ahead for the government.

In the past two weeks, there have been two national rail strikes, a one day national strike of all government employees, a one-day national building workers' strike, and a one-day strike in the Paris transport system. Factory occupations are

country. Students unions in some institutions in the provinces extended the strike to the entire week.

On Wednesday 17th March, more than 10,000 Paris students demonstrated on the Left Bank. The government's response was predictable. The para-military special police force, the CRS, was called out, and the inevitable clashes occurred. In the area of St Germain de Pres barricades were erected and paving stones were exchanged for tear-gas grenades. The stench of tear-gas once again hanging over St Germain de Pres revived memories for many of the great days of May 1968.

Clashes

The following day provincial students joined their Paris comrades in an even bigger march, beginning from Gare St Lazare and marching to the Ministry of Education. More than 30,000 students were estimated to have taken part. More clashes occurred between students and CRS, but not on the same scale as on the previous day.

On both demonstrations the banners of the revolutionary left were prominent. Whether the students can maintain the momentum of the movement, only time will tell; but present indications are encouraging and the outlook for the government is ominous.

J-M PICARD



frequent and long-lasting. A wave of militancy can be seen in the Trade Unions' wage offensive, which is threatening to become a spring tide. In the face of this widespread popular discontent, there is free speculation, even on the right, as to how long the present shaky coalition Government can hold together.

J-M PICARD

ONE OF the key military positions in Beirut has fallen to left wing Muslim forces. After two days of fighting, they captured the Holiday Inn Hotel, a 26-storey building which dominates the Lebanese capital's sea-front. The Muslim forces were spearheaded by troops of the breakaway Lebanese Arab Army and supported by the militias of Kamal Jumblatt, the leader of the left wing Muslims.

This is a tremendous military and psychological boost for the Lebanese left and their Palestinian supporters, coming as it does after the support given to the right wing Maronite Christian president, Franjeh, by the Syrian government.

So far, all attempts to topple Franjeh have been blocked. The coup organised by Brigadier General Adhab two weeks ago has lost its impetus in the face of Syrian opposition.

At first, Adhab's demand for Franjeh's resignation met with widespread support. More than two thirds of the Lebanese parliament demanded that he step down immediately. Left wing leaders like Jumblatt, and the leader of the Lebanese Arab Army, Lt. Khatib, also came out on the side of Adhab.

However, it rapidly became clear that mere verbal threats were of no avail, as Franjeh continued to sit tight in the presidential Palace. This prompted Adhab and the LAA to launch an attack on the palace. They moved troops and armoured columns towards Beirut, but as they approached the city they were surprised to find themselves being confronted not only by troops loyal to Franjeh, but also by forces backed by Syria.

Attack

These troops were sections of the Palestine Liberation Army and Al-Saiqa — units of the Palestinian resistance which are supported, armed and directed by Syria. Adhab drew back from such a confrontation, and called off his attack.

With this Syrian support, Franjeh still clings onto power, despite the recent rise of a new wave of heavy fighting. It is quite clear that he has lost the support of the vast majority of the population. His administration has been notoriously corrupt and inefficient, and this has lost him support even among the rich Christian community from which he comes. Only the Maronite right wingers will be very sorry to see him go.

After the last round of fighting when Franjeh intervened on the side

LEBANON:

Syria

props

up

Franjeh

of the Falangist militias, his downfall seemed only a matter of time. Yet now the Syrian government is propping him up against the wishes of most Lebanese. Why are they doing this when they themselves would prefer him replaced by someone more sympathetic to the Muslims, who would involve the country more in a common front against Israel?

The reason is that the Syrians want to see him replaced peacefully and as smoothly as possible. If further fighting continues on a large scale, they fear that their influence will be undermined by more radical Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim groups. It was to forestall the possibility of a new escalation of the fighting that they acted to suppress Adhab's attack on the Palace.

Yet the tide is still flowing in the direction of the Muslim left wing. The capture of the Holiday Inn will strengthen the position of Jumblatt, Khatib and their allies, and make it more difficult for another Syrian compromise to be engineered.

The Syrian actions of the last week have dramatically shown the limits of their support for the Lebanese Muslims. They do want to draw them into a common front against Israel — but on Syrian terms and under Syrian control. To achieve this they are ready to aid, at least for the time being, a reactionary and discredited leader of the opposing forces.

Once again this underlines the lesson that the struggle to liberate Palestine cannot rely on the support of any of the Arab regimes — not even those like Syria which have maintained the most 'aggressive' anti-Israeli stance.

'Black majority rule? Never in a thousand years!' says Smith

HITLER envisaged his Third Reich enduring for a thousand years. Rhodesian premier Ian Smith wants his white racist regime to last for just as long.

After ten weeks of negotiation between Smith and the moderate African nationalist Joshua Nkomo, this was Smith's cynical and final summary on majority rule...

"I don't believe in black majority rule ever in Rhodesia — not in a thousand years".

Instead he wants to see "black and white working together", with, of course, the blacks doing the work and the whites ruling. In the end, all the talks have been reduced to this — the assertion that the white Rhodesian belongs on top with his boot on the African's neck.

The talking has finally stopped, and now the focus is on the guerilla campaign.

Guerillas

The leadership of the African nationalists has already swung into the hands of the guerilla leaders, Muzorewa and Magube. The willingness of black Zimbabweans to support the guerillas will be further increased by the collapse of the talks.

Muzorewa has now declared that the guerilla struggle will be stepped up, and the leaders of the African states next to Rhodesia have announced they will increase their

support to the guerillas. Even Kaunda of Zambia, who has consistently tried to suppress the guerilla struggle, has been pushed into declaring there is now no other alternative but all-out war on Rhodesia.

All-out war

South Africa will give only slight assistance to the settlers. Smith's last hope, and the one he is now avidly wooing, is Britain. But the British government has been unwilling to tie itself to the doomed white-supremacist regime.

According to Foreign Office statements, however, Britain will intervene — if only Smith will agree to majority rule. This forlorn hope is what inspired Wilson's endless negotiations with Smith at the time of UDI. Now Callaghan has tentatively suggested that Britain will drop economic sanctions if the

Smith government accepts the 'principle of majority rule'.

Of that there is no chance. Smith's latest statement shows this. But Callaghan's 'concern' totally overstretched itself in his announcement that he is prepared to offer aid to white Rhodesians who want to move to Britain or South Africa.

Our 'concern' — and our support — should be for the black Africans.

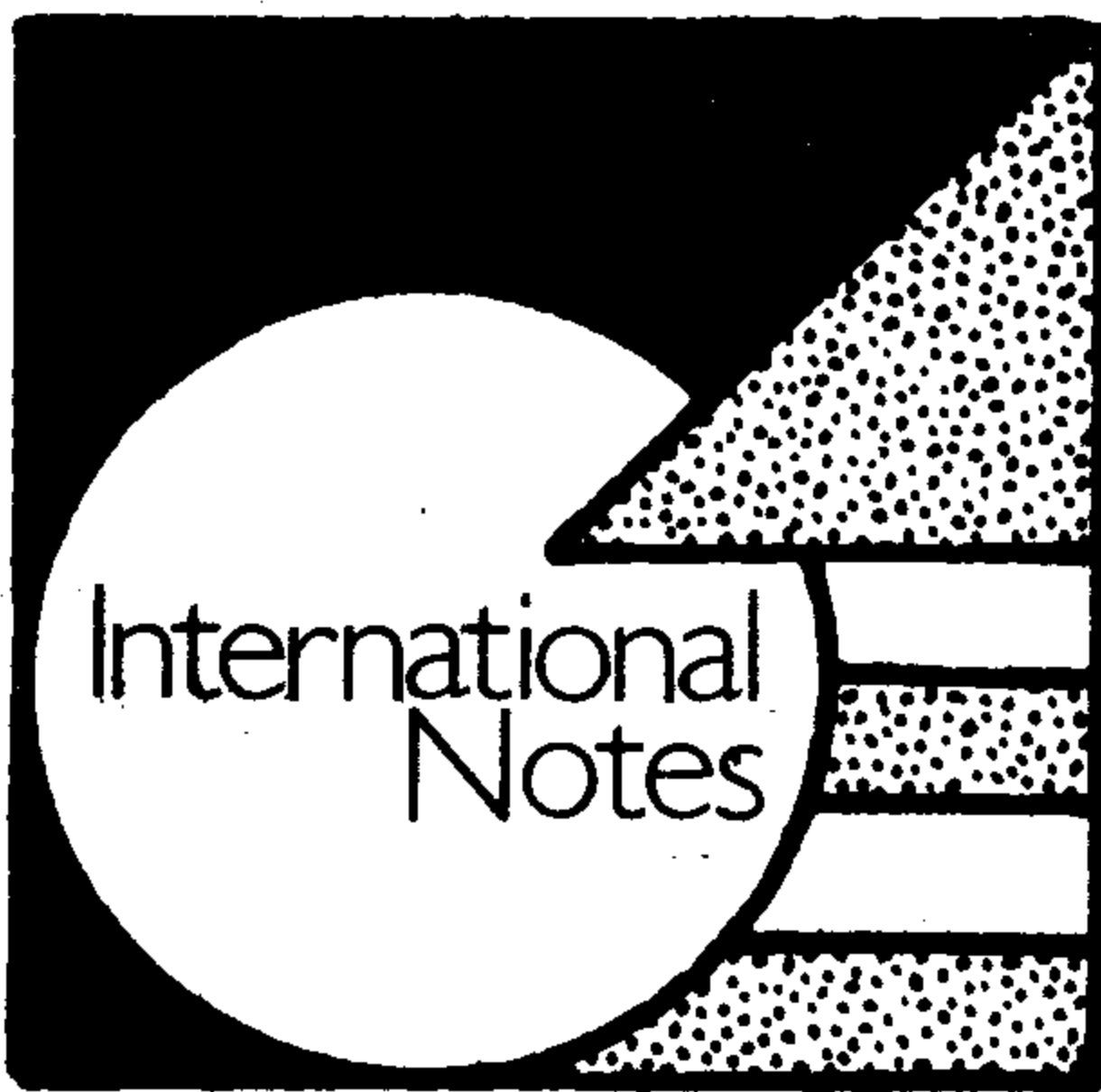


Bireh and Halhoul — have been placed under a curfew following clashes between students and the army.

The East Jerusalem strike is in solidarity with the actions of the students. The response of the occupying Israelis has been to warn the shop-keepers that if they did not re-open then they would be compulsorily closed for three months

under emergency regulations.

The events of the last few weeks should shatter any illusions socialists in this country may have about the 'democratic non-sectarian' nature of the Israeli state, and provide a powerful and tragic reminder that the Palestinians will only recover their country by the complete destruction of the Zionist regime.



Arab protest on West Bank

ON THE Israeli-occupied West Bank the demonstrations and protests reported in last week's WORKERS ACTION continue. At first most of the activities were led by school students, but now adult Arabs have been drawn into action. Last Thursday saw an almost complete strike of all Arab shops, cafes, and businesses in Arab East Jerusalem. Some shops in Hebron and other towns on the West Bank were also closed.

This follows the increasing repression of the school students by the Israeli army. The day before the strike, soldiers opened fire on demonstrators in Jericho, seriously wounding an 11-year old Arab boy. Three towns on the West Bank — Ramallah, El

Labour leadership race

IT HAS become almost a commonplace these days in the Labour and left press to insist that the choice of Prime Minister and leader of the Party should not be the preserve of the 317 members of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

It has also become a commonplace to declare that the choice of this or that person is not what matters, but the policies that person stands for.

"The election should be stripped of personality and turned into an argument about policy by insisting that candidates should publish the platform on which they are standing", said Dennis Skinner, MP for Bolsover, who is a Benn supporter. He was speaking at the Tribune MPs meeting the day after Wilson's resignation.

A democratic procedure would involve a special Labour Party conference where rival candidates would present their policy platforms for debate and a vote for the new leader. (Or if any body other than Conference is to elect the leader, it should be the elected National Executive Committee rather than the Parliamentary Labour Party).

Not only has this been ruled out, but the present timetable for the election — the first ballot will close on March 25th, the second on March 30th, the third, if necessary, on April 5th — hardly even leaves time for Labour Party activists to make their views heard and to put pressure on the MPs who vote for the new leader.

We are therefore in the commonplace world where the commonplaces of Labour Party democracy are as soon uttered as ignored.

OF THE SIX contestants, Benn, Callaghan, Crosland, Foot, Healey and Jenkins, only two have even the remotest reputation as "left-wingers" within the framework of the Labour Party. They are Benn and Foot. The others form an indistinguishable rabble of right-wingers whose recent record of anti-working class actions is plain to see.

Jenkins is the personal jailer of Des Warren, the Shrewsbury picket, he is the favourite candidate of the Tory



press, and the admired leader of the "Social Democratic Alliance"-type reactionaries in the Labour ranks.

Callaghan, who used to be on a £500 retainer to the Police Federation, and who gladly accepted £5000 as a "gift" from industrialist Julian Hodge — "on behalf of the Welsh people" — was Wilson's closest collaborator. Healey is the author of the programme of cuts that forced the abstention of 37 Labour MPs in Parliament a fortnight ago. As Chancellor, he has spearheaded the anti-working class measures of the Wilson government to date.

Cut-backs

As for Crosland, even the Tory press is worried that such a nonentity should be considered for the Premiership, although Crosland's right-wing views suit them fine. His "the party's over" speech, announcing huge cut-backs in local government spending, and council services, was welcomed by the Tories.

Some time ago, before the present government, the candidature of Michael Foot might have given hopes of a "left challenge" to the leadership. Now that is not the case. Foot is the government side of the hinge that links the Labour Government to the trade union bureaucracy. He is Mr. £6 limit just as much as Jack Jones is on the trade union side.

That leaves Benn. WORKERS ACTION says that socialists in the

Labour Party should tell their MPs to vote for Benn.

Why? **Not because** his policies provide the working class with any way forward out of the crisis. **Not because** he has stood out against Wilson. Certainly he has had his differences, but he accepted collective Cabinet responsibility for the £6 limit, the Healey cuts, and all the other right-wing policies. **And not because** we have any confidence that he will push for the reforms in Labour Party procedure, like the election of the Cabinet rather than its appointment, which he speaks of.

But his candidature is the only one that expresses any desire to break with the ways of Wilson. That is why his candidature is the one that scares the Tory press the most. A victory for Benn, in spite of the inadequacy of his policies — and there is an unbridgeable difference of class interest between those policies and ours — will increase militancy within the Labour Party ranks and the trade union movement. And it will enable Benn's "left-wing" image to be tested in practice.

Benn, however, will almost certainly have to drop out after the first ballot. That will leave a group of candidates all pledged to continuation of the present policies lock, stock and barrel. Foot will, if he is still in the running, get most of the Left's votes at this stage, because of his past. But his present record determines that no-one claiming to be on the left should vote for him... or any of the other candidates.



Benn — has 'Tribune's' policies



Foot — has 'Tribune's' affective

NUJ retreating on 'Press freedom'

FOUR JOURNALISTS working for the Barnsley Chronicle belong to a scab organisation known as the Institute of Journalists. The IoJ, which is not affiliated to the Trades Union Congress, has never once in its 90-year history called a strike. In fact it specialises in breaking strikes called by the National Union of Journalists, the union which organises most of the country's journalists.

Recently the Barnsley branch of the NUJ wrote to the Labour group on the local council, the Yorkshire area NUM, the Trades Council, and Barnsley NALGO, telling them that they had unwittingly been supplying information to non-union journalists and asking them to take appropriate action. The NUJ saw this as a way of pressuring the four scabs into rejoining the union (they had in fact 'resigned' some time before while in arrears with their subs). But the national press has jumped on their action, accusing the NUJ of trying to destroy 'press freedom' by 'interrupting the free flow of information'.

This attack comes as the latest in a long campaign waged by the press barons and their allies against the

NUJ. According to them, a closed shop in journalism would sound the death-knell for freedom of the press. In the course of the campaign they have managed to undermine and eventually overturn policy decisions made at the NUJ's Annual Delegate Meeting, and they have even threatened to bring about a constitutional crisis by using the House of Lords to block the passage of Foot's Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill.

A lot at stake

The proprietors obviously think there is a lot at stake. They are afraid that strong union organisation may threaten their monopoly control of the media, which gives them absolute 'freedom' to use the press as they like, to smother the country with propaganda in defence of capitalism and to attack and divide the working class movement. This is especially crucial for them at a time when every weapon is needed to break up opposition to the cuts and unemployment.

In the face of these attacks, the

National Union of Journalists has been steadily on the retreat. This year the union's NEC intends to reintroduce 'associate' membership for editors, which would allow them to scab on their own union by continuing to work during strikes. At the same time they have maintained that the issues of the closed shop and press freedom are entirely separate. In this way they are giving the press bosses exactly what they want — the freedom to print or suppress what they like. And now, in response to an appeal by Michael Foot, the union's General Secretary Kenneth Morgan has said that the NEC will 'reconsider' its support for the Barnsley branch.

But Sheffield and East London branches have already decided to follow the example of Barnsley. East London has also set up an industrial liaison committee to help local trade unionists to get their side of the story heard in disputes: This is a useful initiative, and if deepened by a commitment to take industrial action if necessary to see that workers are given the chance to reply to printed attacks, it could strike at the heart of the bosses' control.

JAMES RYAN

parties during a period of mass upsurge, around a series of working class demands with the revolutionaries in the government under the discipline of their party and of the mass working class organisations.

Since then, a workers' government has come to mean for many left groups a joint government of social democracy and the (now reformist) Communist Parties; and is seen as being applicable at all times.

The Communist International did not argue that every country must go through the stage of a workers' government on the road to a workers state (Russia didn't), but that the workers' government would be a necessary tactic under certain (clearly defined) conditions.

Workers Action should not use such terms without giving readers some idea of what they mean, particularly when they are open to so many different interpretations.

STEVEN CLARKE
North London

PHIL SMITH REPLIES:
COMRADE

Clarke gives an interesting account of the early Communist International's position on the workers' government slogan. However, his criticism of that point in my article misses the point.

The article outlined the need for a fight for workers control, a fight which

would create powerful organisations capable not only of exercising control over management in the factories but of fighting for working class power. The end of this struggle is of course a workers' state — the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Zinoviev, the first President of the Comintern, in outlining the theses on the workers' government, pointed out that the phrase "workers government" was useful in this general propaganda sense to 'translate' the obscure phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" to workers without a marxist tradition.

Besides this sense of the proletarian dictatorship, a workers' government could mean three other things.

The first two — a labour government and a social democratic government — were not really workers' governments at all but bourgeois rule disguised by workers parties holding parliamentary office. The third, the 'transitional' formulation, is described by Comrade Clarke.

Certainly this variant is not a necessary and inevitable stage — though in a country like Britain with a strongly entrenched reformist tradition it would be folly for Marxists to exclude it from their programme. Even though Russia didn't, as Comrade Clarke points out, go through this stage, the Russian Bolsheviks included it in their programme, and it was they who enriched the programme of the Comintern with it.

TUC leaders Blocking off the avenues

by Alan Humphries

THE TRADE UNION leaders are busy trying to stop themselves being outflanked. They realise the instability of the grip that they have presently got over the rank and file of the trade union movement, as well as the Labour 'left' in Parliament.

Their intention of "back to the days before 1969" is constantly being threatened by the pressures of the current economic situation.

When Jones, Scanlon and Basnett issued their call on the Labour movement to 'close ranks', they were trying to cut off two routes by which they feared they might lose control of the movement.

Firstly, as WORKERS ACTION said last week, that call was a warning to the 37 Tribune MPs who had abstained on Wednesday 10th March that they were out on a limb, and that, although they were promoting TUC

March 27th "not to do anything we wouldn't do". In order to cut off this particular avenue, the three trade union leaders offered a concession to the call for a recall TUC — one of the Assembly's main demands — as if to say: "we will go so far, don't you go too far".

The statement says: "... As soon as possible after the Budget, a meeting of the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee should take place... This should be followed by a meeting between the TUC General Council

Rock the boat

the National Executive of the Labour Party, and all the members of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Within the Trade Union movement this approach could be linked to a special TUC Congress or a conference of executives held to discuss future policy".

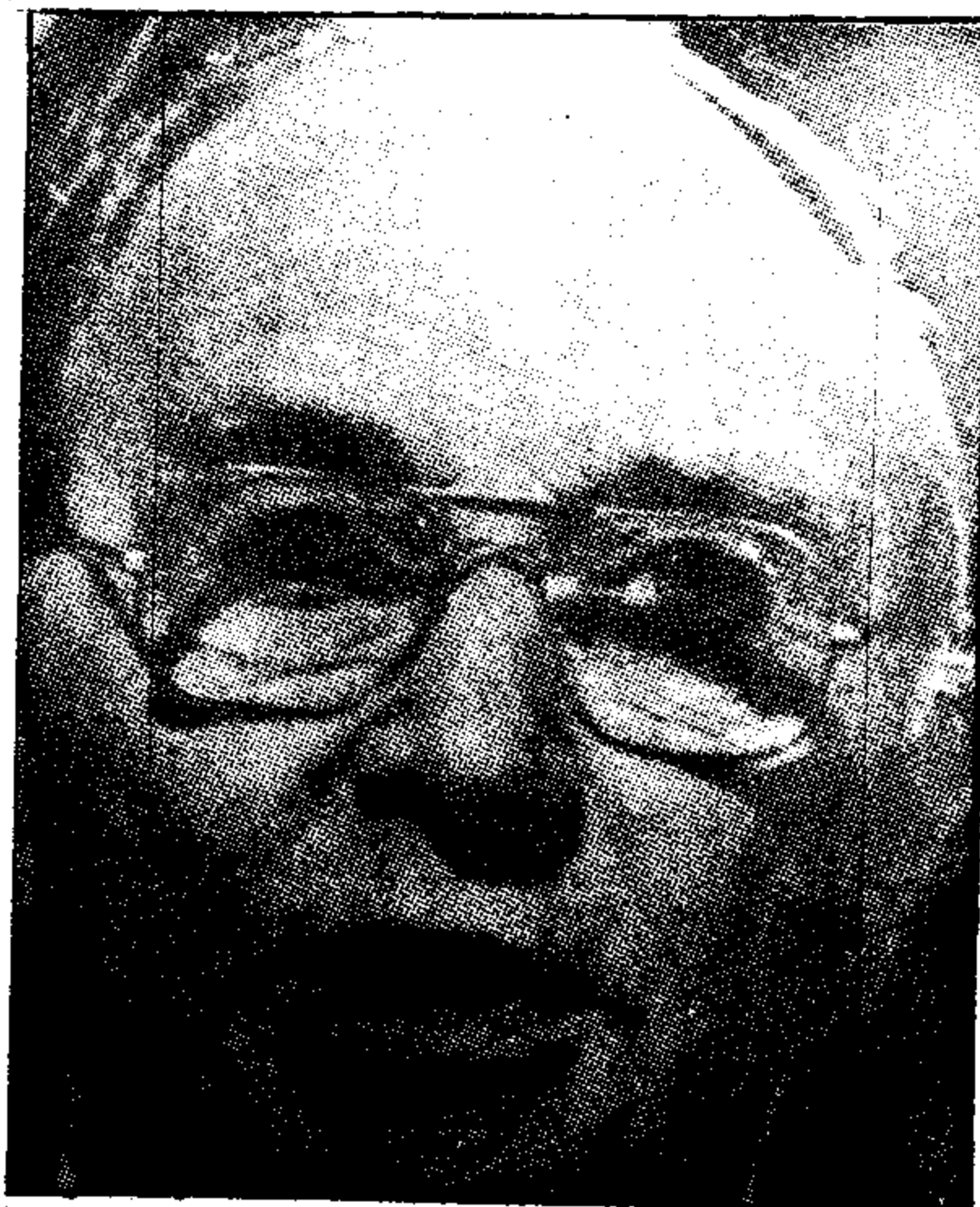
With this "offer" they hope that they and the Assembly's organisers find "unity" — on the common grounds of a conference of executives!

The big three are trying to keep things so close to their chests that it is not only the rank and file they are trying to block — as with the 37 dissenters they are even trying to block fellow leaders when they show any breaking of the solid front. For instance, Jones and Murray have ruled that even trade union leaders are not allowed to publish documents on the future of the £6 limit.

Similarly they now look like lining up behind Callaghan in the leadership race rather than Benn who actually stands for their TUC programme.

In all this, the dominance of bureaucracy over policy is what is most notable. Those leaders know that a crack in the common front, an avenue for those who will not put up with things as they are at present, a point of concentration for those forces who wish to continue the militant traditions of the last seven years — all this is ten times as dangerous to them as the actual policies being put forward by the broad layers of dissatisfied militants both in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

There can be no ground given to these attitudes and to the arguments of don't rock the boat.

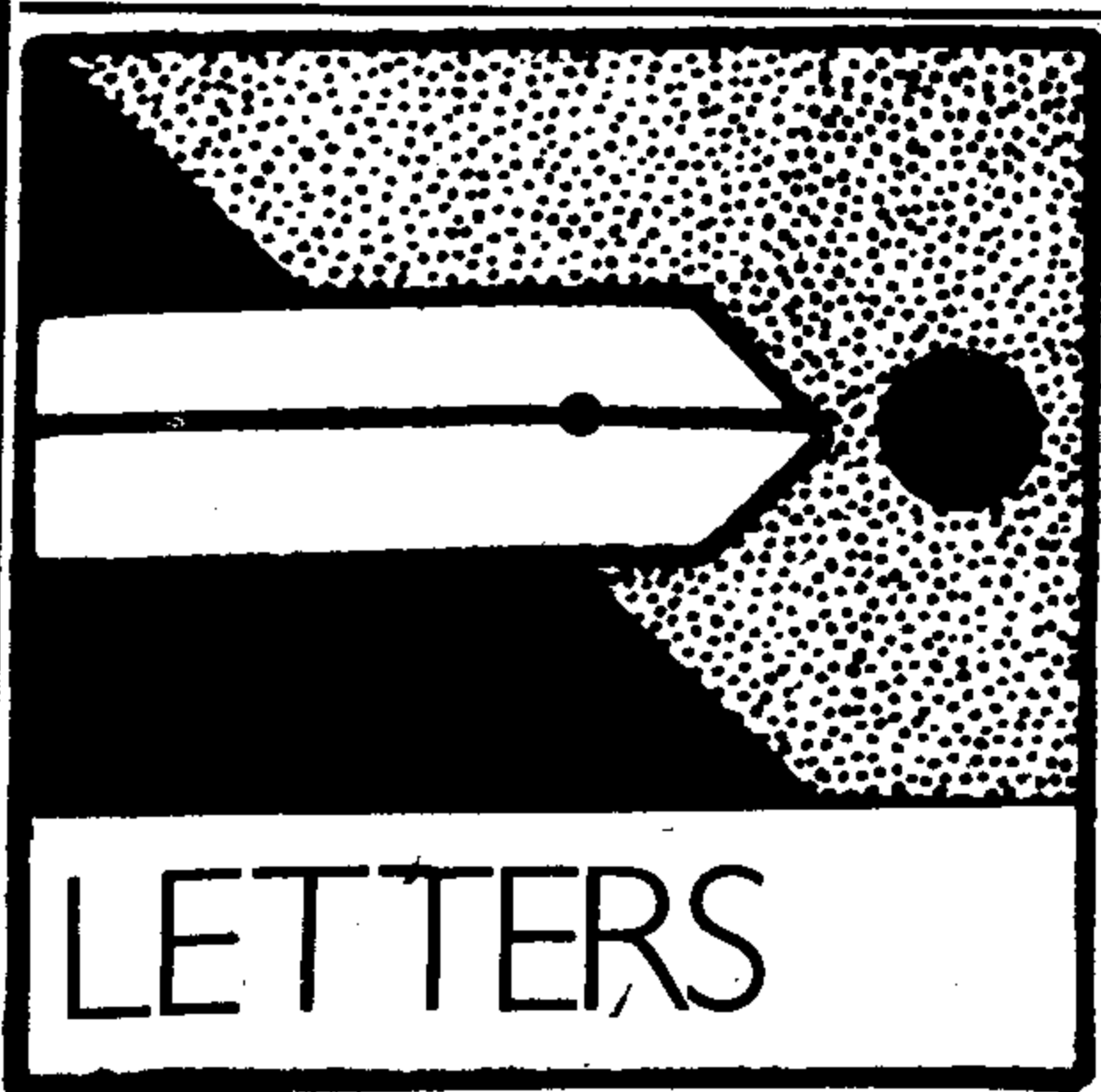


Jones

policy, they could not be expected to be supported by the TUC leaders.

After all, Jones, Scanlon and Basnett recognise that however feeble the Tribunes' own threat to the government, even this not very bold action of standing out against the government could well fuel further dissensions within the labour movement — both within the trade unions and the Labour Party.

In addition — it is now clear — it was a gentle hint to the organisers of the National Assembly of Labour on



IN the article in WA10 "Is there a light at the end of the tunnel", I was surprised to read that workers must look to "a strategy which takes up the fight for real workers' control instead of phony participation, and which includes the building of workers' organisations capable of installing a workers' government and a democratically planned economy as the alternative to the chaos and misery of capitalism".

What does the term 'workers government' mean in this context?

The workers' government was seen as the continuation of the united front of the working class parties at the highest level of government — a joint government of social democracy and the (then revolutionary) Communist



Workers at Coventry's Alfred Herbert plant vote against accepting 1400 redundancies last October (John Sturrock, Report)

TWO RALLIES MAKE A

March 27th Labour Assembly

THIS Saturday's Labour Assembly will represent the massive anger growing in the working class movement over the mounting numbers of unemployed. Over 1000 delegating bodies are now being confidently predicted by the conference organisers. Representing organisations and committees from all areas of the labour movement, the Assembly draws together a tremendous potential to develop a sustained movement against unemployment.

The trade union leadership, in general, has made it clear that it will lead no fight against unemployment. The TUC's opposition to the Labour Assembly, its opposition to the Right to Work March and its opposition to last November's North West Region of the TUC demonstration on unemployment made that clear. Desperately afraid of any rupture between themselves and the government, they will in fact sabotage any attempt to build a genuine fight for jobs.

Neither will the Labour Government be converted overnight to a reversal of its policies which have helped to produce one and a half million unemployed. All the contenders for the Labour leadership share responsibility for these policies. Their aim of restructuring sick British capitalism depends on redundancies, shake out and speed-up. And Healey's cuts will put thousands more on the dole.

In this situation it is vital that a clear perspective be put forward to build a fight independent of the trade union leaders and against the Labour Government. The support won by the Labour Assembly, the growing anger in the labour movement, shows that there is a mood, a



August 1975: Courtauld workers in Lancashire demon

potential, for building just such a movement. But will the Labour Assembly build on that potent Will it mobilise its widespread and deep-rooted support into a serious fight against unemployment? The letter to delegates from the Assembly, organising the proposed structure of the Assembly and the glimpse of political programme revealed so far suggest not.

Deliberately prevent

The Assembly is to be organised as a rally. Celebratory motions and amendments will not be taken from the floor of the Assembly. The Assembly organisers have not circulated in advance a resolution to come from the Assembly which could have been discussed in the union branches and delegating organisations, and result been amended and debated. In this way organisers have deliberately prevented the debate a policy to fight unemployment which is so desperate needed.

OUR POLITICS

- **CAPITALISM** is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (and since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the neo-colonies and colonies abroad. It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the 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 the working class, tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class. We fight for a national rank and file movement, linking up the different

- 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 socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by the ultimate defence of the 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 bourgeoisie 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 socialist should fight to make it do so. In no sense does the w-or-king 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 internationalism with the early Second International, 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 we can see the possibility of a time when a mass female

- 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 racialist 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. **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-marketters 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: 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 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 (ir Hungary in 1956 the 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 accordingly 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 inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity and a clear, consistent, and adequate political programme.

WE DON'T FIGHT



...ate against the sudden loss of 350 jobs. (Photo: Morning Star)

LAST Saturday's Right to Work Rally in the Albert Hall was the culmination of the Rank and File Organising Committee's march from Manchester to London. The march had helped to focus attention on the mounting total of unemployed so shamefully ignored by the trade union leaders. With a mixture of organised showmanship and genuine active commitment, the marchers have initiated a number of positive actions on the road from Manchester to London.

But the Rally which concluded it exposed cruelly the total lack of real perspectives of its chief organisers, the International Socialists.

At the Albert Hall, it was the showmanship that came to the fore. It was marked by feverish but empty calls, the recurrent, mechanical chanting of slogans, led by the platform, the emotionally charged scenes for the Grand Entry of the marchers.

The effect was no doubt to send some of those present away full of evangelical fervour. But that's not enough to build an effective campaign.

Combat

The speeches, punctuated with the militant rhetoric IS has become famous for, were totally empty of any real strategy for fighting unemployment. Speakers like John Deason claimed the march showed how to build a rank and file movement. SOCIALIST WORKER was plugged as the "only paper which hadn't hedged its bets" in support of the march — something of an understatement, since it has contained little else but the march for the past months!

Paul Foot delivered a rousing tirade against the Labour leadership contenders. Harry MacShane, veteran leader of the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1920s and '30s addressed the rally.

Most people attending would have been sincerely enthused by much of what was said — others repulsed by

Assembly, by issuing a call for the formation of such committees, can give an invaluable impetus to this process.

Day of Action

But it must also organise itself as the national leadership of a campaign against unemployment. It should issue the call and name the date for a day of action against unemployment. That day of action must include a massive national demonstration supported by strike action where possible, and by workplace delegations. Such a day of action would provide the focus for local committees and give heart to all workers facing sackings and speed-up.

The Labour Assembly can mark a tremendous step forward. It could be the beginning of a united labour movement campaign against the job-destroying policies of the Labour Government. But to do that it will have to do more than listen to heartwarming speeches, more

Right to work rally

the IS chest-beating and boastfulness and the revivalist atmosphere. But what of lasting value could be taken away from the Albert Hall in terms of a strategy to fight unemployment and combat the Labour and Trade Union bureaucrats who connive at its growth?

Far more valuable and honest would have been a proper delegated conference, to hammer out openly and democratically a policy and to plan a campaign of action. The excited rally was actually a substitute for a serious argument from those

delegated from workplaces and trade union branches who had travelled to London in the expectation of doing something positive against unemployment. It offered a poor precedent to confront the undemocratic Labour Assembly this Saturday.

Neither was a perspective put forward by the platform as to where the campaign goes from here. The marchers are to demand the right to speak at the Labour Assembly. They, and all militants who have been fighting on this issue, should have that right. But what policies will they put forward there if they do speak?

Calls were issued to build Right to Work Committees in the areas. But nothing was said about how to build them, about what policies they should be campaigning for, about how they should relate to existing unemployment committees.

No doubt the Right to Work campaign will go on. The marchers were touring London this week. They are talking of marching on the TUC when it next meets. But against the dead-end solutions of the Labour Assembly they are offering no alternative perspective to unite the mounting anger in the class and channel it into a genuine broad fighting campaign against unemployment.

STEVEN DIGGINES



Jack Leigh, Yorkshire miners' vice-president, talking to marchers (Chris Davis, Report)

than maintain unity with trade union leaders who have led no proper opposition to ever-larger dole queues. It will have to argue openly for policies to fight redundancies. It will have to issue a call for action throughout the working class movement.

The Communist Party dominated organisers of the Assembly do not see it that way. Their history has been one of seeking alliance with the trade union tops rather than strong independent organisation. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, which the same people dominated, was always tightly controlled — appearing and disappearing as the CP leadership found convenient. The lead-up to the Labour Assembly shows that nothing has changed.

If the CP have their way, if the policies and organisation of the Assembly are not challenged, then a tremendous opportunity to launch a real fight against unemployment will have been lost.

DAVE HUGHES

Against the budget

Open the books and meetings of the state, the employers and the corporations to the inspection of worker-delegated representatives. Against phony participation schemes, we must arm independent shop floor trade union organisation.

Occupations — holding the bosses' property to ransom for our jobs — as our answer to threatened redundancy. Occupation in order to force nationalisation with no compensation, recognising workers' control won by occupation.

No covering for unfilled vacancies. Full trade union commitment to resist all pressures to force black workers, youth and women out first. For a woman's equal right to work.

Full trade union rights for the unemployed. Trade union registration of all vacancies and of unemployed workers.

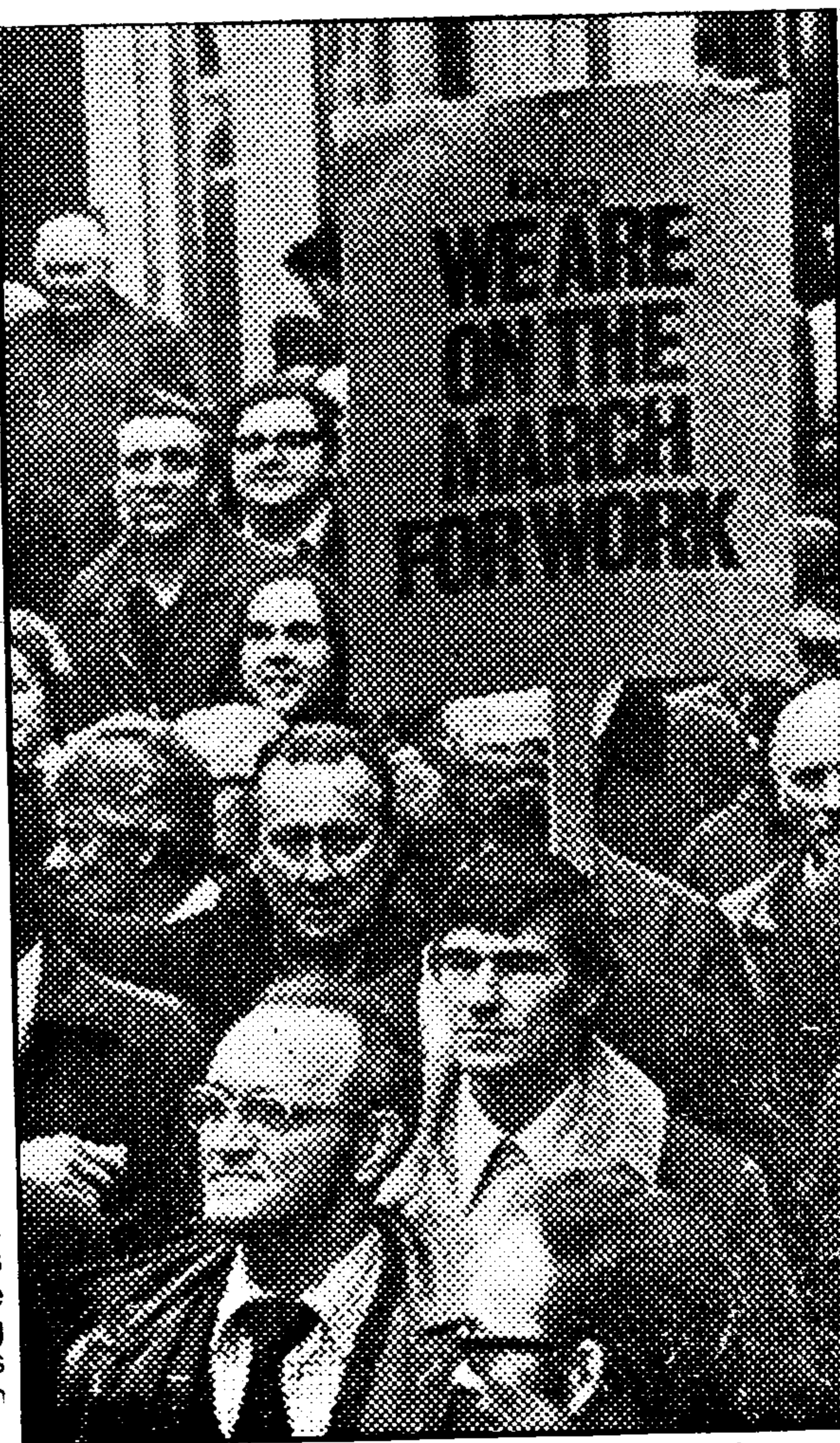
We do not oppose calls for action to be taken by the Labour Government and Labour MPs. One such call is crucial. It is already clear at this point that the next Labour budget will in no way reverse the anti-working class policies of the Government. If those MPs at the Assembly are so serious about fighting unemployment then they should commit themselves to voting against the budget, instead of propping up a government which is openly and clearly committed to rising unemployment.

But if these policies are going to be fought for we will need more than one grand National Assembly. The Assembly must give the lead to a national campaign against unemployment. This must mean the call for the establishment in the localities of broad labour movement committees to fight unemployment.

Supporting workers

Such committees must prove themselves by supporting workers in struggle, and by providing information on companies and state-run bodies threatening sackings. They must draw in and organise unemployed workers. They must include Working Women's Charter groups, black workers' organisations and labour movement youth organisations in a common fight against unemployment.

Such committees are already being formed in many areas. Trades Councils and Labour Parties have been



Workers from Chrysler's Tilling-Steven's plant at Maidstone protesting against plan to close the plant in January. (Photo: Andrew Wiant, Report)

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

THE 'ORGANISED UNEMPLOYED'

Claiming their Rights

JUST two years after the end of the 'Great War', Britain faced another war. The full military forces of the state were deployed. 75,000 members of the Special Defence Force were enlisted by the government in 10 days. Reservists were called up. Kensington Gardens was turned into an armed camp; Hyde Park and Regents Park were used as vehicle depots.

But where was the enemy?

The enemy was the working class. The winter of 1920-21 saw Britain on the verge of civil war — between the working class and the bosses. The short and hectic post war boom had collapsed suddenly in the Autumn of 1920. Exports dropped by nearly 50% in one year. Real wages fell by 40%.

That winter saw a terrible defeat for the working class. But it was not a defeat in the open battle which the British state had prepared itself to wage. It was a defeat brought about by the cowardice and treachery of the official leaders of the trade unions. It was a surrender without a fight.

Imperialist slaughter

During the war, the official trade union and Labour Party leaders had collaborated in organising the imperialist slaughter, sanctifying it as a battle for democracy, a crusade for "poor little Belgium". Leaders like Arthur Henderson sat in the war cabinet that shot the leaders of the Irish Easter Rising of 1916 — such was their concern for 'democracy' and the 'rights of small nations'.

As a result of the class collaboration of virtually the entire trade union leadership — its bitter opposition to the most basic defence of conditions and wages during the war — a powerful rank and file movement grew up in the engineering industry and in the coalfields. The shop stewards movement was born.

After the war, it grew in strength. The Lloyd George government, having made extravagant promises of social reform to keep the war-weary masses at the workbench and in the trenches, was busily engaged in wriggling out of these commitments. Not only that — it was trying to retrieve what it had been forced to concede in the war. The demands of total war had brought the temporary nationalisation of the mines and railways; wage rates were forced up by both men and women. Now the ruling class had to recover these losses.

Powerful weapon

The working class had a potentially powerful weapon in its hands — the Triple Alliance of railwaymen, miners and transport workers, pledged to support each other. This Alliance had been formed in response to rank and file pressure just before the outbreak of the war. Now it faced a ruling class which was armed and ready to attack.

But on Friday 15th April 1921, the leaders of the railwaymen and transport workers went back on their pledge to support the miners' resistance to wage cuts. The miners, as so often since, were the test case: could the working class be made to pay the cost of the capitalist crisis. And the answer of J.H. Thomas, the railwaymen's leader, was a resounding yes.

Such was the impact on the working class of this act of treachery that the day became known as Black Friday. And its effects were worse than defeat in open battle would have been.

Unemployment shot up. In December 1920 the unemployment figures had stood at 691,103 — 5.8% of the working population. Six months later, one and a half million workers had been sacked: the June figure stood at 2,171,288 out of work — 17.8% of the working population.

Still the great strength of the official movement was not being mobilised to meet this catastrophe. Section after section was picked off by the employers and forced to swallow massive redundancies and huge wage cuts. Trade union membership slumped.

It was left to the rank and file to organise the fight back.

Among the first sacked were, predictably, many of the most militant shop stewards. And it was from the ranks of these men that the leadership of the unemployed struggles of the next two decades emerged.

Wal Hannington, one of their number and the leading figure of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement which developed in the 1920s and '30s, recalled the attitude of these militants: "They sought individually an avenue for continuing their activities from the workshop into the field of unemployment because, by their experience, their minds had been trained to think always in terms of organisation wherever the workers had grievances in common with each other".

Led the way

The first unemployed organisations were often merely charity seeking bodies. The entry into them of class conscious militants soon replaced or transformed them.

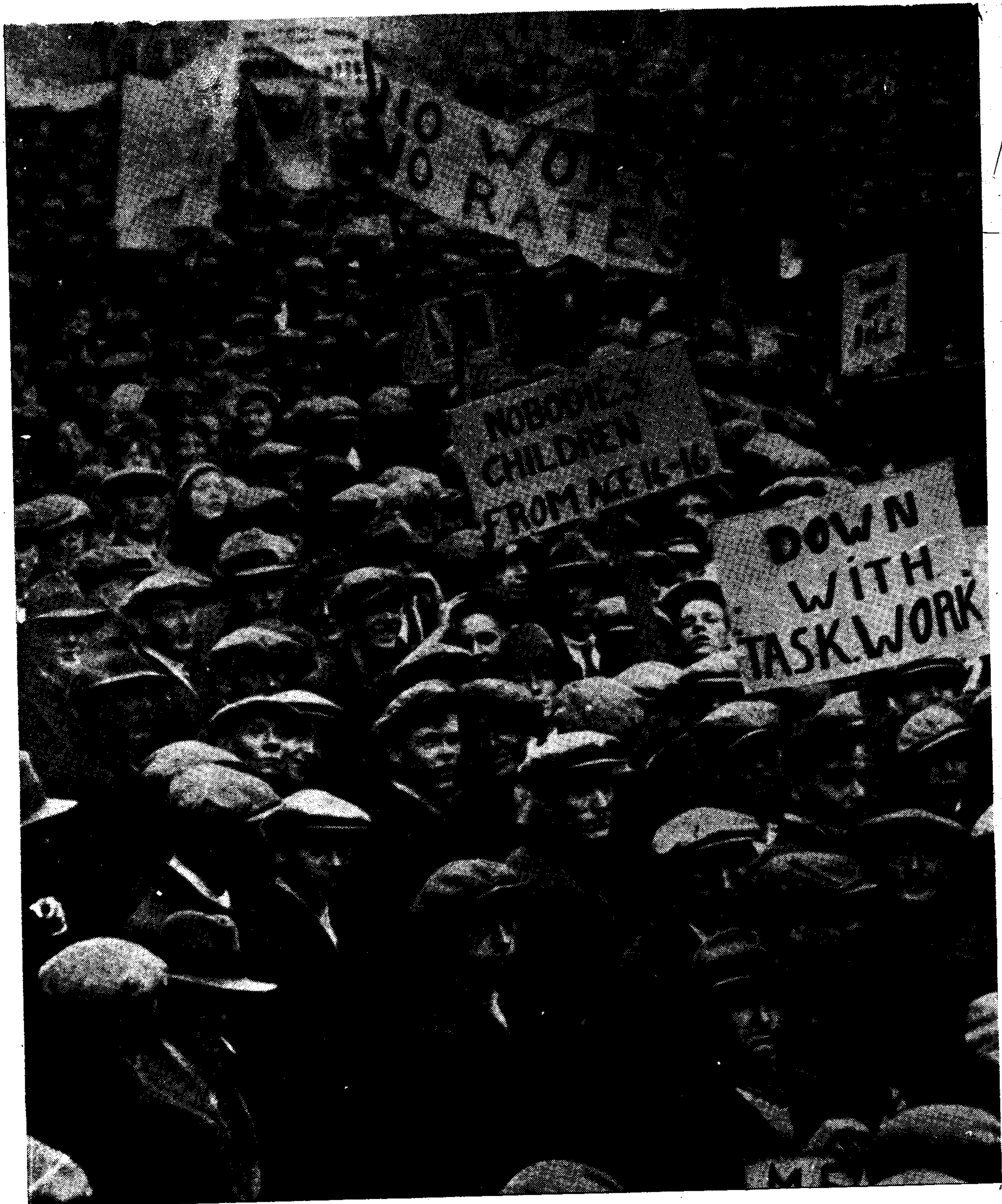
London led the way. A conference was called of delegates of such organisations, and the formation of local committees was encouraged. By December 1920, there were 39 committees in London representing 20,000 unemployed. Their pressure alone forced the TUC and the Labour Party to call a special conference in the Kingsway Hall on January 27th 1921.

Typically, the heroes of the official movement refused point blank to hear the representatives of the unemployed from the rostrum. And in doing this, the Thomases and Hendersons set the pattern of indifference, inaction or downright sabotage which characterised the attitude of the trade union and Labour Party leaders throughout the bitter interwar years.

Militants like Wal Hannington and Harry MacShane were not daunted. In fifteen months there were 300 committees with a combined membership of 100,000, organised around a National Unemployed Workers Committee.

How were these committees built and what actions did they undertake?

First, to draw in and organise the unemployed workers, the most basic task had to be taken up — stopping the begging and charity collections which totally demoralised and



BY DAVE STOCKING

fragmented the unemployed. In their place, collective pressure was brought on the Poor Law Guardians to increase the dole provisions, or pay to pay up where they were refusing aid. Demonstrations and occupations were the chief weapons. Dole Boards were occupied until they gave relief.

The unemployed were inspired with the belief that they were claiming their rights — not asking for favours. Public buildings were occupied to provide centres for the unemployed. A particularly bitter battle was waged with the Islington Borough Council over the occupation and use of the Old Library — a struggle which ended with massive police repression and the arrest and beating up of dozens of unemployed including Hannington.



J.H. Thomas

Another vital aspect of these early struggles was the linking of the struggle of the unemployed with the movement of employed workers. On April 4th 1921 the representatives of the London unemployed passed this resolution: "The London District Council, representing the unemployed in London and Greater London, wish to state most emphatically that in no circumstances

will we allow ourselves as unemployed to be used as instruments for blacklegging against the miners or any section of the workers who may strike in sympathy."

The unemployed committees linked up with the local trade union organisation to enquire into all offers of work to ensure that all established rates and conditions were not being undercut. When strikes occurred, deputations of the "organised unemployed" were sent to strengthen the picket lines and to persuade and organise unemployed workers being used as blacklegs. This, and their experience in standing up to police brutality, made them invaluable allies to employed workers.

In return, the unemployed appealed to those in work to cut overtime. They didn't leave the matter at the level of written appeals, either.

In March 1921 the organised unemployed carried out a "raid" on the Central Aircraft Factory in Kilburn, where workers had accepted reduced pay rates and overtime was being worked. The gatehouse was captured by a squad dressed as footballers. Hannington addressed a mass meeting of the workers, hammering in the need to stop overtime and promising the solidarity of the unemployed for a struggle to prevent any reduction in wage rates.

Arrived in force

After Hannington had finished speaking, the factory manager demanded the right to speak. He was allowed to by the meeting — but no sooner had he started than the police arrived in force and, taking him for the "bolshie agitator" they'd been called in to deal with, dragged him off violently.

This struggle, and many others too where such militant tactics were used, resulted in the stopping of overtime working, the maintenance of rates, and the taking on of unemployed workers.

The basis of ongoing local work — of militant organisation to win increases in benefit, to provide social and recreational centres for the jobless, to link their struggles with those in work — were the unemployed committees. They formed the bedrock for the better known activities of the local marches and the great national Hunger Marches.

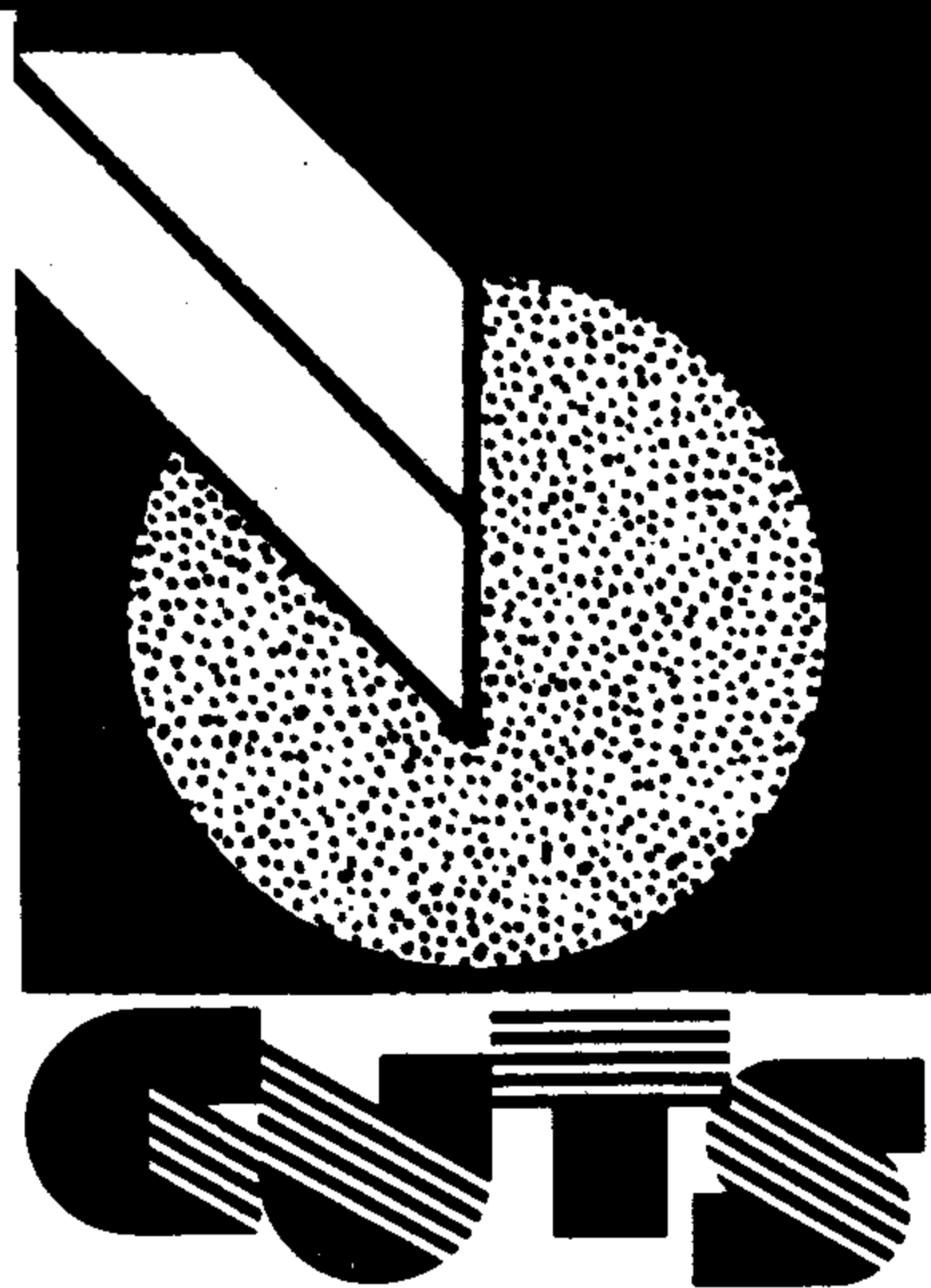
Today, with one and a half million unemployed, we desperately need to learn the lessons of the struggles of the twenties. Firstly, to stop the sell out and betrayal of all the gains both in wages, conditions and social services made by workers over the last 30 years. Prevention is better than cure — and the Murrays, Gormleys and Joneses must not be allowed to succeed as the Hendersons and Thomases did then.

Very real danger

Secondly, the struggle to resist unemployment must link together the employed and unemployed. It is militants from the trade unions who can best organise with the unemployed, using the existing organisations of the movement — the shop stewards committees, district committees, trades councils — to set up local unemployment committees which are not isolated but have the active backing of the grassroots strength of the labour movement.

Marches such as the National Rank and File Committee's Right to Work March can dramatise and focus attention on the problem. But they must be linked to the building of a real non sectarian campaign, to win real, permanent workers' organisations to the fight for no redundancies, the cutting out of overtime, the unionisation of the unemployed. Otherwise they run the very real danger of remaining mere stunts — gimmicks which are a parody of the great and serious movement born in the mass struggles of the early twenties.

Cuts campaign elects 'Open the Books' committee



ON Saturday March 13th, the Islington Campaign against the Cuts Conference brought together delegates from local branches of important public sector unions (Nalco, NUPE and ASTMS) as well as from EPTU and NATSOPA, and tenants organisations, voluntary groups, local Labour Party wards and community health groups.

There were also a number of delegates from Rank and File Teacher, as well as from several revolutionary socialist groups.

The early part of the conference centred on a resolution calling for organised opposition to all cuts, and for automatic increases in social expenditure and wages to keep pace with inflation. In addition it was proposed to pressurise the local Labour council to adopt a Clay Cross-style stance and refuse to implement any cuts in the area, and that they should seek the support of other local Labour councils for this action.

One significant part of this session was the election of an 'Open the Books' Committee to investigate the finances of Islington Council, the Area Health Authority and the Inner London Education Authority. This should be vital in exposing the behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing of such bodies, and providing workers with advance notice of where cuts are planned.

Later, the conference split into workshops covering issues concerned with local housing, social services, education and health. Out of these came recommendations for policies such as organising a local demonstration against the housing cuts, production of a local cuts bulletin, and mobilising for the national demonstration against the Cuts in the Health Service due for April 25th.

The workshop on education was particularly useful. It drew up a detailed programme of demands against the cuts including such points as:

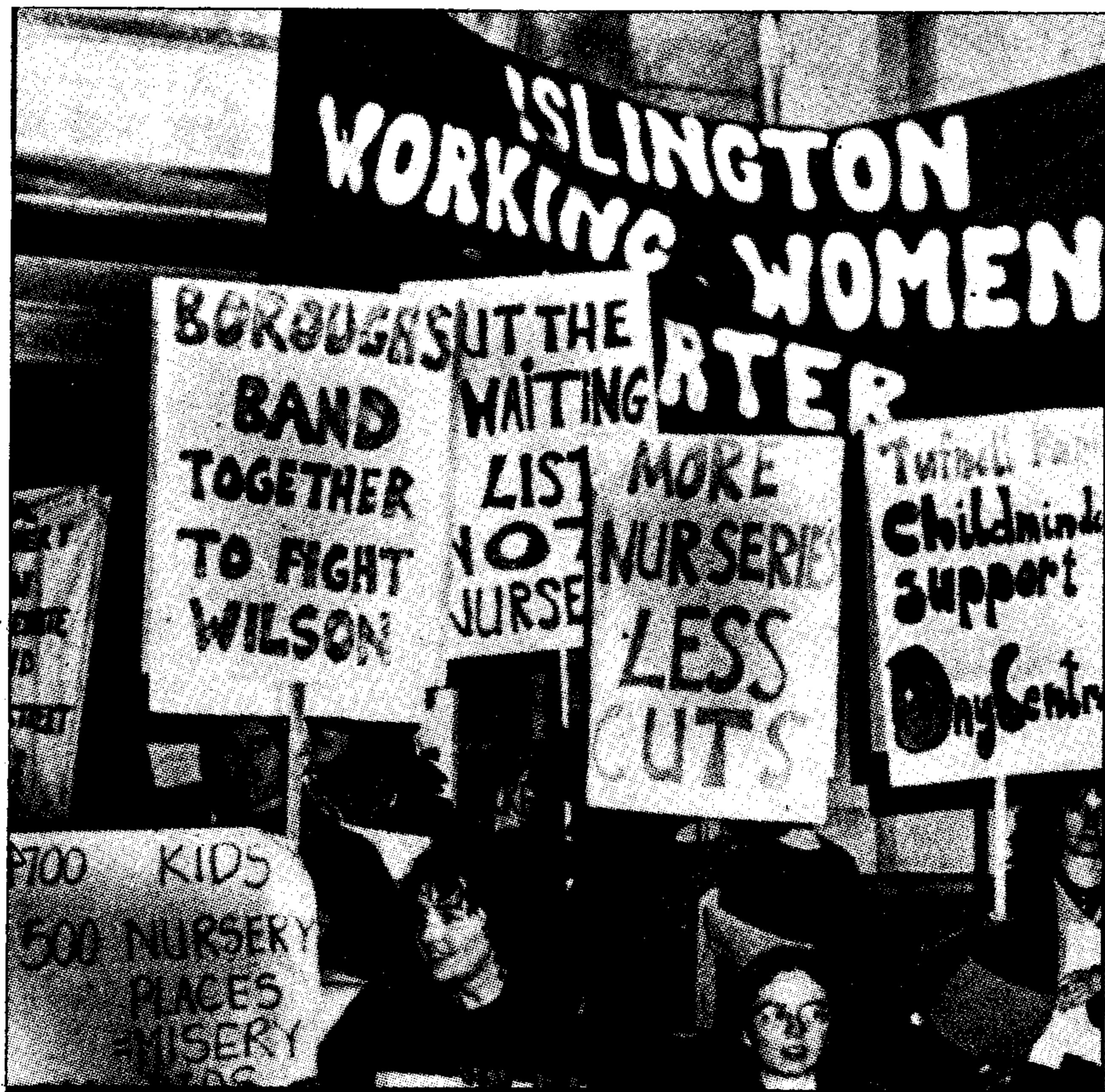


Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

- guaranteed jobs for all trained teachers;
 - no closure of colleges; restoration of all teacher training places;
 - no redundancies; no compulsory transfer; no natural wastage;
 - an end to all short-term contracts;
 - no classes over 30.
- This programme can serve as a useful basis for mobilising support for the public meeting the Conference decided to hold at the end of May to set up a trade union inquiry into the

educational needs of Islington. Local NUTs, Further Education Colleges, trades councils and student unions and being asked for their support.

The conference closed with the election of a committee to put the policies of the Conference into action, and it was decided to keep people involved by having monthly general meetings of the campaign with representatives from different sectors reporting on how the cuts were affecting their area.

NW London teachers in 'no cover' campaign

TEACHERS, unlike most other workers, are expected to cover for other teachers who are absent or even when there is an unfilled vacancy on the staff. Clearly, many of the cuts being planned in education are based on the expectation that teachers will go on stretching themselves in this way to fill the gaps.

A national campaign of refusal to cover would make many of the cuts very difficult to implement. But the NUT applies the no-covering sanction (which involves not covering for unappointed teachers or those whose absence is known 3 days in advance) very sparingly, after many qualifications have been fulfilled.

Teachers in North West London

have now joined many other areas in applying to the NUT for these sanctions to be extended to their area. NUT members at John Kelly Boys School, after hearing that there would be a reduction in the number of teachers at the school in September, voted to request that the Brent Teachers Association (local NUT branch) "contact the Action Committee of the NUT with a view to instructing us to operate sanctions in opposition to the proposed cuts." Teachers at another Brent school, Alperton, have been balloted as to whether they would support the imposing of the sanctions at their school if Brent TA imposed them. They voted in favour by a massive 44 to 3.

Some teachers are now trying to get a special meeting of the BTA on the question of the cuts and unemployment.

Meanwhile, the BTA has given an object lesson in union democracy. With 8 candidates standing for four outer London places on the NUT Executive, the Committee of the BTA is circulating schools in its area with the election addresses of just four of them (all by strange coincidence right wingers) with a recommendation that members vote for this slate. The other four candidates have been left to circulate their addresses at their own cost, while the BTA gets the material of its chosen slate circulated free using the Education Office's internal mailing system!

'No cover' action spreads in Midlands

Teachers in Sandwell (which includes the West Bromwich and Warley areas) are applying a 'no cover' sanction in protest against education cuts of £300,000 imposed by Sandwell council.

Their action is beginning to take effect this week as they refuse to cover for absent colleagues after three days. The fact that children will be sent home is some indication of the level of feeling in this area which hasn't been militant before. In fact, the local leadership of the NUT had hoped that Westminster would treat Sandwell as a 'special case' and inject funds into the area, which is already suffering a grave staff shortage. They were met with a blanket refusal.

The proposed cuts would eliminate about 45 teachers, and considerably worsen the pupil-teacher ratio.

Teachers in the Walsall area are now planning similar action from April 1st, in response to announcements of a £700,000 cut in the current budget there.

Both the NUT and the smaller single-sex unions, the NAS and the UWT, are involved in these actions.

With these severe cuts imposed on the depressed 'Black Country', there can be no more illusions about 'special cases'.

Sandwell and Walsall will be joining other Teachers' Associations in applying these sanctions. But still the NUT refuses to authorise such action on a national scale, nor is it encouraging the more effective ban on classes over 30.

Antics

One of these favoured candidates is Max Morris (Communist Party member, ex-President of the NUT, present member of the NUT Executive and headmaster of Willesden High School, from which he has banned the National Union of School Students). On March 16th, at a meeting of the BTA for school NUT reps (which, under a new agreement, was held in school time and attracted an unprecedented 100 or so school reps) Morris used his position to launch into an election speech, naming his slate for the election at least four times.

Such antics have aroused some opposition around the area's schools — hopefully more people will now listen attentively to the case for the four left wing candidates — Beth Stone, Birendra Singh, Archie Foulds and Dave Finch.

PETE FIRMIN

DISAFFILIATION THREAT OVER RULE 14

THE [TUC] has threatened to disaffiliate Northampton Trades Council for failing to adopt the new Model Rule 14 forbidding cooperation with political parties other than the Labour Party or activity running counter to TUC policy.

The Trades Council considered the new Rule at its Annual General Meeting last month. 15 voted for the new rule, 9 against, with 4 abstentions; but Northampton Trades Council rules say a two-thirds majority is needed to change the rules. So the new Rule 14 was not adopted. The TUC has now written to the Trades Council telling it to adopt the new Rule immediately — despite the fact that another rule says that rules can be changed only at the AGM!

The Trades Council has decided to write to the TUC and ask for clarification.

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE County Association of Trades Councils has also failed to adopt the new Rule 14. A 7-6 vote for the new rule was not sufficient to get it adopted, since the constitution requires a two-thirds majority for rule changes.

Support for the new rule came from a leading member of the Communist Party, although a number of CP members voted against it.

"FOR MANY YEARS bans and proscriptions have been a blot on the labour movement. They have been

used time and time against by the right wing to quell protest by the working class and working class organisations. Now, at a time when we have a Labour Government carrying out policies which the Tories would never have dared to carry out when in power — £6 wage limit, education cuts, public service cuts, unemployment — we have an attempt by the TUC General Council to widen and extend the bans and proscriptions already existing."

At the Nottingham Trades Council meeting on 17th March Workers Action supporters distributed a leaflet calling for a vote against this new addition to the labour movement's "bans and proscriptions" — the new Model Rule 14.

After a reasonable debate the vote was put on the motion to accept Rule 14. It was lost 26-30.

But the issue didn't finish there. A motion was put to disaffiliate from the TUC on the grounds that this would be the logical conclusion. The temperature was raised a few degrees and charges of "irresponsibility" were made against people who voted to reject Rule 14. However, the new motion lost 29-30.

Still the supporters of Rule 14 weren't finished. A Communist Party member put forward a motion moving suspension of Standing Orders so that another vote could be taken in view of the gravity of the situation. All the speeches bar one were now for the motion to accept Rule 14. It ended with the President of the Trades Council, another CP

THE UNIONS



member, making a pleading speech, saying how he had been on the "bad end" of proscriptions for many years. He said that things were now getting better. The new Rule 14 was an improvement on the previous rule since it no longer mentioned the Communist Party by name.

After this performance the new Rule 14 was finally adopted by 38 votes to 20.

EVENTS

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

Friday 26th March. Pre-Labour Movement Assembly meeting jointly sponsored by International Communist League, International Marxist Group, and Workers' League. "Strategy against unemployment — The Revolutionary Alternative". 8pm at the 'Albany', near Great Portland Street station. (Not the 'Pindar of Wakefield' as advertised last week)

Friday 26th March. Islington NAC benefit. 7.30pm, Old Red Lion pub, St Johns St, EC1.

Saturday 27th March. Labour Movement Assembly on Unemployment. At Cntral Hall, Westminster. Details from 'Assembly', no.8 Confederation District Committee, 12 Denmark St, London WC2H 8NJ.

Saturday 27th March. Spring Party and Disco organised by Hendon South LPYS. 8.30pm at 7 Sunningfields Rd, NW4. Admission 20p; bring a bottle.

Saturday 27th March. Student conference on Ireland, sponsored by North London Poly and Middlesex Poly Student Unions and by the Troops Out Movement. Delegates from all college societies and unions. 10.30am North London Poly, Holloway Rd. Details: 01-328 1545.

Tuesday 30th March. West London Workers Action meeting on "Workers Action and the Trade Unions". 7.30pm at Westcott Lodge, Furnivall Gardens, Lower Mall, Hammersmith, W6.

Tuesday 30th March. Cardiff Workers Action meeting. "The Fight against the Cuts". Speaker: Michele Ryan. 7.30pm at the Rhymney Hotel, Adam St.

Tuesday 30th March. "Introducing Workers News, a new socialist paper. Roger Protz speaks at the Three Pigeons, High St, London W5, 8pm.

Thursday 1st April. Reading Workers Action meeting on "The Fight against the Cuts". 8pm, TGWU Hall, Kings Rd.

Thursday 1st April. Manchester Workers Action meeting on "Why the Labour Government is selling us out". Speaker: Dave Spencer (Coventry Trades Council). 8pm at the Ducie Arms, Gt Ducie St.

Saturday 3rd April. Conference on how to fight the education cuts. At University of London Union, Malet St, WCI Sponsored by TUC South East Regional Council. Credentials from Paula Lanning, NATFHE, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9GH.

Saturday 3rd April. National Abortion Campaign demonstration for Free Abortion on Demand and A Woman's Right to Choose. Assemble 1.30pm at Speakers' Corner.

Saturday 3rd April. Local labour movement conference on unemployment and the cuts, organised by Lambeth Trades Council and Norwood Labour Party. At Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Walk, London SW2. Details from V Wiseman, 23 Saunders House, St Martins Estate, SW2.

Saturday and Sunday 10th-11th April. Working Women's Charter national delegate conference. At Lanchester Poly, Coventry. Details from Helen Gurdon, Flat 4, 39 Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warks.

Sunday 11th April. Campaign to Repeal the Immigration Act demonstration. Assemble 2.30pm at Speakers' Corner. Committee to organise the demo meets every Friday, 7.30pm at 152 Camden High St.

Saturday 24th April. Rally against Unemployment and The Cuts, called by North West Region of the TUC.

Saturday 25th April. National Demonstration called by National Coordinating Committee against the Cuts in the National Health Service. Assemble at Speakers' Corner and march to Trafalgar Square. Details from P. Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London NW10.

"Fight the Cuts" film made by a group of film-makers in ACTT. Available FREE for all meetings and conferences against the cuts by phoning 01-794 2825. 55 minutes, black and white, 16mm optical sound.

Leicester TGWU on the side of racists and scabs yet again

The
Right to Work
Campaign's
'model town'

OCCUPYING WORKERS at Delta Mouldings in Leicester have been forced out of occupation by management.

The workers, mainly immigrant workers, had been on strike for a week against 28 redundancies. They decided to occupy the plant as the most effective way of enforcing their refusal to accept any sackings.

Immediately management promoted and supported a counter-demonstration of workers from other Delta Mouldings factories in Leicester and of scab workers (mainly white) who had been continuing to work during the strike. Within four hours the foyer of the occupied factory was itself thronged with workers backing management.

Management have made it clear that they had reached 'understanding' with the Leicester TGWU about the redundancies. This is no surprise. They were negotiating with the notoriously racist Leicester TGWU presided over by George Bromley JP, who in the past, has refused to support black workers at Imperial Typewriters and at Delat Mouldings itself. Using their good relations with George Bromley management have stated, "The strike would be over at once were it not for the intimidation of the workers by a small group of troublemakers". They forced the strikers to back down and accept negotiation.



ANYONE reading recent issue of 'Socialist Worker' will have noted the lavish coverage of events in Northampton regarding the Right to Work Campaign. It would appear that Northampton must be a model for others to follow, that its support is fantastic (judging from reports on its meetings) and that lump labour in the town was abolished miraculously when the Right to Work march came through.

The truth, however, is different and sadder. Before December an Unemployed Action Committee was set up, with IS members participating. The Committee set out to campaign for policies against unemployment including the 35-hour week, no overtime, no covering, a programme of useful public works, and factory occupations, and to ensure that claimants got their full rights.

However, the local IS then obviously had orders — "get a Right to Work committee off the ground, the march is coming through your town". This was done. Attempts to work under a joint banner were rejected and supporters of the Unemployed Action Committee were told to leave Right to Work meetings.

Meanwhile the Unemployed Action Committee got the Trades Council to sponsor a conference on unemployment. More than 50 attended and trade unionists, MPs, and representatives of the Right to Work campaign and of the Unemployed Action Committee spoke. Activity on dole queues around claimants work resulted in a fair response, and support was gained from the Labour Party and from one or two trade union branches of the Unemployed Action Committee's attempts to get a room for unemployed.

Racist

The TGWU has shamefully refused to support these workers fighting against redundancy. They have a consistent record of not supporting black workers in Leicester. The ability of management to use divisions in the workforce, most importantly the racist attitudes of white workers, shows more clearly than ever the need to fight for the support of black workers' organisations and for unemployment campaigns to take up the particular attacks that black workers face both from the employers and whole sections of the Trade Union leadership — and membership.

This is especially so in Leicester at the present moment. Last week one hundred AUEW foundry section workers at Richards Foundries occupied the plant in pursuit of the full £6 wage claim. Management retaliated by sacking all the workers. They have refused to discuss with the Idian Workers Association, insisting that they will only talk to the AUEW Foundry Section, who had not at first approached management on the workers' behalf.

If groups of workers like these are not to be smashed, it is absolutely vital that the trade union movement puts its entire strength behind them and their organisations.

DAVE HUGHES

BLACKMANS STRIKERS PICKET G.E.C. HEADQUARTERS

WORKERS from the GEC-owned Keith Blackmans plant in Tottenham picketed GEC headquarters last Wednesday (17th) as part of their campaign against the victimisation of a shop steward. Despite pouring rain the picket was maintained throughout the day. Some twenty delegates from other plants joined the demonstration — a sign of the support that has resulted from the dispute committee's national campaign. It is this support and the solidarity shown by the 350 locked-out workers in Tottenham that the management have to break if they are to win their fight to break union organisation at the plant.

Their most likely course of action will be to argue that there are two issues involved, the sacking of the shop steward Rudi Klein, and the question of trade union rights on the plant. At the mass meeting held on the Friday after the picket it was reported that management were apparently softening on the general point of trade union rights, but were not prepared to budge on the victimisation.

Under pressure from the unions, the dispute has now been taken to the Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service (ACAS). This body, set up by the Government as part of the 'Social Contract', poses as an independent body between management and workers. Its actual role is to find a way of ending disputes. In effect this means that if they

can find a way of convincing the workers to go back to work, then that is what they will advise.

But there can be no independent or neutral position between the two sides of such a dispute. The dispute began as a result of the sacking, but that was only one part of an overall management attempt to break the unions, not a separate issue. There is no half-way house, no middle course which is "fair" on both sides. Either the workers win, which means they keep the rights they have won through fighting for them, or management win, which means taking away those rights.

The right of shop stewards to act in the interests of their members is the backbone of Trade Union organisation. If management "give way" on the wider issue but insist on sacking Rudi Klein, then in reality they are giving away nothing. They will have what they want, precedent for the sacking of stewards.

The workers at Keith Blackmans, who are occupying the plant, are relying on the support of other workers. So far the response has been very good. At the last meeting, for example, it took nearly ten minutes to read out the most recent contributions to the hardship fund. This stream of support has to continue.

Contributions should be sent to: J. Pickering, Suite 3, 2nd Floor, 128-136 High St, Edgware, Middlesex. STEVE MACSWEENEY

Stunt

Both committees got support from the Trades Council, but no affiliation, being thought of as politically motivated outside groups.

The support for both groups now remains small, and the Right to Work march rally was packed in the traditional fashion of the SLL/WRP with IS members from Peterborough and Leicester. Not one of the speakers ever rose above tub-thumping and talked about strategy against unemployment.

The lesson is plain: we must never think that stunts and staged rallies can replace the job of securing commitment to act from Trades Councils, Trade Union branches, and shop stewards' committees. The whole movement can only lose from such antics. It is urgent that IS comrades change their approach and join in a united-front effort to get the Trades Council to act and sponsor a real campaign incorporating both the ad hoc groups. DAVE GREEN

'Palestine week' exposes Zionist racism

SALFORD University's Palestine Solidarity Society holds a Palestine Week every year "in accordance with the revolutionary spirit of solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against imperialism and Zionism". The PSS see it as being necessary to counteract the large bias towards Zionism in the British media, and to get across to students something of the tragedy of the Palestinian people.

This year's 'Week', held earlier this month, was generally agreed to be the most successful so far. It started with two films (one which exposed the colonialist policy of the Zionists in Jerusalem, and another showing the expansionist policies of Israel in Syria), and later in the week a series of meetings was held.

Colonialist

On the Wednesday Said Hammami, the London representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, spoke to a packed meeting and explained the aims and positions of the liberation movement, calling for a secular, democratic state in Palestine. Challenged that it would be like strife-torn Lebanon, he replied that Lebanon was neither truly secular nor truly democratic. And he affirmed that Zionism should be equated with racism.

On Thursday another large meeting heard Glynn Jones of 'Free Palestine' talk about the biased nature of reporting in the capitalist press in Britain about the struggle of the Palestinians. And the week ended with a meeting addressed by Moshe Machover from the Israeli socialist group Mapai who spoke about the racist aspects of Zionism and gave many examples of Israel's

institutionalised racism. He stressed that he viewed Israel as a colonialist state, and called for a Socialist Arab East.

All through the week there was a Palestinian cultural exhibition and literature on sale, and the week ended with a Palestine evening on Saturday. The Zionists' attempts at opposition throughout the week only served to strengthen the arguments of the Palestine Solidarity Society.

PAUL SINGH
Salford Univ. Students Union

Union recognition — a basic right still denied

LAST Thursday, 250 trade unionists and socialists turned out at 7.30 in the morning for a mass picket of a small electrical firm, AUTOMAT. They were demonstrating their solidarity with 43 AUEW members in the eighth week of their strike for union recognition.

Automat is a small private firm that assembles electrical equipment, transformers etc. It is a contractor for state industries, and employs 100 workers, two thirds of them women.

The mass picket gave a great lift to the strikers. Their boss is hysterically hostile to

unions and trade unionists. Occasionally he comes out to shake his fists and shout at the pickets. In 1973 he fired three workers who had been elected by the workers to approach him for union recognition, and the firm has been the subject of blacking since then by AUEW-TASS.

The owner's primitive brute intimidation has paid off. Lack of successful unionisation has meant very low wages: in September he was paying women workers just £17.35 basic. Skilled men got a basic of £28, well below the District rate.

These wage rates were intolerable, and

impelled the workers once again to make a bid for union organisation. Most of the workers joined the AUEW — but still the boss would not negotiate. To prove he was a model employer and they didn't need a union, he raised the rates, to £26 basic for women, and £35 for skilled men. But the equivalent rates negotiated for the District are £45 and £54.

In January, under the thin disguise of 'redundancy', he fired 9 workers. By sheer coincidence, all but two were in the union, including the convenor Tom Smith. The boss refused even to discuss the dismissals

most deliveries to the firm. But they haven't yet got the total backing of the rest of the workforce, and unfortunately about half the production workers have stayed at work.

This has strengthened the management's resolve to smash the new union organisation. The strikers urgently need support, particularly hard cash, to keep the strike going. Send money and messages to: Ms. M. Reynolds, 114 Ross Street, Cambridge. NICK BARSTOW

20 workers at Cecil Instruments of Milton, near Cambridge, are going into their sixth week of unofficial strike to reinstate a woman sacked for helping to organise a union.

The dismissal of Pat Parfrey, a wages clerk, came just 10 days after the workers had begun to organise in ASTMS.

Victimisation at the firm is nothing new. In the last year, 25 workers have been sacked in similar circumstances. Now the strikers feel that, as one of them told our

with union officials.

The next week, all 43 union members came out, demanding recognition of the union and the re-instatement of the sacked men. All the strikers were promptly sacked.

They have been picketing ever since, and the dispute was made official, with Automat's products being blacked. But there are still orders in hand, and supplies are sufficient for the factory to function with scab labour.

But convenor Tom Smith spoke for the 43 when he said firmly "We are fighting for the basic right of belonging to a union without fear of intimidation or dismissal. We will stay out until we win."

Send messages of support and donations c/o T.A. Smith, 549 Liverpool Road, Irlam, Manchester.

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