

WORKERS' ACTION

8 pages
10p

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Solidarity still needed

DESPITE being blatantly sold out by the union leaderships, many BL workers are fighting on. As we write, Oxford Exhausts has voted to stay out.

The paint shop at Castle Bromwich walked straight out again after a mass meeting of the whole plant had voted narrowly to return. The stewards at Jaguar in Coventry are not even scheduling a meeting to discuss a return to work. And at Longbridge CO2 welders and finishers have come out over the removal [under the 92 page document] of a toggling-up allowance.

The bosses' threat still stands: if these workers are

still out on Wednesday, they will be sacked. So it is vital that solidarity is spread, and that the TGWU leaders are forced to stand by their promise to support any workers who stay out on strike.

If the BL bosses go ahead with their threat, it must be thrown back in their faces by an all-out strike of all BL workers, with the occupation of the factories if necessary. Solidarity action by other workers, particularly lorry drivers and dockers who handle cars, will also be needed. The trade union organisation in one of Britain's most important industrial companies is at stake.

SELL-OUT!

ON WEDNESDAY 16th the BL bosses threatened that anyone still out on strike on Wednesday 23rd would be sacked.

On Thursday 17th, leaders of the TGWU, the major union supporting the strikes, met BL management. They came out with an 'understanding' that the TGWU would call off the strikes, and in return the bosses would concede... practically nothing.

The bosses' ultimatum of a 5% pay rise (10% for skilled

workers) and 92 pages of strings would be 'operated without prejudice'. The TGWU would not actually sign an agreement on the bosses' package (not even the AUEW, which opposed the strikes from the start, has done that), but it would allow it to operate.

The BL strikers were furious. Some of them could hardly believe that TGWU general secretary Moss Evans, with his left-wing reputation, would do such a thing. Pickets at Rover called

on Evans to resign — or be kicked out.

On Sunday Evans said that despite the Thursday agreement the TGWU would support strikes where they continued. But the damage had been done. Seeing no national leadership for a fight against the bosses' determined and ruthless offensive, mass meetings at several BL factories on Monday voted to return.

The dominant political force in the BL Combine Committee, the Communist

Party, had praised the Thursday sell-out more loudly than Evans dared. In the giant Longbridge plant, where the CP is influential, the Works Committee gave no lead to the mood for a walk-out in many sections. It opposed a strike.

Thus a chance for beating the sell-out was lost. Evans' statement on Sunday showed the TGWU's attitude could be changed under pressure. A strike at Longbridge could have convinced the other plants to stay out.

But now, because of the outright strikebreaking of the AUEW leaders, and the treachery of Evans, and the cowardly lying of the CP, BL workers face a hard struggle against an escalating offensive. The only redeeming factor is the battle that workers at several plants did wage, and in some places are still waging, against the bosses' ultimatum.

This battle was and is at least a warning to the bosses and a spur for the local strikes that are bound to

develop as BL bosses press ahead with their sweeping attack on work conditions and shop stewards' organisation.

A battle to reorganise and reorient the trade union movement in BL is urgently needed now. The old leadership has shown itself unable to resist an offensive which threatens to cripple, perhaps eventually to destroy, the union organisation itself.

There must be a fight for democracy and accountability at all levels of the trade union structure in BL; regular stewards' meetings in every section of every factory; a genuine combine committee, elected by shop floor voting in each factory, with recallability of delegates and regular report-backs in work time.

The unelected Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee must go, and negotiations and strike action must be controlled by a democratically accountable combine committee.

No to the Carter-Thatcher war drive

U.S. SABRE-rattling over Iran and Afghanistan is now so belligerent that we may be nearer to world war than at any time since the Cuba crisis of 1962.

"The US government wants its NATO allies to take steps towards military readiness to be able to fight a 30-day war in Europe", reported the *Guardian* on 15th April. Carter is treating the Iran and Afghanistan situations as one crisis. Both are seen as presenting a threat to Middle East oil for the West. The European war would, of course, be against Russia.

The US has been paralysed since its defeat in Indochina, especially by the aftermath of the opposition of millions of Americans to that

war. Russia's seizure of Afghanistan and US helplessness in face of the prolonged captivity of the 50 US Embassy staff in Tehran underlined just how weak the USA had become in the world.

Now Carter is using both events to line up support for a US arms drive and for restoring conscription. And of course the crises have hugely boosted his previously near-bankrupt stock for next November's presidential election.

Whipped-up chauvinism diverts attention from domestic problems such as the current 20% inflation rate (just as in Iran the antics with the hostages deflect attention from the limits and disappointments of the Aya-

tollah's revolution).

Now Carter says there is an immediate threat to the captives' lives because the situation is increasingly out of the control of the nominal Iranian government. The implication is that American military action is 'necessary' and therefore an immediate possibility.

Carter's closest and most bellicose supporter in Europe is Margaret Thatcher.

The labour movement must speak out against war over Iran and Afghanistan. Trade union branches and Labour Parties must make it clear that though Thatcher goes along with Carter and the Labour front bench trails after Thatcher, the labour movement will go with none of them.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE PERSIAN GULF WE WILL REINSTATE THE DRAFT REGISTRATION, SO IF THE NEED ARISES WE CAN QUICKLY MOBILIZE OUR TROOPS THE SOVIETS MUST KNOW WE WILL NEVER EXXONERATE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STANDARDS OF A SAFE AND FREE...

INSIDE

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FUND

So far this month we have received £2.50 from Coventry and an excellent £73.15 from a collection among supporters in London. We still need £224.35 to reach our £300 monthly target.

We are also opening a special £2,000 development fund to buy a new printing press.

Mark envelopes 'development fund' and rush cheques and POs to WORKERS' ACTION, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

ALL OUT MAY 14th

Alexis Carras reviews E.P. Thompson's new pamphlet, 'Protest and survive'.

THE INVASION of Afghanistan provided a perfect excuse for the ruling classes of America and Europe to bury their own past crimes and to start pronouncing on the need to defend those time-honoured principles of 'peace', 'justice', and 'democracy'.

The jump from there to a resurrection of the old Cold War sabre-rattling and the need to restock those 'outmoded' nuclear stockpiles was very easy. The opportunity was not missed.

The Tories rushed to confirm officially their approval for NATO to site 160 Cruise missiles in Britain. Very few dissident voices were heard in Parliament in the first debate on nuclear weapons to be held for 15 years. Labour frontbench spokesman Peter Shore even suggested that the NATO missile modernisation might not be sufficient to cope with the Russian armoury!

One thing the hypocrites refused to mention, of course, was the arms build-up was going on long before the Afghan invasion. The United States were going ahead with a little-known decision to increase by 2 or 3000 the number of nuclear warheads carried on their B52 bombers.

Divide

As E.P. Thompson says in his new pamphlet 'Protest and Survive', the greatest lie in all history in that of nuclear deterrence: that is, by creating larger and larger arsenals, an eventual stalemate will be achieved, by which the imperialists and the reactionary bureaucrats of the Warsaw Pact will no longer vie with each other, but will peacefully sit down and in a latter-day Holy Alliance divide the world according to their mutual interests.

The very premise of 'deterrence' creates its own logic of escalation which far

NUCLEAR BALANCE OF TERROR

The biggest lie in history

surpasses even the most bizarre ideas of Dr. Strangelove. A whole new language comes into play: CEP (Circular Error Probability), MIRV (multiple independently-targeted re-entrant vehicles), ICBM (inter-continental ballistic missiles), ECCM (electronic counter-countermeasures), MEASL (Marconi Elliot Avionics Systems), and of course MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction).

'Strategic', 'Theatre', and 'Tactical' nuclear weapons are combined in a total 'chain of deterrence'. The new Cruise missiles which the NATO generals wish to locate in Europe are a relatively new departure for the imperialists. They are to serve in a limited nuclear engagement, confined to the European theatre and essentially leaving the American continent unscathed.

In plain man's words, the tactical nuclear weapon would be employed in the view of NATO to limit the war in Europe. Europe is to be transformed into a 'nuclear Maginot line' for the defence of the United States. The targeting of

the Cruise Missiles on the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria (not the USSR), and on the other hand, the limitation of the Soviet initial 'escalation of sufficient shock' to the West European and Mediterranean spheres, conveys something of the mentality.

Unscathed

Europe is expendable so long as the respective power blocs survive relatively unscathed. Divided Europe is once again to be the arena of great power politics, its 400 millions are the future sacrifice to achieve a 'real', lasting detente.

But the idea is false anyway that nuclear war can actually be contained, prevented from escalation into a world conflagration. The tremendous passions and clash of interests that an initial nuclear engagement in Europe would create amongst military and political commands in the rest of the world, the sheer disorganisation and lack of communication in such an instance,

would make escalation almost certain.

And yet the American and European imperialists insist on peddling this half-baked 'deception' about limited 'theatre' warfare.

Entirely abstract calculations concerning the numbers of casualties are used to numb the working people into accepting the inevitability of the possible conflict.

Meanwhile, the government will not supply large scale shelter for the population, although of course our leaders will rush to their shelters, especially created for the purpose — somewhere in the Chilterns. In effect they are leaving each family to fend for itself formidably armed with 'doors, planks... sandbags, books, heavy furniture', with which to construct protective cubbyholes, along with portable radios so as to keep in touch. But will there be anything to return to after 14 days of isolation?

Only one power can tear through the lies of governments, the self-interest of the large and profitable munitions corporations, the deception of the various intelligence agencies and the ideological mystifications of the Western and Eastern statesmen. If ever the slogan 'socialism or barbarism' was true, it is true now. On the proletariat of East and West rests the responsibility for literally rescuing the world.

Extra

However E.P. Thompson as well as falling into rather cheap anti-American 'European' chauvinism and indignation at the circumvention of the British Parliament by 'foreign' generals and American officials, sees the role of the working class as something desirable but essentially something 'extra' in this battle against nuclear holocaust, waged by intellectuals with a 'European consciousness' unwilling to kow-tow to American or

stop the warmongering of the imperialist ruling classes and throw off the murderous legacy of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The intervention of revolutionaries within the emerging movement against nuclear weapons must have this as its guiding perspective. The illusion of stopping nuclear proliferation or scrapping all nuclear weapons by appeals to our 'common humanity' or 'rationality is utopian.

Planning

Proletarian revolution, by immediately posing the possibility of the United Socialist States of Europe and eventually a world federation, by planning rationally the economic resources of society with the sole criterion of human need, is the only way forward.



Iran: latest target is student Left

AFTER VIOLENT clashes between Muslim reactionaries and the left in a number of Iranian universities — in Tehran, in Shiraz where 300 were wounded, and in Mashhad where over 500 were injured — the Islamic Revolutionary Council warned that it might close the universities.

When the violence did not stop after the three day limit set by the Council, the threat was carried out.

The chief target of the right wing's attacks were the Fedayeen and Mujahedeen Khalq organisations. Any hopes by the authorities that these organisations would soon decline have been disappointed. Both got thousands of votes in the recent elections.

Now the authorities will attempt to purge left-wing influence in the universities, perhaps refusing to readmit militant students who are members of the Fedayeen, the Mujahedeen, or the Tudeh ('Communist') Party (despite Tudeh's extremely conservative line).

In Kurdistan there have been further clashes between the army and the Pasdaran (Islamic Revolutionary Guards) and the Kurdish Peshmergas. According to the Turkish paper *Harriyet*, 500 Kurds and Iranians were killed in heavy fighting near the town of Saqqez.

An army column, it is re-

ported, has been stopped near the provincial capital of Sanandaj.

According to the government the troop movements are necessary in Iran's border dispute with Iraq, but this pretext is rightly not believed by the Kurds. They see the present military build-up and the stalling of negotiations between government representatives and Kurdish leaders as part of renewed aggression in the area.

Iraq: ruling with the help of racism

A HUNDRED and fifty people marched in London last week to protest against the deportation of Kurds from Iraq and the war against the Kurdish population in Iran.

The demonstration was jointly organised by the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, the Confederation of Iranian Students National Union, and the Iraqi Students Society.

At the beginning of the month, Samir Ali, an Iraqi Kurd, tried to assassinate Dr Azziz, a leading figure of the Ba'ath regime. Samir Ali belonged to Iraq's Fehli Kurd community — Shi'ite Kurds originating in the area of the Persian Empire included in Iraq after that state was established in 1923.

After the assassination attempt, a pogrom atmosphere was whipped up by the government, culminating in the arrest of Ali's entire

family — three brothers, seven sister, mother and father — and the deportation from Iraq, especially from the capital, Baghdad, of tens of thousands of Fehli Kurds.

This is only the latest in a long line of persecutions and deportations of the Fehlis. At the same time the government continues its deportation of Kurds from the north of Iraq to the deserts of the south and its repression of the Iraqi Shi'ite community.

The latest outrage in this wave of repression has been the execution of Imam Mohammed Bakr Sadr, the Shi'ite leader and head of the al-Dawa religious party.

Last year, following the resignation of President Hassan al-Bakr, Saddam Hussein gathered all the reins of power in his hands and carried out a bloody purge of top Ba'ath party officials. The cause seems to have been the refusal of a section of the Party leadership to support a campaign of terror against the Iraqi Shi'ites — actually a majority in the country but virtually excluded from high office by the overwhelmingly Sunni elites.

This repression is not only an attempt to rule through a policy of racism, but also a form of retaliation against the new Shi'ite regime in Iran.

Iraq is rapidly becoming an important tool of the US imperialism. Its border disputes with Iran are designed to weaken Iran, and its huge increase in oil production — 40% last year — is designed to stop Iran using its oil as a weapon against the imperialist powers and to undermine its stand within OPEC.

After Zimbabwe, will Namibia be next?

AFTER THE COLLAPSE of white supremacy in Zimbabwe, the days of the South African rule in Namibia (South West Africa) must be numbered.

SWAPO, formed in 1960 with the object of 'the liberation of Namibian people from colonial oppression and exploitation in all its forms', has been gaining more and more support.

SWAPO is not officially banned inside Namibia. But its open political work has met the most severe repression by the South African regime. SWAPO members, supporters and leaders have been detained, banned, killed and tortured, and some have simply 'disappeared'.

Rallies have been violently broken up by police and the office in Windhoek has been closed by the regime.

Virtually every SWAPO activity contravenes some apartheid law, and increasingly its work has to be underground. South Africa has between 75,000 and 100,000 troops in the territory, and some 40 bases in the North alone.

Attempts at unionisation have failed because of the murderous repression of South African forces. But the two month general strike

which began in 1971, originally over contract labour, involved many sections of the working population, including farmworkers and domestic labour. And the repression has failed to put down the resistance.

SWAPO continues to seek negotiated settlement within the UN framework, demanding the withdrawal of all South African troops, the release of all political prisoners and detainees, and the preservation of Namibia as a single political entity (South Africa is trying to turn it into a collection of bantustans). South Africa's occupation of Namibia is supposedly considered illegal by the UN. But the major capitalist powers have propped up the occupation with delaying tactics.

Now imperialism faces a dilemma. Zimbabwe shows that white domination cannot last. But it also shows that, contrary to the beliefs of some imperialist strategists, even in rigged elections SWAPO would be likely to win a big majority — so a 'moderate' black rule solution seems excluded.

Zimbabwe: free, but tied hand and foot

LAST WEEK'S PAPERS were full of reports of the affectionate speeches of Soames, Prince Charles and Robert Mugabe at the independence celebrations of Zimbabwe. All credited Soames and Carrington with little less than

miraculous powers of statesmanship, and Mugabe with little more than a convenient personality change.

Ian Smith was absent from the celebrations, on a lecture tour of South Africa, and from the cocktail party where 'long-time political antagonists chatted amicably'. Under a picture of Thatcher and Soames embracing on his return, the Sunday Times correspondent remarks that 'a sense of optimism prevails'.

If so, it is certainly not attributable to the prospects of foreign aid in rebuilding the country. The finance minister has estimated that £140M is needed for immediate rebuilding of homes, schools, hospitals, roads, etc. Britain is sending £7M this year, the USA a little less.

£75M is required for the first phase of the land programme, buying the 10 million acres of unused white-owned farmland. At the Lancaster House talks, figures such as £200M in international aid for land reform were mentioned. £75M is Britain's total contribution, almost all in loans, and over four years.

So the new Zimbabwean government will be hamstrung from the start by debts run up in order to pay off wealthy white exploiters.

While the imperialists pull out, patting each other on the back, unemployment is already 20%, and will rise as a new army is built out of ZANLA and ZIPRA and the Rhodesian army — headed by General Peter Walls, former commander of the war against the guerrillas.

A CODE OF PRACTICE AGAINST THE EDWARDES ONSLAUGHT

THE 92 pages of strings attached to the BL bosses' ultimatum amount to a wide-ranging programme for restructuring work conditions in BL. They are a plan for total management control, with workers working exactly where, when and how the bosses tell them.

To get the unions to agree on paper to this scheme is one thing. To put it into practice in the factories is another. Over the coming months there are bound to be many local and sectional disputes as management 'tries it on'.

Even on Monday 21st at Longbridge there were walk-outs by some sections over withdrawal of a 'toggling-up allowance'. The workers who walked out put on pickets, stopping the movement of finished bodies and halting Mini and Allegro assembly.

Socialists and militants need a clear programme, or 'code of practice', against

the bosses' offensive, in order to fight to generalise the local disputes into a united counter-offensive.

■ No moving of workers, or change of jobs or of shift arrangements, without the agreement of the workers in the sections affected and of their stewards.

■ Defence of mutuality.

■ No more company-imposed ballots or ultimatums. All working conditions to be subject to duly negotiated agreement with trade union representatives.

■ No victimisation. Criticism of the management, or normal trade union action in defence of workers' interests, cannot be grounds for

disciplinary action.

■ No change in shift arrangements, pay structure, or grading to be accepted which results in a lower wage rate for any group of workers.

■ Defend existing rights to lay-off pay, and fight for 100% lay-off pay.

■ Adequate manning levels to provide for maintenance of existing rest allowances

and for covering absences.

■ No productivity dealing. No selling of jobs or conditions.

■ No more 'participation' schemes.

Leyland—the TGWU sells out

Communist Party: The other traitors

A deal for fools and liars

WORKERS' ACTION supporters distributed this leaflet to BL factories in Birmingham on April 21st.

NO TO THE SELL-OUT — STAY OUT TO WIN!

"It's a sell-out!" — that was the response from workers throughout BL to Moss Evans' 'understanding' with BL bosses, reached on Thursday night, 17th.

The 'understanding' does not alter the terms of BL's 92-page document in any significant respect. The much publicised '10 day period of negotiation' simply means that the company will talk to union officials (not stewards) for 10 days before going ahead with major changes — and the company says that even this meaningless 'concession' won't

apply to manning levels and job flexibility — so Evans' claim that mutuality has been retained is completely untrue.

Similarly, the claim that 'status quo' has been saved is utter nonsense: the status quo clauses will only apply to issues not covered by the 92 page document — and if you can think of anything not covered by that document, we would be very interested to hear about it!

Even the famous promise from the company not to go ahead with their sacking threat turns out to be so much hot air. BL now say that they've only withdrawn the threat on condition that strikers return to work by Wednesday — anyone who stops out after that will still be sacked!

The 'understanding' is not worth the paper it's written on. BL have not conceded anything worth a damn to any BL worker, and anyone who tells you differently is either a fool or a liar...

Building a new leadership

WORKERS' ACTION supporters in Longbridge have been producing a regular fortnightly factory bulletin for two and a half years now.

With the announcement of the BL bosses' ultimatum, the WA supporters stepped up their activity. Bulletin no.60, dated March 25th, raised the call: 'Out with the steelworkers — general strike!'

No.61 was produced on April 3rd, after the AUEW opposed the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee call for strike action and a meeting of national officials and senior stewards had responded by climbing down on the strike call. It repeated the call for an all-out strike. "We all know that it will be a difficult struggle. But strong picketing of every plant plus flying pickets to the docks and car transporter depots could freeze Leyland solid, and force Edwardes to back down".

WA supporters also argued for an all-out strike in the Longbridge Joint Shop Stewards Committee, putting a resolution which was defeated after strong opposition from the plant leadership.

Bulletin no.62 came out on April 17th, as the strikes spread against the bosses'

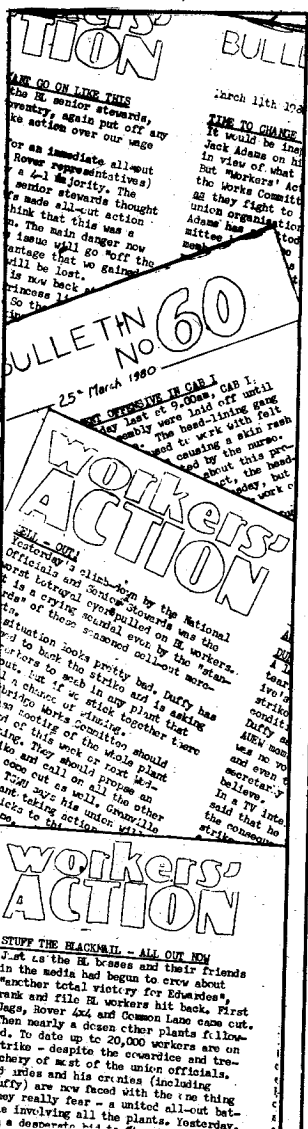
ultimatum. "There is now no 'middle ground'. The choice is complete capitulation to Edwardes, or an all-out strike".

Bulletin no.63, dated April 21st, was distributed not only at Longbridge but at the mass meetings held on that day in other BL plants in Birmingham. Its message: 'No sell-out, keep up the fight!' was well-received by many militants. At one plant, Rover Tyseley, shop stewards took bundles of the bulletin to distribute.

All available WA supporters or sympathisers in Birmingham, together with extra comrades from other areas, were mobilised to make sure that as many meetings as possible were covered.

This work is vital if an alternative to the sell-out leadership of the union leaders and of the Communist Party is to be built in BL. It also urgently needs more resources, in terms of active helpers and financial aid. Whether we work fast enough to stop the bosses completely crushing the union organisation in BL depends on our readers.

Send financial contributions or offers of help to WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.



BL WORKERS have been doubly betrayed: by the top bureaucrats of their trade unions, and also by the political party which dominates large sections of the plant-level leadership in BL, the Communist Party.

Terry Duffy of the AUEW and Moss Evans of the TGWU have made little effort to decorate their sell-outs. They have hardly tried to hide the fact that BL boss Michael Edwardes just raised the stakes too high for them.

But the Communist Party has taken over the job of trying to present the sell-out as a victory, to convince militant workers to accept it.

Article

On Friday 18th the CP daily Morning Star quoted CP members and sheet metal workers' general secretary George Guy on the sell-out: "This is a trade union victory".

The following day, a front page article signed by the Editor began: "How the establishment hates to admit when it's beat! Like a John Wayne hero in a B Western, Sir Michael Edwardes rode into town, all guns blazing. "On Thursday night he slipped out quietly, his posse frightened off by the firm stand of the trade unions."

The biggest victory, according to the Star — "the key words the rest of the media ignored", they said — was BL agreeing not to sack the strikers. In fact, the rest of the media did report that — and it was no victory at all.

Before, BL said it would sack the strikers if they didn't go back by Wednesday 23rd. Now, it says that it won't sack the strikers if they do go back by Wednesday 23rd! Where's the victory?

The Star, quoting George Guy again, also claimed that "the workers at BL have re-established a number of very important trade union principles".

This lying claim is based

on vague statements by the BL bosses in favour of "consultation" — statements which cost nothing and mean nothing — and the agreed 10-day waiting period for "major changes".

The only concession by the BL bosses in Thursday's talks with the unions was this 10-day clause. But it is worth very little.

The clause only applies to "major changes likely to have a significant and widespread effect upon employees". Ten days' discussion will be allowed, and then "all procedures are deemed to have been exhausted" and the bosses can go ahead.

And, as the Financial Times reports, "the management argues that this clause refers to things such as the commissioning of new plant or models rather than the more routine issues of manning levels and flexibility in the use of labour". The Observer confirms this: "BL pointed out this would only apply to a new model programme and not the wide range of reforms that it has in mind at plant level over the next two months".

In other words: the 10-day clause will have no effect at all on the implementation of BL's 92 pages of changes in work conditions and negotiating practices.

Truth

Mostly, the Morning Star just fell back on demagoguery, claiming the Fleet Street press was playing up the sell-out as a bosses' victory because of class bias. "Fleet Street fumbled telling the truth". The Star, which hardly has a good record for telling the truth itself, presented no evidence, marshalled no facts. It just hoped that it could use its readers' hard-learned hostility to the bosses' press to prop up its praise of the sell-out.

Like Duffy and Evans, the CP buckled under pressure. Duffy and Evans listened to Michael Edwardes' arguments that there is no other way out for

BL — and accepted them, for indeed there is no other way out under capitalism, and a struggle for socialism, to these bureaucrats, is at best something for the misty future.

The CP could see no alternative either. Like Duffy and Evans, they think in terms of having to "save BL" within the present system. "A major breakthrough has been won", they said. "British Leyland workers now have the opening to save the company that Britain needs".

Motive

The CP had more direct motives, too. Their political perspective centres not round working class mass action, but round the CP gaining bureaucratic positions. If CP convenors and senior stewards in the factories led a struggle, they could get victimised. Longbridge convenor Jack Adams has already had a final warning.

And many leading CPers reacted to the Longbridge vote against a strike for Derek Robinson by blaming the rank and file workers, rather than their own (and Robinson's) bureaucratic methods and failure to campaign vigorously against the right wing AUEW leadership. Now they react with contempt and cynicism to rank and file hostility to Edwardes' ultimatums.

For nearly 50 years now the CP has been a party of betrayal. It builds up some reputation for militancy in less difficult times, only to betray the working class — and its own militant members — at the crunch.

The beginnings of an alternative to the CP in BL exist in the Leyland Action Committee, which at present is a loose alliance centred round the Workers' Socialist League, the International Marxist Group, and Workers' Action. Now is the time to build it into a real rank-and-file movement which can destroy the CP's treacherous influence.

The SWP and the strikes

IN WORKERS' ACTION 173 we stated that, "When the Longbridge Joint Shop Stewards Committee met before Easter, SWP stewards voted AGAINST the motion by a WA supporter for... an all-out strike".

This was incorrect. The SWP stewards voted for the

motion. However, when they spoke in that meeting, the SWP noticeably did NOT argue for a strike. The same was true in their leaflets and in SOCIALIST WORKER, up until April 15th. We believe, therefore, that the political essence of the criticism we made of the SWP last week remains valid.

ORGANISE AGAINST THE SELL-OUT

Meeting for all supporters and sympathisers of the Workers' Action Leyland bulletin 7.30pm, Friday 25th April, at the 'Bulls Head', Bishopsgate St, off Broad St [5 Ways], Birmingham

A YEAR LATER SPG killers are still on the streets

EXACTLY A year after the Special Patrol Group killed Blair Peach on an anti-Nazi demonstration in Southall, the 'Friends of Blair Peach' committee, supported by anti-racist and socialist organisations, is stepping up the effort to kill the SPG.

On the anniversary, Wednesday April 23rd, pickets of police stations and meetings will be held all over the country. They will be demanding that the SPG be disbanded immediately.

The pickets and demonstrations will be also calling attention to the need for an amnesty for the hundreds of people convicted on police evidence for their part in the demonstration. Most have been heavily fined, a number have also been jailed.

The pickets will be followed up on Sunday 27th by a national demonstration in London.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has decided not to prosecute anyone over the murder of Blair Peach. Home Secretary William Whitelaw has decided on a few cosmetic changes,

notably that SPG members will frequently return to ordinary police duties to be replaced by other, 'ordinary' policemen.

This means that over time a much bigger proportion of the police force will get the specialist SPG training (and experience) to make them better at making war on strikers and demonstrators. There is nothing to rejoice in about that.

The SPG must be disbanded. Both the General Council of the TUC and the National Executive Committee of the Labour party have both called for the disbanding of the SPG. But what have they done about it?

What demonstrations have they organised? Where will their forces be when the pickets are put on the police stations on April 23rd?

Trade union and Labour Party branches should demand that the TUC and Labour Party launch a campaign to get the SPG disbanded and to get the killers of Blair Peach brought to trial.

ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTHALL

PICKET
YOUR LOCAL
POLICE STATION
WED APRIL 23rd

DISBAND THE SPG

DEMONSTRATION
SUN APRIL 27th

Assemble 1pm Speakers Corner Marble Arch
March via Scotland Yard to Rally in Trafalgar Square
REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH

JIMMY KELLY: THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

THE VERDICT of death by misadventure in the inquest on the Huyton labourer Jimmy Kelly has stunned and disgusted his friends and relatives.

Evidence from witnesses that Kelly was kicked and beaten by the police, and post-mortem evidence, strongly indicate that Kelly died as a result of his handling by the police.

Throughout the inquest the whole proceedings were tilted in favour of the police. There were two lawyers representing the police (one representing Merseyside's Chief Constable, the other representing the Police Federation) and only one for the Kelly Family.

A third post-mortem report — believed to deal with the original police version of the events surrounding Kelly's death — was suppressed by Chief Constable Oxford. Oxford has also prevented witnesses at the inquest from seeing their own police statement, so that the police QC, Rankin, is able to bully and confuse them in the witness box when they have only their memories of last June to rely

on. The Coroner made it quite clear whose side the state was on.

Since the verdict the local police have launched an all-out attempt to discredit the Jimmy Kelly Action Committee — in particular its chairman, Tommy Banks. However, the committee has declared that the fight to bring out the truth about Kelly's death and the brutality of Merseyside Police's K division will go on.

The demand for a public inquiry will be taken up again along with new attempts to gain publicity for the case. The possibility of appealing to the European Court of Human Rights has been raised by the Action Committee.

Pressure will be kept up on local Labour MP Harold Wilson to support the campaign. One thing is certain; the standing of Merseyside Police, and in particular K Division, has taken a severe battering and the myths of police neutrality have been shattered in the working class of Huyton and Merseyside.

ANDY DIXON

'THINGS WILL never be the same afterwards' pickets said again and again during the steel strike.

When the great upsurge of the French workers was sold out in June 1968, revolutionary students issued a poster headed 'Retour à la Normale' (Return to Normal) and depicting a flock of sheep. The question now being asked is will the steelworkers return to 'normal'?

One of the most urgent tasks facing the steelworkers in the ISTC, the union for production workers, is the reform of their union — to stop a return to its usual no-fight policy.

The ISTC is a bureaucratic undemocratic class collaborationist union. With the exception of the recent strike, it has done nothing to defend its members' living standards and jobs. The entire history of the union is one of abject crawling to the bosses.

During the strike, for the first time in the lives of many steelworkers, they were involved in decision making, rather than just being dictated to by a full-time official. The rank and file saw the power of democracy and direct action, and it is a lesson they will not forget.

The ISTC is undemocratic in virtually every aspect of its organisation. What is taken for granted in many unions is unknown in the ISTC.

It was only in 1976 that the ISTC held its first national conference, and Bill Sirs has already cancelled the 1980 conference on the grounds that it is too expensive. Conferences are not policy-making bodies — they can only advise the National Executive Committee.

So items raised at conference only become policy when the NEC has discussed

No steel worker's job is safe

NO STEEL worker can consider his job safe, even if he works in one of the plants not threatened with closure.

When steel was nationalised in 1967 there were around 40 steel-making centres in the UK with a work-force of approximately 270,000. BSC's plan is to concentrate steel production in five major centres: Lakenby and Redcar in Teesside, Scunthorpe, Ravenscraig, Port Talbot and Llanwern. Besides these the only other areas would be secondary rolling mills and the special and alloy steels in Sheffield and Rotherham.

After consistent losses throughout the '70s, BSC now plans to cut production jobs to 100,000 and possibly lower. That means the loss of 200,000 since the mid-'60s.

In areas earmarked for development, new techniques usually mean fewer jobs. For instance, the Basic Oxygen process requires only about a fifth as much labour as the old Open Hearth furnaces. An Open Hearth requires 9 to 10 hours to process a heat [load] of steel, whereas the Basic Oxygen process needs only 45 minutes.

At Port Talbot, when BOS converters replaced the Open Hearths, manning levels went from 2500 to 500. The new blast furnace at Redcar, one of the biggest ever built in Western Europe, employs only 450 men.

In the private sector, special steels particularly, mergers and takeover have generally meant trimming of the workforce. Firth Brown, the wealthiest and biggest firm in the private sector, has only recently announced 400 redundancies.

Steel union:

No 'return

to normal'!

and voted on the issues. The rules regarding selection of delegates are complex and it often ends up that fulltimers appoint them.

At the plant level there are no equivalents of shop stewards' committees and no single branch covers a plant. Instead organisation is by section, so there is a branch for the melting shop, one for the rolling mill, and so on. Each branch has its own secretary and negotiates separately. Any co-ordination usually comes from fulltimers outside the plant.

All this, of course, plays into the hands of the bosses. When a branch becomes

strong or militant, or in any way troublesome to the bureaucracy, it is either disbanded or split up. Fulltime officials operate in a world of their own, with little accountability to the membership.

One fulltime official from Scunthorpe who was interviewed on Yorkshire TV just before the strike described the internal regime in the ISTC as 'autocratic'. And he thought it was a good thing, too!

Strike action has always been frowned upon by the ISTC bureaucracy. Rule 4, Clause 3 of the rulebook states "No member or branch or official shall have

the power to order or sanction any strike or stoppage of work or any act that might be deemed unfair industrial practice." If anyone does try anything like an unofficial strike then Rule 4, Clause 15 will take care of them. This gives full power to the Executive to suspend or close any branch at its discretion.

Opposition to the bureaucracy has been growing, starting in 1976 when Sirs finally conceded the right to hold annual conferences. At the 1979 conference a document entitled 'Steelworkers and Reform' was circulated by the Liaison Committee

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These re... out by com... launched a... demagogic... Reform... need for... demonstrat

A programme to save jobs



The unity built up in the strike [picture, right] can be the basis for success in the jobs fight

NOW the steelworkers are back at work, the immediate question is defending jobs and fighting the closures. The unity achieved between steelworkers through the strike provides the basis for this fight.

The local strike committees should be developed into local sections of a National Action Committee. The unofficial national strike committee should take a lead in this.

A National Action Committee was set up before, in 1972, to fight the closures then. That one fell apart as workers from different plants tried to save their 'own' works. The arguments about which plant was more 'viable' than the others weakened the struggle and allowed the BSC bosses to pick the plants off one by one.

But an Action Committee based on the local strike committees could build on the unity achieved in the strike. It could also draw in representatives from the other industries affected by the steel closures: car workers, miners, transport workers and dockers.

Learning from the strike, it could firmly reject the bosses' whinnings about viability and lack of profitability. It's their crisis, not of the workers' making. What workers must be concerned with is livelihoods and jobs.

On that basis a fighting policy can be worked out. The ISTC must come out with a clear commitment to fight the job cuts, and stop negotiating with the BSC bosses about how to sack steelworkers.

All productivity deals must be rejected. They just mean selling jobs and conditions — and usually very cheaply.

A National ittee should; national link workers in t British steel workers' fig hour week.

The centra fight for j worksharing control with' cut hours, bosses say; enough wor then we say.

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OUR A NORMALE...



Executive steamrollered through the decision to return to work. But what was also missing was a rank and file organisation that could challenge the bureaucracy for leadership.

During the strike an organisation called the Steelworkers' Charter was set up, mainly by supporters of the Socialist Workers' Party. The Charter incorporates most of the basic demands of the Reform Committee and puts forward a minimum programme for steel workers for reform of the union and the fight against redundancies.

Jobs in steel

The fight for worksharing, for workers' control, and for nationalisation will immediately bring up the question of who controls society as a whole.

Given the central importance of the steel industry to the whole of British industry, the reorganisation of steel under workers' control means the reorganisation of all basic industry.



so as to acting in the interests of the working class. This is the only real alternative to the Tories' determination to shore up British capital at the expense of the working class. Their programme is the only serious programme for a bosses' government. Our programme must be a programme for a workers' government.

cost of living clauses (the sliding scale of wages) instead of just lump-sum increases — Section 3 of the Charter calls for take-home pay to keep up with prices — unless this means steelworkers should negotiate for increases every day of the year as prices go up then it means fighting for automatic increases in line with a cost of living index.

This cost of living index must be worked out by workers' organisations, since the index worked out by the government does not reflect the working class cost of living. In France, for example, unions work out their own cost of living indexes, which generally show higher inflation rates than the official figures.

But the Steelworkers' Charter avoids the question of workers' control, both in relation to the cost of living index and in relation to the steel industry. Reflecting the politics of the SWP, the demands of the Charter nowhere go beyond routine militant trade unionism, except in the demand for take-home pay to keep up with prices.

Section 4 of the Charter, 'Opposing rationalisation and mergers which threaten jobs' is actually wrong. Socialists do not oppose mergers or the centralisation of capital, we oppose threats to jobs whether by small firms or by big ones.

With a drastic crisis facing the steel industry, it is vital

to pose the question of how we change society from one that squeezes every ounce of profit from the workers to one run for and by the working class.

When the bosses say there isn't enough work to go round, we must fight to share the work out with no loss of pay and under workers' control. We fight for nationalisation without compensation of the entire steel industry, not just the unprofitable sectors.

We fight for workers' self-defence against the police, which many steelworkers have experienced firsthand on the picket lines.

The Steelworkers' Charter can provide the basis for a workers' answer to the crisis in the steel industry, but we would propose the following additions to it:

Nationalisation of the whole steel industry.

Work-sharing with no loss of pay under workers control.

The abolition of business secrecy. Workers' inquiries into all proposed cutbacks and closures, probing into the financial and state connection. An end to the siphoning off of the wealth produced by steelworkers in interest payments.

For workers' self-defence. For fulltime officials to be paid the average wage of steelworkers.

Steelworkers' Charter should call for a National Action Committee to be formed immediately in order to fight the job cuts.

STEELWORKERS' CHARTER

1. NO MORE CLOSURES

No more closures in the public or private sectors. For direct action in threatened works to be spread to other steel areas and throughout the trade union movement. Black all orders transferred from a works facing closure.

2. DEFEND EVERY JOB

No selling of jobs through productivity deals. Against group working practices and flexibility deals. No cover for vacancies. Against voluntary redundancy schemes. For a ban on all regular overtime. Defend the guaranteed week.

3. AGAINST WAGE CONTROLS AND INCOMES POLICIES

For take-home pay to keep up with prices. Against the self-financing of cost of living awards. For parity of wages and conditions throughout private and public sectors, and for a common settlement date for all annual pay negotiations in both sectors of the industry.

4. NO HIVING-OFF PARTS OF BSC INTO PRIVATE HANDS

Oppose rationalisations and mergers which threaten jobs.

5. NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF WORKERS

No cooperation with new plant or equipment if jobs are to go. For a 35 hour week without loss of earnings. For longer holidays and earlier retirement. For improved health and safety — black all unsafe equipment.

6. STRENGTHEN SHOPFLOOR ORGANISATION

Establish joint union committees of shop stewards and branch officials in each works to give unity and leadership with a regular levy on members to provide funds.

Withdraw from management-union participation schemes — reject the BSC 'Steel contract' and worker director schemes.

For trade union newsletters at branch and works level. For the 100% closed shop. Against SIMA representation.

7. RANK AND FILE DEMOCRACY

For regular branch section or mass meetings of the membership to be held, whenever possible in works time.

No settlement of disputes without full report-backs to decision-making by the members concerned. No enforced secret or postal ballots and no co-operation with management ballots which undermine trade union representation.

8. REFORM OUR UNIONS

For delegate conferences to be policy-making. Regular election of full-time officials. For the circulation of election addresses based on policies. For the right of recall of full time and lay officials. For the ISTC Executive Council elections to be based on Divisional representation and the abolition of the trade sections.

For a lay delegate controlled NCCC.

9. DEFEND OUR UNIONS

Total opposition to all anti-trade union laws. For the workers right to determine the location and numbers of pickets needed to win a dispute. Honour other workers' picket lines and respect calls for blacking.

For defiance of the Tory Employment Bill — industrial action to free any workers jailed for trade union activity.

For financial, moral and physical support for other workers in dispute and for campaigns to defend our hospitals, schools and the Welfare State.

10. BUILD RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION

Win support for this Charter amongst workmates and in trade union bodies. Build towards a national shop stewards committee linking all steelworkers.

GENERAL STRIKE: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

A review by Mandy Williams

ORGANISED revolutionaries have a very serious responsibility to the working class in developing the political perspectives of the general strike. The pamphlet recently produced by Workers' Action looks at some of the problems and possibilities.

A general strike is qualitatively different from the conglomeration of sectional strikes with which it may begin: it can be used directly for political ends, and implicitly poses the question of state power, challenging many existing state institutions by the development of workers' councils, of bodies for making and executing decisions about distribution and apportioning of essentials, of national organisation of the struggle: the 'rudimentary organs of a potential working class state'.

Such developments in the general strike of 1926 are, with other historical lessons, considered in the second article in the pamphlet, 'Dare to Fight', which is reprinted from 1972. This also discusses the different conceptions of a general strike: the 'well-orchestrated ultimate weapon controlled and directed from above', versus the 'self-mobilisation of the working class'.

The first view, argued by Karl Kautsky and the mainstream German Social Democrats before 1914, is shared by many present-day reformists and Stalinists. And today trade union bureaucrats in Britain try to use the threat of a general strike to scare the Tories, while busily trying to ward off rank and file pressure for an actual general strike in favour of talks with the Tories... and more talks with the Tories...

The third article in the pamphlet examines the experience of May '68 in France, and the cynical derailment of that movement by the CP and its trade union the CGT. The CP had for 20 years diverted industrial struggles into isolated ineffective actions, by divisive policies and demoralising token gestures (such as half-hour strikes). It was taken by surprise by the May events: the May 13th strike was called for one day, as yet another token gesture, but it was answered by millions of workers (many more than were organised in unions) and rapidly grew and developed with widespread factory occupations and demonstrations.

Fighting desperately to catch up with events and to restrain the struggle, the CP tried to slander and discredit the student struggle which had inspired many workers. It tried to limit the demands to separate wage concessions. Eventually de Gaulle took advantage of the lack of revolutionary leadership, challenged the CP head on, and won the ensuing el-

ection (to which the CP agreed with relief), gaining votes from disillusioned workers.

Yet much of the left called in 1972-4 for a 'general strike to kick the Tories out', and they repeat that call now. The last article in the pamphlet emphatically rejects this slogan. It not only does 'kicking the Tories out' mean other than a general election (hoping presumably for the return of a compliant Labour government)? ... Exactly what stopped the movement in France in its tracks, and led to its defeat.

It is not just a historical debate. *Socialist Challenge* of 6th March, having established that the aim is to bring the Tories down, continues: "What is needed is not just an attempt to get more industrial militancy, but an overall political perspective.

policies within the Labour Party. Thus we rationally combine work within the existing labour movement to change its policies, with keeping open the perspective of a general strike that could rapidly change the movement and throw up new more powerful and democratic organisations like workers' councils. *Socialist Challenge* garbles the perspectives: it does no work (or very little) within the Labour Party now, and yet it implicitly relies on the Labour Party to provide the way forward from such a great mobilisation as a general strike!

The pamphlet explains that a general strike can begin with apparently less radical demands than removal of the government (throwing out anti-union legislation, for example), without such demands

Why we
need
a
General
Strike

A new pamphlet from Workers' Action.
20p plus 10p postage from PO Box 135,
London N1 0DD.

This involves putting across the socialist arguments that can offer a real solution to the crisis of the economy with a line of action to get rid of the Tories."

The socialist measures they propose include such demands as the 35 hour week and the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses. Good advice to the next Labour government? They do not mention how such measures are to be won by the 'general strike to kick the Tories out' which they propose.

In 1979, *Workers' Action* supporters worked in numerous CLPs around the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory platform which included just such demands. Some CLPs used the SCLV platform, and SCLV supporters continue to fight for such

limiting the struggle and the possibilities for its development in advance.

On the TUC demo on March 9th against the 'Employment Bill', TUC banners called for the government to 'change course' and Len Murray pleaded for more time to talk to the Tories. But the rank and file called for action now, for a general strike, for an offensive against the Tories the bosses and their state, not conciliatory talks.

Those calls must not be restrained by any attempts to determine in advance the course of the struggle: the action must not be restrained by muddled political perspectives in a radical guise. That is the theme of the first article in the pamphlet which argues for a general strike as an answer to the task of today: Stop the Tory blitz.

WORKERS' ACTION

AS FROM this issue, Workers' Action will be going to 8 pages for a while.

Over the last few months, we feel there has been an imbalance between the efforts we have put into producing the paper and the efforts put into organising circulation, supporters' groups, and campaigns which the paper supports.

With the increased activity as struggles against the Tories escalate, and parti-

cularly with the expansion of the Women's Fightback campaign which WA supporters have helped to organise, the imbalance has become more serious. We are therefore reducing the number of pages in the paper so as to free some of the comrades previously working on the paper for organising and campaigning activity.

The political reasoning behind this is that for us the paper is an instrument for a

purpose — and that purpose is to organise in the class struggle and build a revolutionary left wing in the labour movement.

With the help of our readers — in financial support, in sales of the paper, and in active cooperation in campaigns — we will be able to make major progress in that central purpose in the coming months, and quickly return the paper to 12 pages on a more balanced basis.

FIGHT FOR A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT



The second part of an article arguing that socialists should raise the political slogan for the Labour Party and the labour movement to break with the bourgeoisie, to reorient and restructure themselves and to form a workers' government.

A Workers' Government and a Labour Government

A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT would differ from the Labour governments we have experienced so far by:

- really fighting for the demands in the programme above, or at least some of the most essential.
- Even if resting on a Parliamentary majority (which is the most probable variant, at the beginning), basing itself on the working class, and relying on its mobilisations in the struggle against bourgeois resistance.
- By breaking to a serious degree with the organs of the bourgeois state power, its bureaucracy, police and army.
- By being to some degree directly answerable to and controllable by the working class, because dependent on it against the bourgeois state — not, as with the Wilson-Callaghan government, dependent on the bourgeois state against the labour movement and against Labour Party conference decisions.

It was therefore not possible to call for a Workers' Government in a situation where there was no revolutionary organisation of sufficient size and weight, where the bourgeois state remained stable and the class struggle remained essentially confined within the channels of bourgeois society, and where the Labour Party dominated working class politics and was itself in the bureaucratic grip of the right wing, capable of surviving while ignoring the labour movement's demands.

1972-4: The Left's dilemma

WE WILL GET a clearer idea of the problem and of what WA thinks is sufficiently altered to allow the raising of the Workers' Government slogan now by examining how the dilemma was faced by forces on the revolutionary left (and by *Militant*, which is an amalgamation of left-reformist and right-centrist tendencies, bound together by the Labour Party).

The SWP focused (and still focuses) on industrial action, and made timeless socialist propaganda. It is a combination of syndicalism and abstract socialism. Industrial action was and is its only answer to the impasse the class faces.

Implicitly its position is that until the SWP is a mass party any talk of a fundamental social change, of socialism to be fought for immediately, is ruled out. In essence their project is one of replacing reformism and the Labour Party by rebuilding the political labour movement from the ground up that is, building the SWP, which through involvement in militant industrial action and socialist propaganda can gradually become the dominant organisation in the working class movement.

Their perspective is actually a perspective — at best — for decades ahead. The problem is that we haven't got decades. We face a catastrophic crisis and decline of British society now, and the need for answers now, even if the left isn't ready! The SWP's view implies pessimism about the working class being able to do anything except at best hold its own through its industrial muscle.

Others, prominently *Militant*, but not only them — called and call on the Labour Party to carry through socialism, with slogans like Labour to power with socialist policies, nationalise the 200 monopolies and Labour Take the Power.

Essentially all such summary slogans were fantasies, separated from a programme for restructuring the labour movement or even (before the Labour Party's Brighton conference decision) from a plausible perspective for the

success of such a programme. The correct Marxist approach of making specific demands on those organisations leaders who claim to represent the working class or are elected through its organisations, as a means of mobilising forces to struggle for those demands and against those opposing them or refusing to fight for them — is generalised foolishly into a very abstract summary slogan. *Militant* itself counterposed such fantasies to the industrial class struggle.

Workers' Fight like *Workers' Action* focused on the industrial struggle, and also focused on work in the Labour Party, but realistically, recognising the limitations placed by the relatively stable right wing domination. Fantasies about Labour instituting socialism were avoided; so was the view that in 1974 the Labour government could be a real working class government. Specific demands were placed on the Labour government, and of course a Labour vote was called for.

This approach was also limited, recognising the reality of the Labour Party in 1974, and did not put forward an immediate perspective of struggle for socialism, despite an attempt to relate to the existing political labour movement as well as to the trade unions and the industrial struggle. The assessment of what was possible in the circumstances was at any rate more or less accurate (though perhaps tending too much to accept the state of the political labour movement as given, despite raising the call to renovate and democratise the labour movement, including the Labour Party too). In so far as any immediate socialist solution was looked for, it was as a possible outcome from a general strike that would lead at least to dual power and thus perhaps circumvent Parliament-based reformism.

The IMG looked to industrial action, more or less ignored the Labour Party, and instead called for a government of the working class, based on the trade unions (in various forms). This could only be a mystified and foolishly self-consoling way of calling for a Labour Government. A later variant (see their 1976 *British Perspectives*) called for a workers' government based outside Parliament, which was seen as probably originating in a general strike creating organs of dual power — i.e. soviets or their rudiments. This was a sectarian and 'next year in Jerusalem' variant of the workers' government which essentially had nothing to say to the immediate situation. It was especially foolish in that the Parliamentary traditions of the British labour movement are very powerful, would be a big factor for the ruling class even in a general strike — and in any case have to be related to.

None of these approaches is satisfactory. In the case of *Workers' Fight* (though we would now make some criticism of the approach of this tendency, too) the unsatisfactory situation arose essentially from the hard reality that the ruling class (and the non-combattant left) dominated the political labour movement.

After the Brighton decisions

FOR THIS situation to change it was first necessary either for the Labour Party to lose its predominant position in working class politics, or for the political wing of the labour movement itself to begin (it is as yet no more) to change — and to begin to change sufficiently for it to be now not fantastic to set as a goal its transformation (at least partially, and on condition that further changes are pressed through) into a real instrument of the working class.

The decisions of the Brighton conference, if they are pushed through and consolidated to make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable and therefore more or less controlled by the labour and trade union movement, open up a new perspective. The posing of a full transitional pro-

gramme to the British labour movement, that is, the posing of immediate socialist tasks for the struggles now opening up, ceases to be fantasy and nonsense on condition that the forces can be organised to push through the changes in the Labour Party and labour movement — i.e. on condition that the struggle against Thatcher's government is linked to the struggle for a democratic and accountable political wing of the labour movement.

It is not required that the Labour Party becomes a revolutionary party — or that one should think it can or will become that. Only, that the political organisation of the trade unions be tied to the working class interest, by depriving the Parliamentary tops in office of the possibility of an alliance on a stable basis between themselves and the bourgeois state, and that the political wing become immersed in the class struggle. That will not, of course, stop the leaders weaseling and betraying. But given these conditions, and given the activity of organised revolutionary militants, raising revolutionary political perspectives, the ferment and mobilisation of the working class against the Tory government will do the rest.

For many decades Marxists looked to the experience of the working class with reformism in office to lead to a break with reformist politics. This has not yet happened on a mass scale. Probably it will require a serious struggle for reforms by the mass labour movement in the present crisis conditions to make it happen. In advance of a mass break from reformist politics, the experience of the Wilson/Callaghan government ignoring their own movement and resting on the bourgeois state against it has led to a move to restructure the Labour Party — to democratise it and, by rendering it accountable to its members, to destroy the possibility of a repeat of the experience of the last Labour Government.

The development is a powerful testimony to the tenacity of the hold the Labour Party has in the working class movement, because it is relatively supple and flexible, or can be made to be so.

The Brighton decisions are — or rather can be made to be — the beginning of a process of renovating and reconstructing the labour movement in all its wings and sections, from shop stewards' committees through to the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Brighton demonstrates that transforming the political wing of the labour movement is a possibility, and thus that it is possible to raise the transitional demand for a workers' government in Britain, where in the initial stages such a government would inevitably have the Labour Party as its major or only component.

Could the proposals to democratise the Labour Party — in many cases to bring it into line with other social democratic parties — be absorbed by the Labour bureaucracy? Yes, undoubtedly — over a period of time. Now, however, the struggle for democracy has deprived the bourgeoisie of a stable fall-back party of bourgeois government, just as the class struggle begins to escalate. A blasé, dead, static, predestined assessment of the struggle in the Labour Party writes out all the opportunities for revolutionary intervention.

Even should the Brighton decisions be reversed or deflected at the next conference, as is possible, the experience points to a decisive area of continuing struggle for all socialists and trade union militants who really want to settle accounts with the Tories and with capitalism.

Tasks of Revolutionaries

WHAT THEN are the tasks of revolutionaries?

1. To put forward in the labour movement a full programme for the beginning of the socialist transformation of society, as our immediate answer to the crisis of British capitalist society and the consequent Tory attacks on the labour movement and on working-class living standards.

2. To crown that programme with the call for the creation of a workers' government which will at least fight for the immediate interests of the working class, breaking with the bourgeoisie where necessary and to the extent necessary. We try to root the daily work of the labour movement in a perspective of socialist and working-class power. We explain that without the workers' government slogan, all socialists can do is have a syndicalist focus or a more or less abstract socialist focus (or both).

We agitate and make propaganda for the specific measures and demands in the action programme, fighting to commit the organisations of the labour movement to struggle for them. Thus we prepare politically to give weight and meaning to the Action Programme.

In Britain there is already in existence a vast network of factory committees which could expand their activities and functions to the point of being dominant over the organs of the bourgeois state, and even before creating soviets, could be the basis of a decisive struggle. We made demands on these working-class organisations (while making propaganda for soviets): the working class must, in the course of the struggle, learn confidence in its own democracy and in the potential of its own existing factory organisations to expand into a framework of democratic working class self-rule in the whole of society.

We avoid like the plague delusory generalisations like 'Labour to power with socialist policies'. We say instead: 'These and these measures and demands alone will serve our class interests. A government will be a workers' government, even in a minimal sense, only if it really fights for these demands, going as far as necessary in a break with the bourgeoisie. We explain that in the light of all experience such a government would have to support or perhaps (less probably) initiate working-class action to disarm the state forces or major sections of them, and to begin to build a counter to them. Only a government thus freed — from the pressures and the threats of the armed forces of the ruling class could carry through a serious working-class programme of reconstruction of society.'

We put forward these proposals neither in the spirit of manipulating the labour movement, nor merely to expose the leaders by making impossible demands — but as measures immediately and self-evidently necessary for the working class. They can be fought for and realised on condition

CLEGG ON TEACHERS

Yesterday's pay rise tomorrow

AT £2.75 FOR 62 pages, the Clegg Report on Teachers' pay is a pretty slim and expensive volume. Compared with its predecessor, the Houghton Report of 1974, with its 204 pages crammed with useful statistics for only £1.75, the Clegg Report is pretty dull and its price per page is 417% up on Houghton.

The pay increases proposed, needless to say, have not risen at the same rate, or even in line with inflation.

The first method used by Clegg for calculating "comparability" led the Commission to justify massive increases for those who actually do the job of teaching in the classroom — the Scale One and Scale Two teachers — while they could only justify much more modest increases for those higher up the school hierarchies. Obviously this decision, which would have had the effect of narrowing differentials, was a political embarrassment, so they finally turned to the method of the Houghton Report.

Fuss

As a pay award, teachers' 1979 salary increase (for this is what Clegg is all about) rivals the most complex spy story for intricacy... although really and truly all the fuss has merely been a useful device for delay-

ing payment. The press can trumpet on about teachers getting a 17% pay rise, but 17% of last year's salary which is not all paid until 16 months later is a good deal less than 17% once inflation is taken into account!

Take the plight of a teacher on Scale One. By virtue of the fact that the unions had allowed things to slide since the Houghton Award of 1974/5, and their inability to insist on a pay award linked to inflation, the National Union of Teachers found itself in 1979 submitting a claim for a massive 38% increase. It was quite moderate in terms of keeping up with inflation, but it seemed wildly militant to many people, including many teachers.

This 1979 pay claim was due from April 1st 1979. In fact there was a 9% award from April 1st, plus £6 on account. The £6 was payable each month until December, after which it had to be paid back to the employers.

All this was perfectly acceptable to the union negotiators, because they had been led to believe that the Clegg Report would be ready by January 1980. Of course, it wasn't, so there was an interim report which offered teachers 7.5% payable from January 1st pending the full Clegg report which has just come out.

Having gained our 7.5% in January, we found ourselves

promptly docked the £6 payments we had been receiving over the last nine months, except that these had to be paid back in three months at the rate of £18 a month!

We finished paying those back by the beginning of April, then the Clegg Report in full was upon us, though not in one part but in two! The 17% is proposed to be paid half from January 1st 1980, and the other half from September 1980... i.e. 16 months after the initial payment was due!

The first half of the 17% (i.e. 8½%) includes the 7½% we've been enjoying since January 1st so that, in

effect, we get 1% backdated to January 1st, and we don't get the final payment until September, by which time we should be enjoying the fruits of our 1980 pay claim.

There's a word for all this jiggery-pokery and it's not a kind one. Those teachers just entering the job, who were awarded just over 8½% as an interim award in January, now find themselves strictly speaking in the position of having to pay back the surplus, although Clegg has at least the good grace to suggest that this 'debt' is waived.



Clegg: 1979's pay rise in September 1980...

Facts

The Clegg Report does however cite some useful facts: "The National Foundation for Educational Research has shown that over a working year of 46 weeks, teachers average out as spending between 38 and 41 hours a week on school related activities." These figures — which compare with an average 37 hours a week for other white collar workers — show that teachers are indeed workers, not some "class apart" as some teachers and some workers think.

Not surprisingly, the employers have seized upon this statement to try and link working conditions with future

pay awards. "If the pay award takes into account this length of working week, we have a right to insist that work done outside the classroom is written into the contract and legally enforceable."

But what the employers see as work outside the classroom and what the NFER measured as work outside the classroom are two different things.

The employers are falling over themselves to legally enforce such things as lunch time supervision, extra-curricular activities, parents' evenings, staff meetings and in-service training outside the school day. They even want to enforce covering for absent colleagues. But they suggest a mere 2¼ hours preparation and marking time for a teaching load of 27 hours!

Teachers must now fight for an end to this sort of 'comparability' swindle and for pay rises linked to inflation. They must also fight against conditions being traded off for pay rises.

And finally, they cannot sit back and allow local councils to run towards more rate rises as a means for financing increases in teachers' salaries. Teachers must be in the forefront of struggles against cuts and rate rises, explaining how rate rises are just another cut for the working class.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

STUDENTS BACK ARMAGH WOMEN

THE NATIONAL Union of Students' conference last week voted to "condemn the treatment of Republican women prisoners in Armagh jail, Northern Ireland". The motion was passed by a majority of 85, despite considerable pressure from the NUS Executive.

The previous day, two women speakers received a standing ovation after speaking about the conditions in H Block and Armagh women's prison. When a collection in aid of the welfare fund for women campaigning against prison conditions in Northern Ireland was proposed, Communist Party member Andy Pomaine made a statement on behalf of the Executive describing the women as representing a front organisation of the IRA.

He warned the conference that no-one could tell "where the money was going to".

Amidst considerable uproar, the collection was held in defiance of the Executive and raised £150 from the conference floor.

Time and again the Executive depended on whipping up "anti-terrorist" hysteria to deflect attacks on the role of the British government in the North of Ireland.

The NUS Exec was also

criticised for failing to organise a demonstration against the Prevention of Terrorism Act in flagrant breach of a mandate from the previous conference, and for deliberately excluding all reference to the International Women's Day picket outside Armagh jail on March 8th from the mailing list despite a specific request from the NUS Women's section.

Although amendments calling for restoration of political status for Republican prisoners, self-determination for the Irish people and support for the Republican forces fell, the passing of the main motion on Armagh jail was a real achievement in breaking the wall of silence within the student movement on Ireland.

Ironically the Executive followed the conference floor in giving a standing ovation to Leo Mugabe, nephew of the new Zimbabwe Prime Minister and an ex-ZANU guerilla. Obviously Ireland is a bit too close to home to support the armed struggle.

Ireland was not the only issue over which the NUS Executive came under attack. Conference overwhelmingly rejected the Exec report on future orientation, which would reduce NUS to little more than a Parliamentary

lobby.

The Exec's strategy depended on putting "convincing arguments to the Tories". The report also argued (in the words of outgoing NUS President Trevor Phillips) that "students should concentrate on their own problems and stop worrying about the rest of the world."

Issues such as racism and sexism would only be taken up within the field of education. And international solidarity was described as "being irrelevant to most students".

With many delegates at the conference seeing the need for a fight against Tory policies, the hold of the Left Alliance (a mish-mash of Communist Party members, Liberals, independents and right-wing Labour bureaucrats and careerists) over next year's Exec was greatly weakened. Seven Exec positions went to SSA (IMG), SWSO (SWP) and independent National Organisation of Labour Students candidates.

The future of NUS lies with these left-wing forces campaigning together to build a mass base against the cuts within colleges, and to link these campaigns with those going on in the labour movement. NICK LAWRENCE

...AND IN SCOTLAND Teachers say £40 now

"NO MORE Bloomers", chanted 2000 striking teachers in Edinburgh last Monday (21st), as they picketed a meeting between union negotiators and management over pay.

The 'Bloomer' in question is Keir Bloomer, the leader of the negotiators for the EIS, the main Scottish teachers' union.

Like English teachers, Scottish teachers have been waiting for over a year for an award from the Clegg comparability study. Unlike English teachers they have not been given one.

Instead, Scottish teachers have been told that as their pay structure is so different they must work it out for themselves.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that Scottish primary teachers get paid less than English ones, while Scottish secondary teachers get paid more than their English and Welsh counterparts. To end this 'primary anomaly' within the few guidelines that Clegg has given would mean a proportional CUT in the level of Scottish secondary teachers' pay.

The result of the year's wait for a kick in the teeth has been a wave of unofficial strike action unparalleled

since the major Scottish teachers' strike of 1974.

The teachers' bitterness has been compounded by the behaviour of their national leadership over the past few months. 'Battle cries' from the union leadership have ranged from a front-page banner headline in the union journal, three months ago, "Don't hustle Clegg", to a statement only three weeks ago, "We are almost entirely satisfied with the progress of the Clegg negotiations".

A touching faith in the goodwill of management was coupled with some astonishing manoeuvres to prevent any rank and file action. In one school, Firhill High in Edinburgh, a decision was taken at a full meeting of EIS members to come out on unofficial strike to picket Clegg while he was in Edinburgh on a fact-finding mission. The next day, Keir Bloomer arranged directly with the headmaster (a non EIS member) and over the heads of the elected EIS representatives for another school EIS meeting [in school time!] to try to call off the strike.

The announcement of the meeting was made in a notice

signed by the headmaster and read out to astonished members and representatives by a member of the FSTA, a rival union.

At the time of writing, union leadership and management are trying to cobble together a deal to buy off the teachers.

They may succeed despite the teachers' militancy. With the collaboration of the union leaders the employers may be able to sell an award amounting to a little more than the miserable Clegg award for England and Wales.

But they can only do this if they can capitalise on the lack of a coherent and unifying demand from the striking teachers.

Scottish teachers should take up the demand first made by the Scottish Rank and File teachers' group for a £40 a week across-the-board increase.

This is a demand which amalgamates the 1979 claim [the subject of the Clegg report] and the 1980 claim which is now also due. It should be backed up by escalating unofficial action to force the leadership to put up a real fight.

CALLUM McRAE [EIS rep., Firhill High]

that the capitalist framework and institutions are not treated as sacrosanct. We offer our honest collaboration for the fight.

In addition, of course, we explain in our propaganda that only with the complete expropriation and disarming of the bourgeoisie and its agents, and the consolidation of the rule of the working class in a stable system of democratic workers' councils based on the armed and self-controlling working class — only then will it be a stable and complete workers' government. But short of that a beginning is actually possible and can be made by the organisations and militants of the labour movement who do not yet accept our politics.

Many people in the labour movement now are likely to interpret our call for a workers' government as just a call for a Labour government. That is beyond our control. We do our best to limit misunderstandings, but we can only shout as loud as our voice. To refrain from raising necessary slogans for fear of misunderstanding is to boycott ourselves. To the degree that we win support for our programme and for the working of renovating the labour movement, we become a force to help ensure that there will never again be a Labour Government like the ones of the past.

To the degree that the planks in our programme are taken up and demanded by the labour movement, militants are picking up weapons against reformism, even if they also have illusions in it at the beginning. The struggle for a workers' government can be taken up by all those who want to fight for working class interests and to really defeat the Tories.

3. We point to the need to renovate, reorganise, and reconstruct the existing labour movement as an essential prerequisite for a workers' government, a government essentially different from the bourgeois Labour governments of the past. This work becomes extremely urgent in the light of the objective social tasks confronting the labour move-

ment.

We must point out to all sections of the labour and revolutionary socialist movement the link that exists and must be developed between the direct class struggle and the struggle against the bourgeois agents in the labour movement. That link is the prerequisite to be able to give the direct action struggles a political focus that can lead to a real victory over the Tories and over capitalism. To prosecute the class struggle in the period ahead on the level of even beginning to offer an overall socialist solution, it is a precondition that the class struggle be prosecuted within the labour movement itself, against the agents and unreformable collaborators of the ruling class and of the Tory government.

We must demand here and now that the Labour Party and trade unions break off collaboration with the Tory government and its agents.

Bring Industrial Militants into the Labour Party

4. We must turn the Labour Party outwards to the class struggle — and begin to get away from Labour Party work in the spirit of *Militant*, which has given Labour Party activity a bad name.

At the same time we must turn industrial militants towards the Labour Party — and towards the political perspective of a workers' government. For the revolutionary left this is the essential point to insist on.

The experience of 1973-4 is fundamentally that because the best industrial militants were not also involved in the Labour Party, they had no political instrument to fight even for reforms. The Wilson/Callaghan leadership was all the better able to demobilise the working class.

The passive consumerists of the SWP lay great stress on the moribund state of many Labour Party branches, and the

fall in individual membership in the last two decades. To this we counterpose the need to build and develop those organisations by recruiting industrial militants and making the Labour Party organisation reflect the trade union struggles. The point is not whether the Labour Party membership has withered or not. It has remained the party of the working class movement. To industrial militants we say: orientate to the movement. If you want a workers' government, join us in the fight to change the labour movement to make that possible.

To those who have been working to democratise the labour movement we say that a perspective of a slow and peaceful democratisation of the labour movement — as society rots! — is impossible.

The fight for democracy in the labour movement can only be won if it is linked to the fight for class-struggle politics which gives purpose and urgency to it. The labour movement will be renovated urgently, under the felt pressure of a dramatic crisis, or not at all.

5. To the sectarian left we explain the close organic links of the Labour Party and the trade unions — the fact that there is an open-valve connection allowing the rank and file militants to flood the political wing should they wish to. We advocate that they should do this — on the political perspective of fighting to make the political labour movement into an instrument of class struggle. We explain that only if large layers of the militants can be got to abandon the politics of self-exclusion will anything other than defensive struggle be possible.

We explain the need for a full programme of democratisation of the whole labour movement, trade unions and Labour Party alike, and demonstrate that these are inseparably linked. Without democratisation of the unions nothing stable can be achieved within the Labour Party dominated by those unions. We insist that it is foolish to counterpose the Labour Party and the trade unions as the neo-syndicalists of the SWP do.

TO BE CONTINUED

WORKERS' ACTION

A DEMO of 300 gave Margaret Thatcher a noisy and hostile reception when she arrived at Lansing Bagnalls, Basingstoke, as part of an official visit to some of the town's industries.

She had earlier officially opened a new electronic firm, Posidata, where she praised the enterprise of the two bosses who had started the firm. The local Tory MP, David Mitchell, was practically singing hymns to 'her policies which had made new businesses possible'.

At Bagnalls, there was little praise outside the gate. Members of the Constituency Labour Party, Trades Council, Labour Party wards, hospital workers from the GMWU, workers from other engineering factories and a delegation of nurses from Winchfield Hospital (which is threatened with closure), the LPYS, Women's Rights Group, students from the 6th form college and Workers' Action supporters were joined outside the gates by Bagnalls workers. Other workers chose to stay away for the day.

There was an explosion of

Basingstoke factory welcomes Thatcher

TORIES OUT!

noise as Thatcher arrived, and any speeches of welcome would have been drowned out by chants of "Tories Out!"

The Workers' Action factory bulletin had called for a walk-out on Thatcher, with success in areas of the factory complex where a firm lead was given. Many of the bollermakers and shop stewards from other unions came out, with a surprising-

ly high number of clerical workers.

Later, while Thatcher was touring the computer block, anti-Tory placards were displayed out of windows.

The AUEW, despite the presence of their district official on the demo, did not call for a walk-out but left it to the individual workers, so only a handful of AUEW members came out.

Later, Thatcher attended a



"Just rent-a-Trot", said Thatcher, as workers walked out in protest at her visit, and shouted slogans

private reception in the Mercury Motor Inn, the only non-unionised hotel in town, (which has also held such unwelcome guests as the NAFF, with its NF body-guard). She was quoted as referring to the demo as "Rent-a-Trot".

Workers' Action support-

ers put a lot of effort into the demo. We are very pleased that Thatcher is aware of who her most implacable enemies are.

The demonstration showed that significant active opposition to the Tories can be quickly built up even in areas like Basingstoke, so far

relatively lightly hit by unemployment and the Tory attacks.

The labour movement should make it standard practice that visits by prominent Tories to work places meet vigorous and well-prepared demonstrations.

Lewisham: 5,000 cops escort the Nazis

LEWISHAM was smouldering on Sunday evening, 20th.

Hundreds of local kids, black and white, were on the streets waiting for something to happen. Police vans screamed to and fro. Cops were wandering around in groups of five or six pushing black kids around and telling them to keep quiet and go home.

Police dogs were brought in to force us to 'move along' from outside Lewisham

Odeon.

Sunday in Lewisham was a day of frustration and mounting anger at the police, who defended 500 National Front marchers in a huge operation said to have cost over £700,000.

Along the route of the fascist march, between Forest Hill and Catford, there were over 5,000 police in vans and coaches, on foot and on horseback. Only a handful of anti-fascists were able to

get within shouting distance of the Front's march. All the roads were blocked off, every group of more than three or four people was

followed by a police van, and anti-fascists were turfed off buses going near the area by police.

Lewisham council tried to prevent the Front march by taking out an injunction against police chief McNee. After this move in the courts failed, ALCARAF, the local anti-fascist committee, tried to persuade people to leave the area to the Front... but the many activists who stayed were joined by growing

numbers of local people as they tried to get through to the fascists.

Despite the police operation, dozens of people who lived in the roads where the Front marched came out of their houses to hurl abuse at them.

As news that the Front's demonstration had dispersed reached a crowd of over 1,000 counter-demonstrators at Catford, the anger exploded. Hundreds of youths

chanting "Bristol, Bristol!" surged up Lewisham High Street towards the police station to show what they thought of the police protecting the fascists.

The police panicked. They started indiscriminately arresting black youth anywhere on the street — smashing cameras if people dared to photograph their arrests.

The police showed their true colours — defending the fascists goes hand in hand with harassing and intimidating black youth. But the more openly they unfurl their colours, the deeper the revolt has started to run.

NIK BARSTOW

Council says: we won't pay McNee

LAST THURSDAY, April 17th, Lewisham council made public their refusal to pay their £5½ million rates precept to the Metropolitan Police for 1981. The announcement came at almost the same time as the National Front said they would march through Lewisham.

The council's case for refusing to pay is twofold. They argued that the Metropolitan Police is not accountable to the local councils who pay the money, but (alone among police forces in Britain) is directly controlled from the Home Office.

The council also says that the police have 'fallen down on the job' of crime prevention and traffic control by concentrating instead on a daily battle with young blacks.

The events of Sunday 20th lent weight to the council's argument. Police Commissioner McNee provided massive

protection for the NF march despite council demands that he ban the demonstration. The waves of arrests of young blacks after the demonstration added to a record of police harassment in Lewisham stretching back well before the 1977 anti-NF demonstration.

The council's stand should be supported. But the arguments they use are weak, too weak to resist the huge pressure that will be put on them to pay up.

The council wants 'accountability' of the same type that exists in most areas of the country through council police committees. Certainly that demand should be supported as against the present special status of the Metropolitan Police. But such committees are toothless bodies which have very little to do with making the policing of an area accountable to and under the



67 were arrested as police laid into anti-fascists

control of the community.

And to call on the police to stop the fascists demonstrating (as Lewisham council did) undermines the ability of anti-fascists to mobilise sufficient numbers to sweep the police aside and deal with the fascists. It opens the way to blanket bans on marches, as in Glasgow recently.

But other Labour councils should join Lewisham's example in refusing to pay for Thatcher's boot-boys — and link it to a fight to disband the SPG and to the general struggle against the cuts.

NIK BARSTOW

AUEW's recipe for NEC of lambs

THE AUEW is cooking up a recipe for a return to a right-wing Labour Party NEC.

For some years now the NEC, previously the timid toadies of the Parliamentary Party leadership, has been challenging the right-wing domination of the Party. Its leftist majority, initially the fruit of a turn to the left by the AUEW, has insisted (on its better days) that the NEC is the true voice of the Party.

Now the Commission of Inquiry will hear evidence from the AUEW — firmly under right-wing control these days — on why the NEC should be reorganised to include an MPs' section and a councillors' section.

Other right-wing moves are likely to be focused on restructuring the women's section.

The AUEW suggestion would push the Party to the right, giving special representation to its most conservative sections. The lesson is clear: a fight for democracy in the Labour Party cannot succeed unless it is linked to a fight for democracy in the trade unions.

Council backs down on cuts

A MASS meeting of school ancillary staff in Haringey (N.London) last week heard they had won their fight against the cuts.

The council had attempted to cut back on school lettings and to make assistant caretakers do up to 30 hours cleaning a week while the cleaning staff was run down by natural wastage.

The ancillary staff's response was an overtime ban and work to rule, which only lasted a week before the council backed down.

This victory has built up a new sense of solidarity and militancy among the work force, restoring confidence shaken in the aftermath of the national sell-out of the low pay strike of 1979 and the strings attached to the local deal won after six weeks on strike. This new militancy was reflected in a massive vote in favour of coming out on May 14th.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

MAY DAY 1980 Send greetings in

Socialist Organiser

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EVENTS

SATURDAY 26 APRIL. Islington Campaign against the Cuts trade unionists' conference against the cuts. 2pm Manor Gardens Library, N7. Details and credentials from 41 Ellington St, N7.

SATURDAY 26 APRIL. Southall Anniversary Benefit. 7.30, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Admission £2.

SUNDAY 27 APRIL. Planning meeting at 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1, for the national women's demonstration and festival against the Tories, planned for October 18th and aiming for a united show of strength against all the current attacks on women.

Groups so far involved include NAC, Rights of Women, Labour Movement Fightback for Women's Rights, Socialist Organiser, Lewisham Women's Rights Group, and South West London Women's Centre.

SUNDAY 27 APRIL. 'Can Socialism come through Parliament?' South London WA supporters' discussion meeting, 8pm. Details of venue from WA, PO Box 135, N1.

THUR. 24 APRIL. 'Revolutionary organisation in the labour movement'. Islington Workers' Action supporters discussion meeting, 8pm. Details of venue from WA, PO Box 135, London N1 ODD.

SATURDAY 10 MAY. National meeting for BARRICADE supporters, in Birmingham. Details: 'Barricade', 16 Glen St, Edinburgh.

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KLEINS: SUPPORT SPREADS

LAST FRIDAY 80 pickets were outside Klein's Bros. in Salford in a new escalation of the strike.

Many AUEW members joined the picket line do back the demand of the garment workers at Klein's for the management to negotiate with the NUTGW.

Support is growing. Salford Trades Council has set up a support committee and have supported the picket line. Strikers have also spoken at

Manchester Trades Council, the AUEW District Committee the Confed and to the Manchester LPYS Liaison Committee.

No lorries are crossing the picket line and postal workers are also respecting the picket line.

A lot of the local firms are watching this dispute with interest. And textile workers in this area are looking to this struggle to see whether the union can deliver the goods or

not. The strikers are calling for blacking of Klein's goods, bearing the Bendyk label, which are sold through Woolworth's, Littlewoods and other major firms. USDAW has so far been unresponsive to these appeals for blacking, but rank and file militants in USDAW are now pushing for action.

Messages of support c/o 409 Wilmslow Rd, Manchester M20 9NB.

MICK WOODS