

Workers' ACTION

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TUC

BACKS

HEALEY

Editorial



AGAINST THE LEFT

FOR THE SECOND time this year, a huge amount has been hacked out of the social services and from the public facilities that are so crucial to the "quality of life" of the working class. In March the cut was £3,000 million; this time Healey proposes £1,000 million.

The TUC, far from complaining, have led the attack on those Labour lefts who wanted to resist or modify these anti-working class attacks.

At the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee meeting on Monday July 26th, union leaders Jones, Scanlon, Basnett and Murray reserved their most savage outbursts for those MPs who suggested the social contract should be scrapped or re-worked. For these leaders the social contract is above all not a formula for working class advance but a formula for social peace — while the ruling class mercilessly attack the working class.

The Social Contract started life presented as pay restraint, given in exchange for better employment figures and a higher "social wage".

Yet last week's official employment figures showed the highest monthly level of unemployment since World War 2. Without even counting the 81,767 jobless school leavers slung straight from school onto the scrap-heap, there was a leap of 42,819 since last month in the number of unemployed.

Healey's cuts not only attack the "social wage" which the TUC claimed would be improved; they also bring the certainty of a faster rise in the unemployment figures.

So much for the Social Contract, with which the TUC volunteered our heads for the chopping-block!

The treachery of the trade union leaders will not stop us trying to grab them by the scruff of the neck and force them to put OUR organisations at OUR disposal for the prosecution of OUR struggle. And the same goes for the leaders of local Labour Parties and for the MPs.

These must be the main lines of our fight back:

- **LABOUR COUNCILS** should refuse to implement the cuts. They should take Clay Cross as their model, using the facilities under their control in the interests of the working class. They should refuse to make interest payments (which are a large part of local authority spending).
- **UNITED FRONT** fighting anti-cuts campaigns should be formed relating directly to workplace organisation, but embracing the trades councils, Labour Parties, LPYs, trade union branches, women's organisations, tenants associations, community groups and working class political parties.
- **WORKPLACE LEVEL** organisations, particularly in the public sector, embracing all unions present, should decide on sanctions to ward off cuts — most importantly overtime bans and policies of no covering; and industrial action in the event of unilateral action by management.
- **SOCIAL SERVICES** should at the very least be protected against being eroded by inflation: they should get more money automatically when prices go up. At the same time we demand crash programmes of expansion in these areas to meet the need of the working class — from the pocket of the bosses!
- **NATIONALISATION** without compensation is the slogan we raise to unburden the public purse from the crushing weight of debt to the banks, insurance companies and finance houses, and to free the productive apparatus from the stranglehold of the capitalists. We struggle for **WORKERS' CONTROL** in all enterprises in order to impose on the capitalists (whether on a big scale or small) the will and interests of the working class. As a first step in this direction — to unmask the greed and irrationality of the bosses — we demand from the bosses — **OPEN THE BOOKS.**
- **ALL DEFENCE EXPENDITURE** is inevitably money spent on an attack on the working class at home and abroad, and on the colonially oppressed peoples. We demand the complete abolition of all such expenditure and therefore of the ruling class's standing army that it supports.

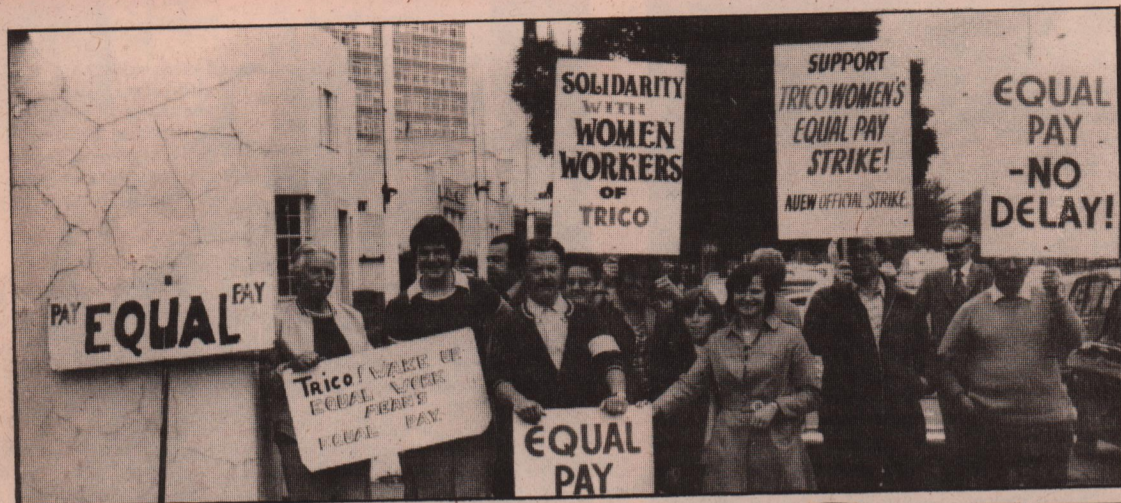


Photo: Jill Daniels

Mary Corbishley on the Trico strike

MIDNIGHT PICKETS BEAT SCAB CONVOY

ON THE night of July 26th/27th, Trico equal pay strikers in West London, reinforced by other trade unionists and women's movement activists, stopped a convoy of scab trucks from entering the works.

After a tip-off that management had organised a convoy to bust through the picket during the night, about 60 people picketed the front gate of the works, while another 15 manned the back gate.

A steel bar was wedged across the back-gates which were also tied up with wire to keep the trucks out.

At about 1 o'clock in the night, word came that the convoy was 5 miles away. At 1.45, security guards opened the front gates and another guard cut the wires on the back gates. Meanwhile police, whose reinforcements were waiting in vans nearby, harassed the pickets and forced them to keep moving.

Soon after, the convoy arrived. It consisted of 8 trucks — 5 carrying raw materials, 2 empty so that finished goods could be transported out of the factory, and one containing a scab workforce.

The convoy drove round to the back gates, but on seeing the pickets there drove past, only to return shortly after in the hope that the pickets would have been tricked into thinking they had travelled on.

But the pickets were still there, so the convoy drove off. The strike remained unbroken again.

This is not the first time scab convoys have been organised by management in this 2-month old strike. A fortnight ago 17 trucks, together with cars filled with scabs, tried to get in. On that occasion the scabs' number plates were covered up (something that didn't worry the police!) but this time their number plates were visible. One of the trucks bore the name "Phoenix Freight".

Scabbing remains a problem as some of the workers are crossing the picket line. One woman who was striking is now working — because of the beating her husband gave her for supporting the strike.

These scabs have been offered £15 every time they take out finished products in their cars.

The Trico strike started on 24th May when management of this firm which makes windscreen wipers refused to make an offer to 400 women workers after negotiations had been going on for nearly a year.

The women get £6.64 less than the five men doing the same work. Their union, the AUEW, which

has made the strike official, has already refused two offers from the firm, made through the 'conciliation' services of ACAS. No date has yet been fixed for ACAS arbitration which the AUEW has rightly claimed is biased and discriminates against women.

But it is believed that there is a new offer about to be made by management.

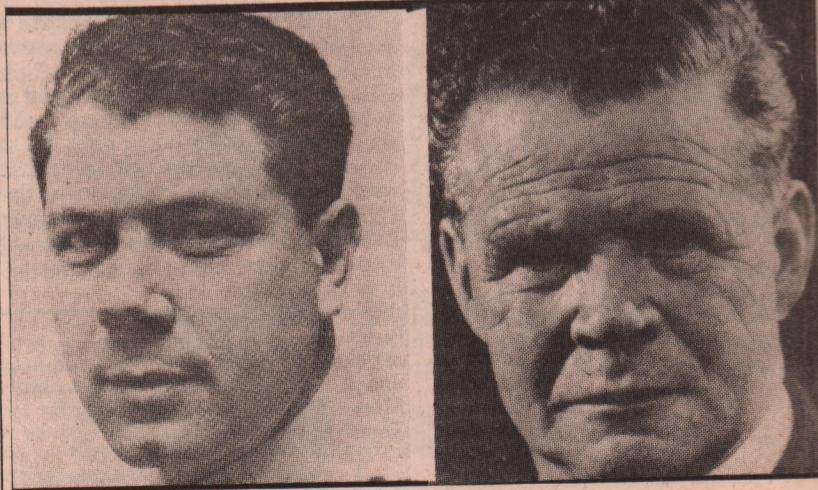
Management want to break through the picket with the materials they need before the August holidays.

The strike is reaching a crucial stage, too, because the car industry is beginning to be affected. So far, the AUEW has given full support to the strike; as the rest of the motor industry — and therefore thousands of other AUEW members — are affected, there will be pressure on the union to reach a quick if unsatisfactory settlement.

This temptation must be resisted. The women at Tricos must be on their guard against any such compromise.

Despite efforts to tighten up the blacking, scab products are still being handled at Fords Langley and at Heathrow. Tricos poorly organised sister-works at Northampton, where there are only 6 trade unionists, are also not responding with solidarity. Pressure must be put on these workers to observe a total black on Trico products and on supplies for Trico.

The strikers need donations, messages of support, and publicity. They also need trade unionists to take up the fight to extend and enforce the blacking and to come down to the picket line and strengthen the picket both night and day. Send messages and donations to Trico Strike Fund, c/o AUEW House, Roger Butler, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall Middlesex.



SILLARS

ROBERTSON

JIM SILLARS, Scottish Labour Party MP for South Ayrshire, and JOHN ROBERTSON, Scottish Labour Party MP for Paisley, have announced that the Labour Government can no longer count on their support in Parliament.

Part of their statement read as follows: "As a direct consequence of the latest cuts in public expenditure, and to underline our total opposition to the use of unemployment as an economic regulator, we have decided to terminate the arrangement whereby we have accepted the Labour whip and counted as part of the Government numbers in the House of Commons.

"We shall vote against the latest cuts as we did against the last round in March..." They went on to make clear that they would not vote confidence in the Government if it were to test its standing in the House as it did last March.

This echoed their previous day's statement that the Government's policies were Tory policies and not deserving of the support of socialists. WORKERS ACTION does not support either the general political stance of Sillars and Robertson or their Scottish nationalism. It is also possible that behind this present stance the two a "frying their own fish". Nevertheless, it must be said that THEIR STANCE IS 100% RIGHT!

It would be quite wrong to vote for the Government's cuts, and no less a capitulation to vote 'confidence' in the Government should it be forced to seek "the confidence of the House".

As Sillars himself has said "If this means that the Government is forced to go to the country and declare a General Election ... So be it!" If Labour is defeated in Parliament and if it were defeated in a General Election, it would have no-one to blame but the Parliamentary Labour Party, itself abetted by the stinking cowardice of the TUC.

"TODAY is Equal Pay Day... it marks the successful outcome of women's campaigns against discrimination in terms of their pay... Here is proof of the nation's will to ensure that women at work get the fair deal they deserve." With these words Michael Foot announced the implementation of the Equal Pay Act on 29 December 1975.

The women of Tricos in West London, now in the ninth week of their strike for equal pay, see things a little differently.

The 'nation', viewed from their picket line, comes in two different forms. There are the trade unionists and the Working Women's Charter groups who have been helping on the picket and raising money for the strike fund. And then there are the police who have been escorting scabs in and out of the factory, the employers who have been refusing to pay the £5 which would give the women parity with the men, and the industrial tribunals.

Tricos management have been very keen that the dispute go before an industrial tribunal; a recent 'Guardian' report explains why: "Out of some 4,000 complaints, a total of 1,754 women have started industrial tribunal action in the four months since the Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act came into force. Only 18 have been successful. 100 have had their cases dismissed. The largest proportion have withdrawn without gain."

The reality of women's position on pay and employment is documented in the latest report from Counter Information Services (CIS), **WOMEN UNDER ATTACK**.

LOWEST PAID

In 1975 women were earning less, relative to men, than in 1950. In October 1975 women were earning less than half as much as male workers (£28.07 per week as compared to £59.20). And even when the one third of women workers who are part timers are excluded, women's average earnings are still only just over half of men's - 57%.

Even the full implementation of the Equal Pay Act would alter these figures by only a few percentage points, because women are concentrated in the lowest paid jobs anyway.

More than half of women workers are to be found in the service sector - in hotels and catering, in laundries, hairdressers, shops and in the 'caring professions' of teaching, social work and nursing. Elsewhere they are in low-graded clerical and secretarial work.

These services are also the largest employers of low-paid men, but a far lower proportion of men than women work in them, showing a system of sexual apartheid at work which allows women in these jobs to gain nothing from the EPA by claiming parity.

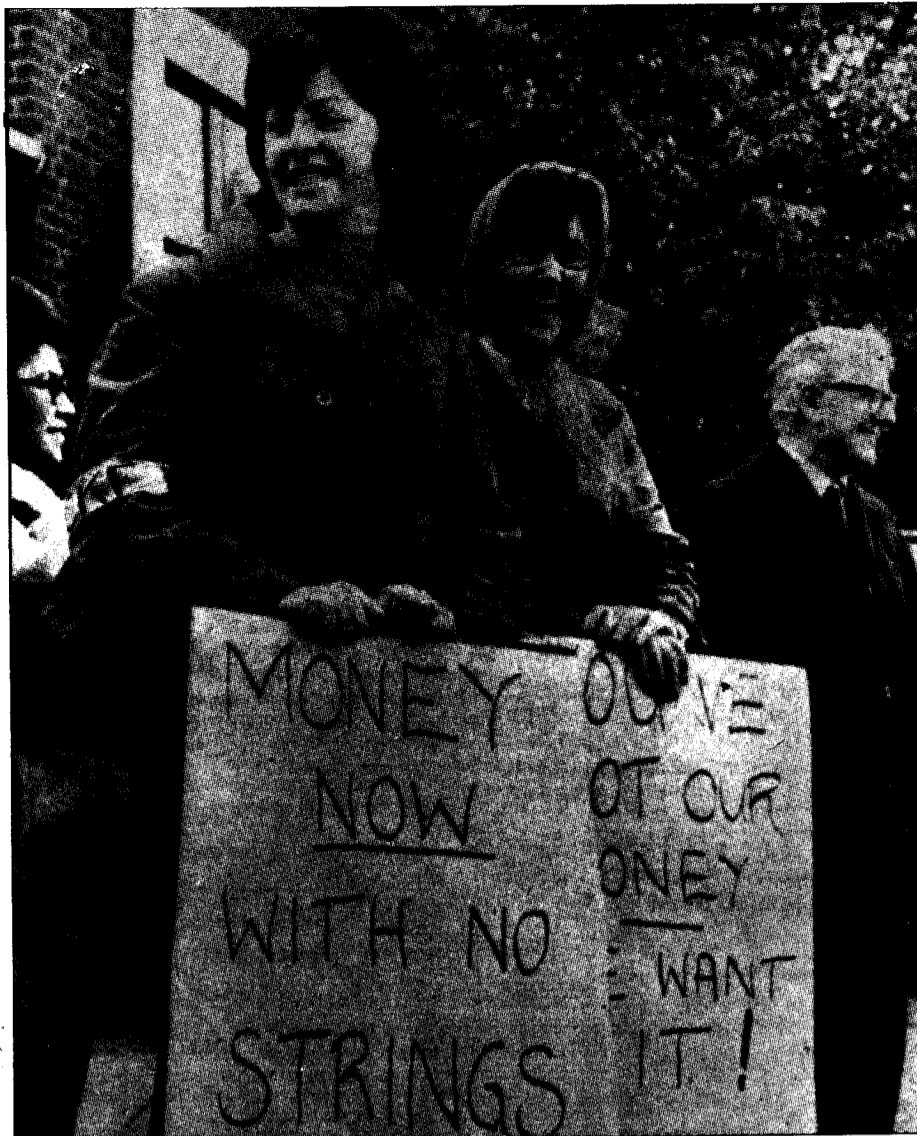
Women's earnings are further depressed because they can't make up their low basic with overtime, bonus and premium payments.

On top of this the courts now demand that women do exactly the same type of work as men to qualify for equal pay, when in fact the Act specified that a woman should do "broadly similar" work. In one case, that of Ann Hunt, equal pay was refused because she was MORE qualified than the man she worked with - who earned more - and so could not be counted as 'equal' with!

EQUAL PAY

With all the cards stacked heavily against women the Equal Pay legislation - although a reflection of the growing militancy of women - is nothing more than a sweetener for the nasty medicine that the Government and the employers have been inflicting on working class women. And even this sweetener is now to go: "Under the latest pay deal, rises towards equal pay are no longer excluded from the pay norm. The TUC and the government have agreed to drop equal pay."

The CIS Report vividly illustrates the extent to which women have suffered in terms of redundancies and cuts. Its statement that "women work when employers demand that they do" is a very useful insight into how women are



Women under attack

treated as a reserve supply of labour. The Report traces this historically, showing that when the chance has been there - during the two world wars, and in the 1950s and '60s boom - women have poured out of the home to take on jobs and learn skills in every sphere of working life.

Between 1951 and 1971, another 2.2 million women were recruited for work. By 1974, there were 9 million women workers.

But as long as women get jobs because of a 'national emergency' or as an 'optional extra', their position is precarious. CIS quotes an official report on the First World War "The speed with which women had appeared in these industries was surpassed by the speed with which they vanished from them."

VOLUNTARY

The speed at which women are now vanishing from employment is difficult to assess. The official figure of women unemployed is 392,335. But many women don't register, and others don't stay on the register once statutory benefits come to an end. Others find they cannot return to work after an absence which started out being voluntary and then became en-

In July 1975, five months before the Equal Pay Act came into force, new minimum hourly rates for agricultural workers were agreed via the Agricultural Wages Council, one of the official negotiating bodies set up to represent the interests of workers in industries where organisation is traditionally weak. A differential was established, with full timers getting 91½p per hour, while part-timers got 80p - about 87% of the full-time rate. Before the new agreement women workers in agriculture used to receive 87% of male rates, but now the differences being established were strictly between part-timers and full-time workers irrespective of sex, as the legislation required.

The full significance of the 12% differential became apparent when it was realised that the employers had also embarked upon a deliberate policy of reducing the hours of large numbers of full-time women workers to below 30 hours a week, so that they would fall into the part-time category. The Equal Pay Act had been easily side-stepped, and the 12% differential between male and female workers was substantially maintained.

forced. "A straw poll of their readers done by 'Womans Own' indicated that nearly three quarters of women who are actively seeking a job are not registered" (which would put the total at 1,569,340) "Beyond the readership of 'WO' the situation is probably far worse."

"For the three out of five working women who regard their pay as essential to the family budget, the trend represents a crisis at least as severe as that faced by men, as it does for those women (14% of all women in paid employment - 1¼ million) who are the sole breadwinners in the family. As many as 80% of women who lose their paid work get nothing, neither dole nor social security. A fully paid up married woman can only get a third of full benefits."

According to the Report, about 87% of women (presumably those of working age) work at some time in their lives. That is, some 14 million women. Yet at any time, there are at most 9 million working women.

That is, 5 million workers at any time stuck at home minding children of elderly relatives for lack of socially provided facilities, or just shopping and cleaning for lack of a job. And about 2 million other women who never get to work at all - from varying degrees of choice.

When the Government, as employer, sacks a man, the Treasury must still pay out in some form, albeit through another department. When it sacks a woman, it is as likely as not to save her entire wage for the Treasury. Little wonder that between June and July alone, whereas 0.6% of working men lost their jobs, 1% of working women became unemployed (or rather, registered as unemployed, and, as we've seen, that's not the same thing).

BRUNT

Seasonally adjusted, 14,300 men were added to the dole, while 23,900 women joined it. And that is just in one month!

Of the new women workers of the post-war boom, most went into service industries. It is precisely these areas of 'unproductive' industry which are the main targets of Government cutbacks today.

Jobs that women did socially, for pay, they are now being encouraged to do in the home, individual-

ly, for nothing. For ailing capitalism the easiest - and least visible - means of shifting the burden onto the shoulders of the working class is to transfer responsibilities undertaken by the state (the care of the sick and elderly and the very young, for example) to women in the home. Education cuts mean no new nurseries, and children having to wait longer to get into schools. (In effect, the school leaving extension to 16 has been stolen from the 'rising fives').

Women bear the brunt, sacked from 'service' jobs and then tied up at home by run-down services and emotional blackmail.

This year the new Invalid Care allowance will be paid by the government to women who remain at home to care for elderly relatives (other than husbands!). No doubt these allowances will seem quite attractive to those women who have accepted such responsibilities over the years as a matter of course. But in the context of the cuts they are nothing less than a bribe to women to accept responsibility themselves for services formerly provided by the state and rightly regarded as the responsibility of society as a whole.

JOB SECURITY

While Ministries and local government wield the Treasury's axe, private employers have their methods too (though these are of course also used by public employers). The CIS Report very valuably exposes the use of part-time labour, exploiting the fact that women with small children are beggars on the labour market and can't be very choosy about wages, conditions or - most important at a time like this - job security.

Part timers are easily manipulated as a flexible and readily available source of labour. Employers are conscious enough and cunning enough to keep hours always just below the minimum laid down for statutory obligations (such as periods of notice, redundancy pay etc) to come into force. Whenever these hours are lowered, the hours of part time workers tend to go down to keep below the government regulation 'water mark'.

Between 1973 and 1974, while full time workers of both sexes were being laid off, employers

actually took on more part-timers, as a short-term filler - to be sacked with no trouble when the mini-boom ended.

While a woman with no nursery for her kids - or, if she's one of the 'lucky' few, a nursery with ridiculously short hours - will take on a rotten part-time job for the extra money she needs, it's clear that what she needs is the sort of nursery and welfare facilities that will allow her to choose where and what hours to work. Those who advocate more part time work, and those who offer such work (with all its snares) are doing her no service.

Yet the TUC in their Charter for Working Women [not to be confused with the independent Working Women's Charter] states that unions must force employers to accept the need for women to work the hours which will enable them to meet their work in the home.



The GMWU, echoing this, states "As a working woman you will probably be running a home, caring for children, looking after dependent relatives - a working woman has special needs." And they conclude from this that employers should be urged to give flexible working hours to women.

Of course the reality of a woman's position is that she has (or has had thrust upon her) two jobs. But our aim must be to change that fact and to relieve her of those responsibilities, not to adapt to them and in so doing, to play into the hands of cynical employers.

[The CIS Report on Women Under Attack, part of the 'Crisis' series, costs 45p and is available from CIS at 9 Poland Street, London W1.]



LABOUR SCROUNGES ANOTHER BILLION

by Paul Adams

of the key points of its demands that this premium should go up. Now that the Government is doing the exact opposite of what the TUC wanted, what is the TUC going to do?

HOUSING: £146 million is to be cut from the £476 million that local authorities lend to house buyers. £81 million will be cut from councils' environmental services (cleansing, rubbish disposal, parks etc.). Councils will not, until further notice, be able to let any further contracts or accept estimates from their own direct labour operations, and neither can they start new land buying arrangements. House building will fall in the public sector in favour of the private sector, although here house building will fall dramatically.

Homelessness will soar. Building industry unemployment is already more than twice the national average.

DEFENCE: £100 million is being cut, but it is not weapons and fighting men that will go — it will be civilian jobs and building programmes. In fact 78,000 jobs are to be lost — yet the

£6m.-a-piece Tornado aircraft programme is going ahead. The Labour MP for Edinburgh estimates "The price of a pair of wings of a Tornado approximates to the amount which my local authority has just been instructed to cut out of its budget." The Chiefs of Staff want 386 Tornados. This is one programme that has got away without any cuts. . .

HEALTH: £70 million is to be cut from the health and social services budget. This includes £13 million 'saved' by delaying a new non-contributory invalidity pension for housewives.

CHARGES

Charges for dental services and spectacles were scheduled to be raised anyway. Now another £20m is to be netted by hiking them up even further: spectacle lenses will have to be paid for at full cost while dental treatment will double in cost.

The hospital building programme will have £20 million cut from it just at a time when hospitals are being shut down. Some health centre building schemes will be 'deferred'.

The only welcome cut is the government's promised refusal to pay the high cost of pharmaceuticals where the prices include "excessive promotional expenditure" But why the half-measure? Why be held to ransom by the drug companies at all? The Government should nationalise the lot without one penny of compensation and under workers' control — that's the only alternative to paying "excessive" prices. And it would save tens of millions.

£30 million will be found by charging more for the care of people hurt in traffic accidents — which will be passed straight on to the public in the form of higher insurance premiums.

EDUCATION: £30 million — about 3% of the education budget — is to be

saved by allowing school meal prices to rise no more than the already-scheduled 10p but pruning £43 million from the rest of the budget. The weight will fall on the nursery, further education and university sectors.

Already there are about 30,000 qualified teachers without jobs, with the Government able to find only one "solution" — cutting the number of teacher training colleges so that fewer can qualify.

PRICES

FOOD: The phasing out of food subsidies will be speeded up so that £80 million can be raked in. Once again this was a major point in the TUC's proposals to the Government, but one which it appears the TUC doesn't take too seriously... like the rest of its demands. Food subsidies are not a good protection of living standards; far better a sliding scale of wages which would protect workers' wages from rising prices. This removal of food subsidies will raise the price index without any increase in wages.

IN THE FOREST of public expenditure the trees have been marked for felling.

Healey wants to lop off more than £1,000 million from the public expenditure programme. Where is it coming from?

INDUSTRY: £105 million is to be slashed from the Government's trade, industry and employment programmes. One of the areas that will be cut is the regional employment premium. This never was a solution to unemployment, yet the TUC in its wisdom made it one

THE SMITH family — two adults and four young children — lived in one room for seven months on a bed & breakfast basis because they were homeless. The Southside Investment Company charged Essex Social Services £80 per week for this accommodation.

When CLAIRE HUNTLEY and her daughter became homeless in South Shields they were put into a guest house where they had to share a room with someone they'd never met before.

The JOHNSONS from Barking lived, like the Smiths, at the Aston Grove Hotel in Walthamstow, but unlike the Smiths the Johnsons lived in a caravan in the garden. "It was horrible" they said "There's no running water — you have to ask at the kitchen if you want some. There's no toilet — you have to come into the hotel to the nearest toilet. It's cold, there's just one electric fire."

Unfit

These are some of the homeless that are in bed and breakfast accommodation. Some of the homeless are in hostel accommodation which is sometimes even worse, more restrictive and less private. Some of the homeless are just living rough.

Altogether there are some 40,000 families this year applying for council temporary accommodation. Other families are too pessimistic to apply (Dorset have said they won't help a family with 'just' one child!); and then there are the single people who aren't even counted in these figures.

There are nearly a million and a quarter dwellings unfit for habitation — yet people have to go on living in them.

What do Healey's latest measures do for these people. Healey said in Parliament last week "We have given high priority to the poorer members of our society." Is this true?

It is a barefaced and cynical lie.

Healey hammers the homeless...



Remote 'Bonny Farm' was 'home' for Anne Saunders for eight weeks. Seven months pregnant, Anne had to take her baby and washing on a daily trip to Whitehaven to 'get out of the way'. "I'd rather live under a tree than go back to B&B". Photo: Shelter.

One of the biggest areas singled out for cuts is housing. The new Healey proposals will mean not better conditions for the Smiths, the Huntleys and the Johnsons, but worse conditions and for more of them.

The fall in the number of houses being built — in particular in the public sector — has continued unabated since the Labour Government stepped in to restrict council house building in 1967. Since that time, the number of

homeless has DOUBLED, rising steadily year by year.

In a report on bed & breakfast accommodation, SHELTER shows that "In London the problem of finding accommodation for the homeless has become so acute that in 1973-74 Lambeth Borough Council housed 600 homeless families, but only 71 families from its housing list of 16,000. Haringey allocated 47% of its vacant council flats to the homeless in 1973, compared with 12% in 1968."

Huge drop

Now, with the new proposals there will be a huge drop in house building. The new cuts mean the first restriction on council house building in nearly ten years. But then council building was at an all-time high. Now it's being knocked back from an all-time low.

And this comes on top of the February cuts: £824 million off housing subsidies; and a plan to spend, by 1977, only 27% on renovation grants of what was spent in 1973 — which is virtually to phase them out.

One of the biggest 'savings' the Government has proposed is the slashing of local authority mortgage lending by £146 million. The building societies, according to the Government, will fill the gap.

But this is just not so. Not only have the building societies refused to make any commitments on this score, but there is no reason to think

that they will alter their policy of not lending money on older inner-city properties.

Writing in this month's issue of 'ROOF' Stuart Weir of Shelter sums up the situation: "Building societies are starving older urban areas... Their practices aggravate urban decay and frustrate improvement policies."

Weir shows how the major building societies have red-ringed what they call "minimum lending areas" which correspond to the bleak inner-city areas of major towns. "Three national societies, the Leicester, Halifax and Britannia, have drawn a red line round the central area of Leicester, within which they will rarely lend, and a fourth, the Abbey National, will lend only up to 60-75% of the surveyor's valuations. These societies, ironically, are the four nominated to make up for the local council's restricted home loans scheme!"

Blow

Now not only Leicester will be operating a restricted home loans scheme: it will be a feature of every council in the country.

With an increasing concentration of black and immigrant families in these inner city areas — not to mention discrimination against them by building societies — the government's latest housing cuts policy will bring yet another blow to harassed and oppressed victims of British racialism.

Trouble in the ghost trade

THE BUILDING trade is rapidly becoming a ghost trade, with its current number of unemployed now standing at almost 220,000 — about 15% of all those in the trade. This figure is 35% higher than a year ago — an increase of 55,000.

There was an overall decline in the industry of 10% in 1974, followed by 6% in 1975 and what was estimated to be 2% this year. The proposed new cuts will turn this 2% into a much bigger number and add hundreds of thousands of building trade workers, both skilled and unskilled, to the dole queues.

Public spending accounts for 60% of the work carried out by the construction industry. The cuts in public expenditure have already had a massive effect. The cuts now proposed — because they combine an £87 million cut in road building expenditure, an £81 million

cut in council environmental services, cuts in capital expenditure programmes in education and health and nationalised industries with the housing cuts — will mean a decimation of the building trade's workforce.

OVERDUE

With the increasing proportion of the major firms' work being abroad, the profits of Wimpeys (£7.3m last year) Laings and the bigger firms will continue to grow. At the same time the smaller firms will go bankrupt.

The number of bankruptcies in construction in 1973 was 741, in 1974 it was 1,031 and in the first quarter of 1975 alone it was 416.

One sector of the building trade

that looked like expanding was the Direct Works of local councils. But within days of the Government agreeing to an extension of direct works into contracting for other councils, the whole point of this agreement had been wiped out by the cuts: they decree a total standstill on the consideration of contracts.

The nationalisation of the building industry is long overdue. Its fragmentation, its lack of uniform standards of work and conditions of work, its appalling safety record and its parasitism on social need all make it one of the outstanding candidates for immediate nationalisation without compensation.

The militants in the industry must campaign for its nationalisation, coupled with a guarantee of 5 days' work or 5 days' pay.

...and cheats the disabled

AFTER THE Child Benefit scandal we have the Invalid Tricycle scandal — an exhibition of Government meanness almost without parallel.

The Social Services Secretary, David Ennals, has announced that the death-trap invalid trikes will be phased out not in favour of four-wheeler cars but in favour of a £5 invalid mobility allowance.

What a cheek! For years invalid drivers, through a variety of pressure groups, argued that trikes were unsafe, uneconomical and unsocial (they have only one seat). Now after over a decade of resisting these irrefutable claims, the Ministry of Health turns round and says, "You're right, so we're taking the trikes off you!"

The Guardian quotes Mr Peter MacBryan, chairman of the Invalid Tricycle Action Group, as saying that "he was quite appalled by Mr Ennals' statement. It would have the effect of rendering immobile the poorest disabled people, many of whom depend on their tricycles to get

to work and to run their homes... You could not buy a car for £260. It is a political scandal of great proportions".

Of the "poorest disabled people", those hardest hit will be the oldest poorest disabled. For the mobility allowance is not payable to those over the age of 50, though a very high proportion of the disabled are over 50.

Already the plan to phase out the trikes has meant a squeeze on spares, so that disabled drivers are being left without a functioning car for months while waiting for spares.

The last Labour Government failed to fulfill its commitment to the disabled when it claimed it couldn't raise the money to give them the telephones and other facilities promised under Alf Morris's bill. This one has set itself on immobilising the poorer disabled — and most are poor — and as a consequence driving them out of jobs. What a record to be proud of!

Ireland: Tears for the Gauleiter?

WHEN the IRA killed the British Ambassador to the so-called Republic of Ireland, blowing up his car in Dublin, it unleashed a predictable explosion of outrage, anger and 'atrocities' propaganda in the press of both Britain and Ireland.

Only the sour Orange daily, the Belfast Newsletter, hinted that double standards were involved in the special outcry.

True, the same paper openly gloated when 27 people were killed and many maimed in Dublin by bombs exploded without warning by Orange rascals 2 years ago. But in its own twisted way the Newsletter came nearer an honest view of the event than all the rest of the press: the Ambassador, his presence and his fate cannot be seen separately from the activities of the British Army in the 6 Counties and the war it is waging there.

The British Ambassador to the Southern collaborator Government was a fair and legitimate target for those fighting to force the British Army out of Ireland. He was a key link between the British Government and its collaborators in the South in their combined efforts to beat down the forces fighting for Irish liberation and unification.

At the time of the explosion Brian Cubbon, Ulster Permanent Under Secretary, was in the car with the Ambassador. Was this an Ambassador or a Gauleiter?

In the North the war that the British Army can't win goes on, with the IRA generally admitted to be militarily stronger than at any time in the last 2 years.

In the South repression against republicans is at a police state level, and getting worse. Special Military Courts can issue two year jail sentences to anyone SAID TO BE a member of the IRA by a senior police officer, no other evidence needed! There is a plan to increase the maximum sentence to 5 years. Savage brutality is normal against republicans, charged or otherwise. Recently, members of a legal republican group, the leftist Irish Republican Socialist Party, were maimed and tortured by the police. Some of them were hung up for periods of time by their hair. The Secretary of the IRSP, Mick Plunket, is still on crutches as a result of the treatment he got.

A man and a woman, Noel and Marie Murray, anarchists convicted by the Military Court for killing a policeman during a bank robbery, are awaiting the hangman's rope in Dublin. A recent statement from Government leader Cosgrave appears to mean that they will not, as was first thought, be reprieved. If they hang, the demand for judicial murder or republicans in the 6 Counties will have must greater force, especially if the situation deteriorates for Britain with a new Republican upsurge.

The 26-County Government, made up of Fine Gael (a fascist party in the early '30s remembered as the Blueshirts) and a small Labour Party far to the right of the British Labour Party and ten times more shameless, is doing its best in its 26 County statelet to aid the British war effort in Ireland.

But their best isn't good enough if they can't protect the British Ambassador a few yards from his official residence!

The liberal Irish Times commented that the incident signified a terrible loss of self-respect for Ireland. They confuse Cosgrave's Government (which no doubt has lost face) with the people of Ireland — who have a powerful enough self-respect to help to maintain an army in the field against Britain and its Irish collaborators, despite the fierce repression on both sides of the border.

The execution of Britain's Gauleiter/Ambassador may help convince the British government and people that the way to end such incidents is to withdraw British troops and agree to the republican demand for a United Federal Ireland.

Socialists in Britain must demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of those troops. We congratulate the Republican movement for its blow at one of the British ruling class's chief agents in Ireland. We express our complete solidarity with them in their



CP leaders Maurice Thorez (right) & Marcel Cachin in 1934

ON 30th January 1933 Hitler took power in Germany; in February 1934 the Dollfuss government crushed Austrian social democracy after six days of street fighting.

In France, where the Great Depression was hitting hard (the index of industrial production fell from 140 to 94 between 1930 and 1935), a similar fate seemed likely. On 6th February 1934, fascists armed with razors took over the streets of Paris. Fights with the police left 15 dead and 1000 wounded. The Radical Prime Minister Daladier resigned in favour of a semi-dictatorial regime led by Doumergue.

The parties of the French working class — the Socialist Party and the Communist Party — were in a weak state. The ultra-left policies of the 'third period' (1929-34), when the CP refused any united front with the social democrats and called them 'social fascists', had reduced the Communist Party to 30,000 members. The Socialist Party, although it had recovered considerably since being reduced to a right wing rump in the early '20s, had a mainly middle class membership.

The French Trotskyists of the Communist League had campaigned throughout the 'third period' for the united front of the workers' organisations. With only 150 members, their impact was limited to some small successes among the youth. But on 12th February 1934 they suddenly found their slogan made reality.

A one-day general strike jointly supported by the CP, the SP and the two trade union federations — the CP-led CGTU and the reformist/syndicalist CGT — brought out 4 million workers, and 300,000 marched on a united demonstration.

Trotsky commented: "The general situation in France puts before the entire conscious labour movement a task of short perspective: either the proletariat will in the course of six months, a year or perhaps the coming two years, destroy fascism and take a tremendous step forward all the way to the struggle for power, or it will itself be destroyed and all of Europe will become the arena for fascist tyranny and war. The pressure of this terrible alternative has forced both of the labour parties to strike out on the road of the united front."

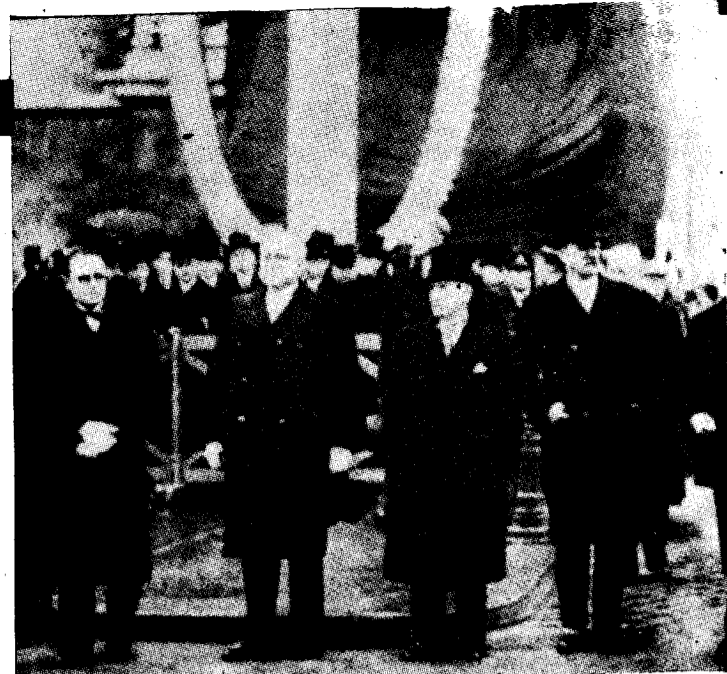
By July 1934, CP-SP collaboration was well-established, and in March 1936 unification of the trade union federations was completed.

Fascism

The United front aroused enthusiasm and a flood of recruits for the CP and SP. The Trotskyists faced the necessity of a sharp turn: "Yesterday the greatest danger was the sabotage of the united front. Today the greatest danger lies in the illusions of the united front." The CP and SP leaders contented themselves with rallies, fine speeches, general declamations about unity — without a programme of struggle. The Trotskyists advanced for the united front a programme of struggle.

In June 1934 they published their "Action Programme for France" outlining a series of transitional demands, which, starting from the effects of the economic depression and the dangers of fascism and war, could lead the working class forward to revolutionary action.

The Action Programme argued for a fight to end business secrecy and establish workers' inspection



THE ENEMY WAS DISGUISED AS A FRIEND

over all the operations of the economy. It coupled those demands with calls for nationalisations without compensation and for struggle for higher wages and shorter hours.

Instead of urging the police to suppress the fascists, the Trotskyists advocated disbanding of the police force and creation of a workers'

militia.

The alternative to the perspective of imperialist war was a fight for the freedom of France's colonies and for the United Socialist States of Europe.

Despite the urgent relevance of its demands, despite the inadequacy of the united front (the CP dropped the slogan of the workers' militia "so as not to offend the Socialist Party"), this Action Programme did not bring mass influence for the Trotskyists. Just the contrary. The realisation of the Trotskyists' slogan of the united front brought isolation for the Trotskyists as the workers turned to the CP and SP.

"The ideas and the methods of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Trotsky) are confirmed at each new stage of development. But can it be anticipated that the League, as an organisation, will show itself capable, in the interval that remains until the approaching denouement, of occupying an influential, if not a leading place in the labour movement? To answer this question today in the affirmative would mean either to back in one's mind the denouement for several years, which is refuted by the whole situation, or just simply to hope for a miracle."

Sharp break

The Trotskyists, not satisfied with being 'proved correct', but wanting to make their ideas a material force, decided in September 1934 to join the ranks of the united front, by entering the Socialist Party.

There was a certain left wing movement in the ranks of the Socialist Party, especially in the youth. The Trotskyists set about organising militias to fight the fascists in the streets, and they were able to increase the Paris area SP youth membership from 1000 to 1450 in three months. Most of the

Against the stream

THE FRENCH POPULAR FRONT illustrates the tragedy of revolutionary communism (Trotskyism) in the 1930s. When the Trotskyists' slogans were successful (the united front, the general strike) they were taken over by the Stalinists and Social Democrats and gutted of their revolutionary content. Where their slogans were unsuccessful (as with the Action Programme) their correctness was proved in the negative: by a general defeat of the workers' movement, including a defeat of its revolutionary wing — the Trotskyists.

New factor

The chink of light in this framework of defeat was the possibility of the pressures of the crisis fuelling such explosive spontaneous struggles that the Trotskyists could crack the hold of the bureaucracies. Explosive struggles there were indeed. But the Trotskyists were not able to open the chink wide enough.

As Trotsky said in 1939: "The defeat of the People's Front was the proof of the correctness of our conceptions just as was the extermination of the Chinese workers [in 1927]. But the defeat was a defeat and it is directed against revolutionary tendencies until a new tide on a higher level will appear in the new time. We must wait and prepare — a new element, a new factor, in this constellation."

Since the late '60s in Western Europe we have had a 'new tide', but with a slower tempo of social crisis and a better relation of forces. After the May 1968 strike in France major gains have been made by the revolutionary left. (The

too, but only after adopting a new 'left' colouring; the Communist Party has grown very little.)

As in the 1930s, however, the building of a mass revolutionary Marxist party is vital for victory. As in the 1930s, the class collaborationist strategy followed by social democracy and stalinism only brings defeat.

Without the heroic struggle "Against the stream" of the Trotskyists in the 1930s, we would be far less richly furnished with traditions to guide us in our tasks. But we have to use those traditions as Marxists, not as dogmatists whose total wisdom is the mechanical misapplication to today of ideas from the 1930s.

Basing themselves on the Trotskyists' tactics in the united front (which included the call for a CP-SP government) and their opposition to the CP's and SP's bloc with the Radicals, modern vulgar-Trotskyists have advanced the idea that a government of the 'Union of the Left' in France without the left-Radicals, a 'left government' in Italy, a government of the SPD in Germany without the 'Free Democrats', or a British Labour government deprived of some small layer of right wingers, would be a "workers' government".

They take the slogan in abstraction from Trotsky's analysis of the crushing crisis facing France, from his perspective of the possibility of the Trotskyists polarising around themselves a major part of the SP membership, and from the fact that at the time Trotsky considered both CP and SP centrist parties. There only remains the abstract formula, gutted of any revolutionary content.

Likewise with the Action Programme. One month after the publication of the

is not enough for a revolutionist to have correct ideas. Let us not forget that correct ideas have already been set down in Capital and the Communist Manifesto. But that has not prevented false ideas from being broadcast...."

Yet today many vulgar-Trotskyists make of an 'Action Programme' or 'Transitional Programme' a magic talisman for revolutionary struggle, proclaiming its slogans as holy relics to inspire great acts of faith, not as intelligently-used weapons to link with real struggles.

The experiences of the Trotskyists' entry tactic in the Socialist Party have also been falsified.

For the last 30 years various Trotskyists' have been mumbling, as a matter of routine, repetitions of Trotsky's analysis of 1934: "crushing crisis is coming, the independent revolutionary nucleus cannot grow into a mass party in the time available, we must intervene in the reformist party". What was a concrete analysis becomes a mechanical formula, outside time and space. The entrance into the reformist party, which for Trotsky was a bold tactic always tied to a sober empirical assessment of events, becomes a fetishistic strategy based on waiting for hoped-for left wing developments.

Tasks

"But if... and then... and if? To foresee everything and to provide for everything in advance is impossible. It is necessary to understand the situation clearly, to determine the tasks and to proceed with their fulfillment." In that spirit the Trotskyists fought in the '30s; and in that spirit we must fight



Members of the Popular Front coalition government

SED

by
**COLIN
FOSTER**

recruits, won by orienting to factories and to strikes, were young workers.

But they recognised that the SP's social composition was generally, as Trotsky described it, "miserable". The majority of the militant workers were not in the Socialist Party; most of them, in fact, were still in no party at all.

The united front was still moving to the right. In May 1935 Stalin signed a pact with the right wing French Prime Minister Laval. "Mr. Stalin", said the communique, "fully understands and approves the policy of national defence carried out by France to maintain its armed forces at an adequate level." Stalin was now staking his strategy on an alliance with the "democratic" imperialisms.

This marked a new stage in the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist Parties. Before this the Stalinists had never dared to advocate the idea of supporting an imperialist ruling class in war, even if that ruling class was in military alliance with the Soviet Union. The Laval-Stalin pact also paved the way for the first-ever example of Communist Party support for a bourgeois government in an advanced capitalist country.

The CP now brought pressure on the SP to move against the Trotskyists. 13 leading Trotskyists were expelled from the SP Youth movement. Trotsky, previously the most energetic in arguing for the entry into the SP, was also the first to grasp the change in the situation and argue for a sharp break with the SP.

The CP and SP set about extending the united front into the 'Popular Front' by including the Radical Party. This party's 'radicalism' was no more than anti-clericalism; it was in fact the largest of France's bourgeois parties.

The Popular Front programme was finally agreed in January 1936. The CP insisted that nothing should be included which might

FRANCE'S POPULAR FRONT — A WARNING FOR TODAY

offend the Radicals. Thus nationalisations (except of the Banque de France and of war industries) were rejected, though the SP wanted them in the programme; and above all the programme avoided all talk of class struggle.

The fascist bands were to be dealt with by the police and the courts. There would be an "enquiry" into the colonies, which in the meantime would remain in the grip of French imperialism. To avoid war, the programme relied on the League of Nations and attempts at agreed disarmament. In relation to the economy, there were only the most vague or timid proposals.

The Trotskyists denounced the Popular Front as an attempt to disarm the working class by tying it to bourgeois politics. They campaigned instead for Committees of Action in every area. These committees would not mechanically exclude anyone prepared to fight against the fascists and against the Laval government. Being set up for struggle, however, the Committees would be dominated by the organised workers rather than by the individual Radical petty bourgeois.

Few others on the 'far left' had a proper understanding of the Popular Front. The 'Revolutionary Left' faction in the SP, for instance, pointed to the enthusiastic working class response to left wing unity, and insisted that it was necessary to support the Popular Front (and later the Popular Front government) while pressuring it to become a "Popular Front of struggle". (Today, such an attitude has been seen on the left in relation to the Popular Unity in Chile, the Union of the Left in France, and even the current Labour Government in

Britain.)

In the elections of April/May 1936, the Popular Front won a large majority. The Communist Party doubled its vote and won 72 seats. The Socialist Party increased its strength from 96 to 147 seats. But not even the best efforts of the CP to avoid embarrassing the Radicals could stop them losing out in the growing polarisation between right and left: the Radical Party declined from 160 seats to 110.

To millions of workers, the Popular Front in France (and in Spain, where the Popular Front had won a majority in February 1936) seemed to be a powerful answer to the attacks of fascism, to unemployment and poverty — and a more realistic one than the programmes of the revolutionaries, however correct the latter might be.

The intensity of the crisis made the CP's and SP's bloc with the bourgeoisie doubly criminally; paradoxically and tragically, it also made the Popular Front doubly attractive.

Throughout 1935 and early 1936 the tempo of industrial struggle rose. Following the election victory the workers, half distrusting the politicians, entered into battle to win the gains they wanted from the Popular Front. In two waves, one culminating around 29th May, the other reaching a peak around 10th June, several million workers went on strike, often occupying the factories.

Subdue

The strikes started with simple wage demands. As they spread, the inevitable logic of a general strike movement — that is raises the question of class power — showed itself in more advanced demands: union recognition, paid holidays and a 40-hour week, recognition of workers' assemblies and shop stewards, workers' control of hiring and firing.

CGT area committees began to take on the functions of Soviets. New, non-unionised groups of workers joined the struggle. One history of the time describes the case of a workplace which occupied and then — having no union organisation — sent delegates to the union office to seek advice on drawing up a list of demands.

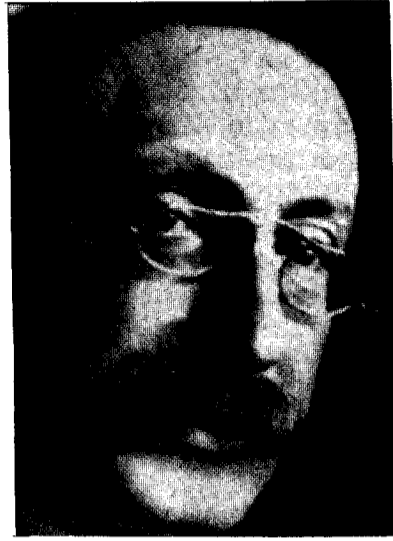
But the leaders of the unions and of the workers' parties were mainly concerned to subdue the movement. The Popular Front government, which the Communist Party supported but did not join, took office on 4th June, with SP leader Leon Blum as Prime Minister. Blum immediately set to trying to find concessions that could calm the strikes. In the two "Maignon agreements" of June 7th and June 10th, wage increases, shorter hours and other improvements (but not the demands for workers' control) were granted.

Communist Party leader Maurice Thorez then proclaimed "One must know how to end a strike";

and together with the SP leaders he set about enforcing the return to work. Gradually they succeeded, though even on 18th July there were still 50,000 workers involved in occupations at 354 workplaces.

The Trotskyists had agitated for a general strike and for the occupation tactic since 1935. On 12th June their paper, with the headline "Power to the workers, in the factories and in the streets", was seized by the government.

The mass strike movement was, as Trotsky wrote, the 'beginning of the French revolution'. "The strike has everywhere pushed the most thoughtful and fearless workers to the fore. To them belongs the initiative. ... The echoing and re-echoing answers of the hindmost ranks to their call gives them new courage. The roll-call of the class has become a trial self-mobilisation... Thus the first self-mobilisation of the masses has outlined and in part brought forward the first elements of revolutionary leadership."



Leon Blum

However, the revolutionary surge was diverted. "In order to lead the revolutionary struggle for power, it is necessary to see clearly from whom the power must be wrested. The workers did not recognise the enemy because he was disguised as a friend."

But again the Trotskyists made no big gains out of the great action which they alone had agitated for. The gains went instead largely to the Communist Party which had sold out the strike. The CP increased from 82,000 members in 1935 to 380,000 in October 1936. Workers newly brought into militancy and inspired by the limited gains of 1936 joined the party that seemed to them the most active, conspicuous and combative.

Having failed to pursue the logic of a struggle for power, the workers' movement fell into the toils of reformism. Thanks to the efforts of the Popular Front "the revolution that began found itself braked, arrested, demoralised." (On a smaller scale, we have seen in Britain the militant struggles of 1972-74 which, bold though they were, failed to break through the bounds of reformism. Since then,

the movement has turned rightward.)

In August 1936 the Blum government declared for "non intervention" in the war between Franco and its sister Popular Front in Spain. Their argument was that this policy would prevent German/Italian involvement in Spain and the generalisation of the conflict to a European war. The German/Italian involvement, and the European war, came nonetheless.

By 1937 the employers, and even the government, were taking back the gains of June 1936. Union membership was one million in 1935; five million at the end of 1936; and down again to 1,700,000 by 1939.

In March 1937 Popular Front militants demonstrating at Clichy against a fascist meeting were shot down, and five of them killed — by the police of the Popular Front government. However, this service to the bourgeoisie merely indicated to them that the Popular Front had done its job of sidetracking the revolution, and that more straightforward methods of bourgeois rule could be restored.

In June 1937 the Blum government fell, to be replaced by another Popular Front government under Radical Party leadership. In April 1938, after an attempt to form another Blum government, the bourgeoisie opted definitely for a Radical administration. By this time Franco was moving to victory in the civil war in Spain.

Early 1938 had seen a new wave of industrial struggles. But they ran up against officially sponsored arbitration procedures endorsed by the government, the workers' parties and the newly consolidated trade union bureaucracy. Even the most tenacious militants eventually had to concede defeat.

The other attempt at a "second round" of June 1936 was in November 1938, when the trade union bureaucracy was eventually forced to call a one-day general strike against government measures undermining the 40-hour week. Mobilisation was weak, especially in those parts of industry which had previously been in the vanguard. Having been betrayed by the bureaucrats time and again, workers were reluctant to take the risk of a strike which was in any case evidently a token effort.

From then on, the shift to the right was continuous, until in July 1940 the Parliament — the same one that had been elected in 1936 with a Popular Front majority — voted plenary powers to the Nazi stooge Petain.

The CP deputies had already been banned from Parliament — but during the war they could find no better alternative than to support another, more 'patriotic' wing of the bourgeoisie, under de Gaulle. And at the end of the war, though the bourgeoisie was totally discredited, the CP joined a de Gaulle government against the working class, setting up the CRS paramilitary police force and voting for imperialist France's war budget to fight the CP's own comrades in the Vietminh.



Strikers at Lavalette listening to the news

Manley extends Jamaican state of Emergency

by Sandra Taylor

LAST WEEK, the Jamaican parliament voted to extend for a further 100 days the State of Emergency imposed by Michael Manley's Peoples National Party government. The State of Emergency allows for detention and internment of those suspected of plotting against the government. It was declared following months of political violence and the uncovering of a plot by supporters of the opposition party, the right wing Jamaican Labour Party, to encourage the violence.

Manley also announced yet another economic package designed to prop up the faltering Jamaican economy, including further import controls, a lifting of the freeze on various public sector projects and the provision of capital for private manufacturing.

The package also included a direct attack on one aspect of working class organisation — action against the 'sick-outs', a tactic employed by public sector workers forbidden to strike. Manley's closing words make familia reading. He calls for "discipline and work" from all sections of the community:

"The sugar worker and the cane farmer have to realise that every ton of cane must be reaped and shipped out as sugar to earn foreign exchange. The garment workers, construction workers, all workers are asked to understand that their output, that each individual person's output, matters at this time."

Do Jamaican workers really have the same interests as Manley's government? Manley talks of building 'democratic socialism'. Over the last four years his government has been marked by reforms which have attacked corruption, extended the welfare state and, in particular, aimed at reforming and improving agricultural production.

Zeal

The PNP government has been under attack from the Jamaican right wing and US imperialism, who are fearful not only of Manley's reforming zeal but of the new policies being pursued in the Caribbean such as Forbes Burnham's nationalisation projects in Guyana and Manley's closer relations with Cuba.

The right wing JLP, helped by CIA agents playing their old 'destabilisation' game, have been fomenting the political violence.

Heavy unemployment, running at a staggering 25%, has created a situation ripe for exploitation; youths have been recruited into rival gangs. Every day, during the first half of the year, someone died following gun battles. Arms were being hoarded, bought by money from expatriate Jamaican capitalists in the USA.

In this situation, it's quite clear that Manley's government has to be defended against the right wing attacks. This was the position adopted by a united front of revolutionary organisations formed in February. They made clear that a right wing defeat of Manley would mean the destruction of trade unionism in Jamaica — but also that Manley was no real friend to the working class, nor could he be relied on to defend them.

Manley's recent measures have made clear that, whatever his roots in the trade union movement, his real commitment is to the 'progressive' elements of the Jamaican bourgeoisie.

He has been willing to press ahead with agricultural reform —

constantly referring to Tanzania as his model. But he has left the sugar, bauxite and banana industries firmly in the hands of the international monopolies, while asking them to 'co-operate' with national companies.

The United Fruit Company controls three quarters of the banana trade. Despite negotiations about sugar, Tate & Lyle still have concessions which give them cheap prices.

Failed

Further, the PNP government last year introduced new anti-working class legislation. The Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act resembles the Tory Industrial Relations Act in Britain. Strike action is severely restricted and entirely prohibited in certain public sector unions.

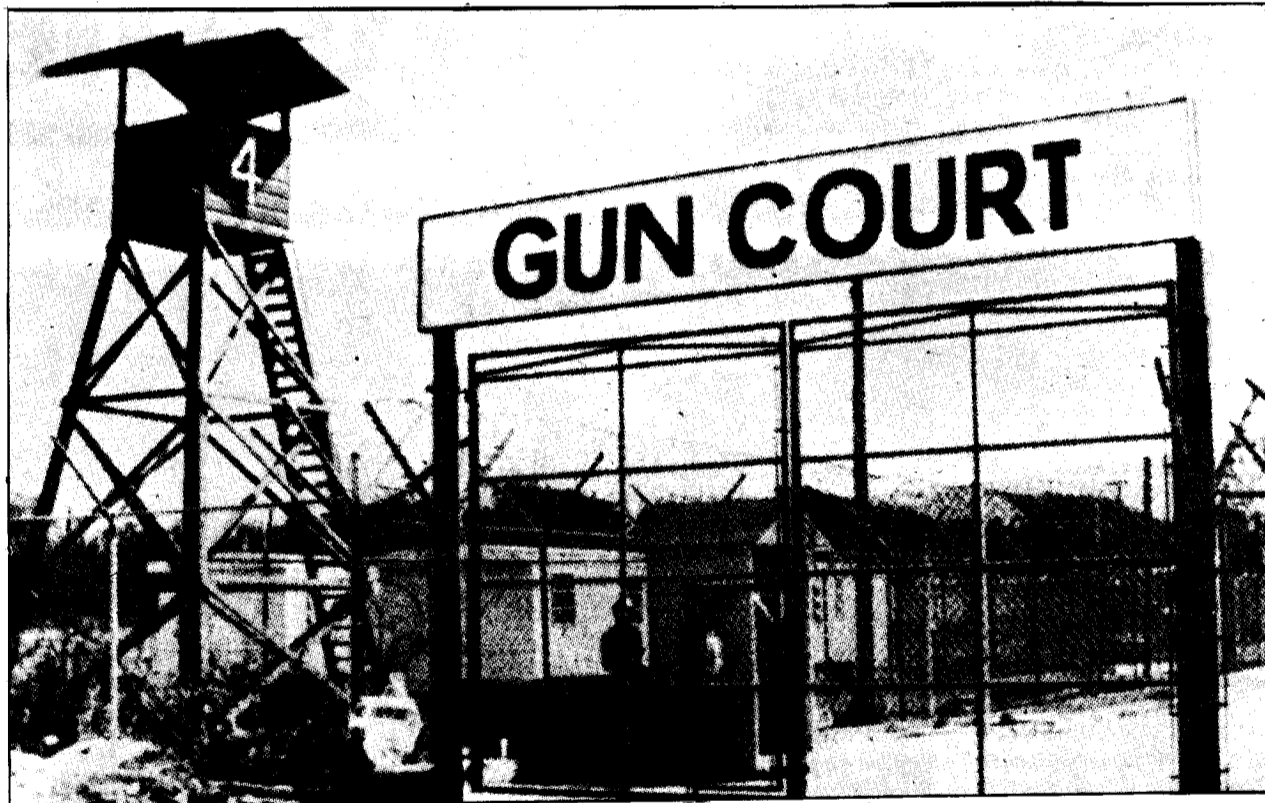
Manley's response to the right

at other bauxite and aluminium companies have been involved in action.

Management has responded with lock-outs in some cases — but workers have adopted new tactics such as occupations and lock-ins (locking the management in).

Public sector workers (including most recently nurses) who are forbidden to strike, have used 'sick-out' for three days at a time enabling them to draw sick pay. It is this sick pay during an industrial dispute that Manley is now abolishing.

Manley's reforms, the PNP drive against corruption and the opening of an 'ideological debate' have meant that not only have expectations risen and trade union consciousness and organisation grown, but class consciousness in general has developed at a great speed. A 'liberal' writer in the Jamaican Gleaner put his finger on the problem that now faces the Jamaican ruling class and, in particular,



wing violence was not to rely on organising the working class against it. It was to re-introduce the notorious Gun Court legislation in February, providing for internment for arms possession. When this failed, he brought in the state of Emergency.

Although most of those interned have been right wingers, these measures which give enormous powers to the state forces can be turned against the working class. And it has been noticeable recently how PNP leaders are talking a great deal about "trade union disruption".

Lock-ins

The right wing and Manley's bourgeois supporters have good reason to fear the Jamaican working class, which has been immensely strengthened in the last 6 months. The two major unions, the National Workers Union and the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (which is affiliated to the JLP) have been uniting behind wage demands under rank and file pressure.

There have been strikes for higher wages following two years of high inflation. Railway and airline workers have driven a coach and horses through the Labour Relations Act. Workers in Coca-Cola, Alcoa and

but hopefully, this will meet with much greater working class resistance.

His other alternative is to nationalise major industries, challenging the monopolies. He could probably count on support from sections of the middle class and professionals and on sections of the trade union movement.

But socialists shouldn't be confused into thinking such measures would mean an automatic victory for working class power in Jamaica, although they would be a blow against the imperialist monopolies. Huge sums of compensation would no doubt be paid out, as in Guyana, and new forms of agreement could be made with the neo-colonists as in Angola.

Hopefully, the moves towards unity in action made by the revolutionary organisations in February will continue and so also will the fight to maintain and strengthen independent working class organisation. But along with this, clear debate is necessary about how to build the workers' movement, how to link up with other Caribbean workers, and what programme is needed by revolutionaries.

Exploit

Another vital issue is the question of black oppression. Not only do the US and European monopolies exploit black Jamaica, but within the island colour still divides. The ruling class remains largely white or mulatto, the working class is black African. It is important that we in Britain recognise this, but at the same time remember that black members of the ruling class can also exploit black — and white — workers.

Just as our job here is to fight against black oppression and to

Manley's attempt to stabilise the situation: "What political development in the nation has done is that by making both workers and employers a sort of vanguard of ideological debate, contradictions of values and convictions have arisen.

"The bargaining game has grown from a display of power broking based on bluffs into an ideological debate.

"If one should request a statement from the Private Sector Organisation, the Jamaican Manufacturers Association or the employers' federation as to what is their idea of a good society, their definition would differ in important particulars, if there was any agreement whatsoever, from what union leaders would define as their good society.

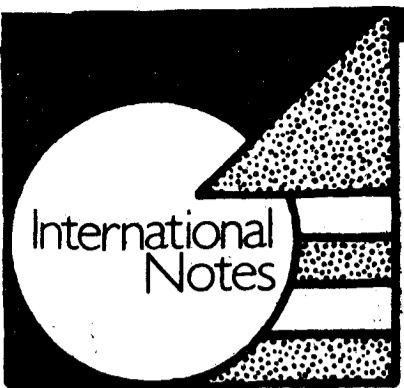
"This basic contradiction which has stemmed from the differing ethical and philosophical values of the employers and the unions and workers has widened into a chasm ever since the ideological debate intensified."

In other words, the class struggle is really ON in Jamaica. Can Manley succeed in stabilising the economy? If he does, it will be at the expense of the working class, and by compromising with US imperialism. But he is caught in the contradictions of his own 'democratic socialism' and pressured by the imperialist monopolies. His plans for further building programmes and other public sector schemes may win him union support — but will not please his capitalist critics.

He can take Indira Gandhi's road to permanent 'emergency' —

build real unity between black and white workers against the ruling class, so we must support Caribbean workers who are fighting the same monopolies, the same ruling class, that we are fighting.

British communists are woefully ignorant of the Caribbean struggle. WORKERS ACTION hopes that readers with knowledge of it will write in and share their experience and ideas.



Cloud of death

ON JULY 9th Roberto Lanzini was sitting down to a meal with his family at their home near Milan. Suddenly a white, evil-smelling cloud descended on the house. After it had gone, Signor Lanzini went outside and found one of his cats dead. "When I picked it up its tail dropped off", he said.

The Lanzini house was one of many in the path of a cloud of gas released in an explosion at the nearby Icmesa chemical plant. The explosion threw into the air a fine vapour of TCDD (a powerful insecticide and a defoliant used by the Americans in Vietnam). Although only about 4 lbs of it got into the air, the effect has been disastrous.

So far more than 30 people have been treated for skin burns and other ailments. Dozens of animals have died, insect life in the area has been wiped out, and the soil and vegetation has been contaminated. People have been warned not to eat food or drink produced in the area.

Hoffman La Roche (the Swiss chemical giant who own the plant and who were sued last year for making excessive profits on one of their drugs, Valium) have said that it will be necessary to use flamethrowers to destroy all vegetation in the area, to destroy all the animals, and removed the contaminated top-soil down to a depth of 8 inches.

Despite the severity of the poisoning, local people were not warned of the danger until last Friday — almost two weeks after the explosion! Until then local farmers had been selling their produced in markets, and hundreds of people have eaten contaminated food.

Not much has been made public about the hazards of TCDD. Roche are saying nothing, even though the information must be available. The Americans sprayed thousands of pounds of it over Vietnam to remove the forest cover from the guerrillas — they must know what its effects are.

Roche have admitted some responsibility for the damage by giving 100 million lire to help evacuate about 400 people from the contaminated area within half a mile of the plant. They are being moved to Milan until the area is safe to live in. Already troops have moved in to fence off the polluted area with barbed wire.

Local residents have attacked the car of the local health commissioner. They are bitterly angry that they weren't told of the danger earlier. Ironically the plant could not have been built in Roche's native Switzerland. Anti-pollution laws and health regulations are more tightly observed there than in Italy. In fact, northern Italy serves as a dumping ground for dangerous chemical processes that are not allowed in Switzerland or Germany. Many chemical firms in those two countries have plants in Italy from which they export products back to the parent firm.

The explosion at the Flixborough plant in Britain showed that, in the construction of these large chemical processes, cost is put above health and safety. Near Icmesa, the lesson may not be learnt at the cost of people's lives (as it was at Flixborough), but certainly at the cost of the livelihood of the farmers and the transformation of the area into an environmental desert.

No aid for Italy

HELMUT SCHMIDT, West German Chancellor and darling of the 'Socialist International', made plain this week the views of the major world employers and bankers on the current political crisis in Italy.

This man, known for his 'democratic' opposition to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, speaking as mouthpiece for the paymasters of the world, has let it be known that there will be no economic aid for Italy unless the rulers of Italy can guarantee that the Italian Communist Party will have no place in the Italian government. Schmidt, who argued last year for similar sanctions against the Portuguese left, has been fully supported by the bosses' press in Britain, and the Labour government have not commented publicly on a position which they have clearly sanctioned in conversation with Schmidt

and the American government. In Italy, Christian Democrat Andreotti is trying to form a government without CP membership. He is hoping instead to secure the CP's support for his government. At a time when the Italian ruling class desperately needs an incomes policy Andreotti knows that only the CP can secure support for that incomes policy from the ranks of the Trade Union leadership in Italy. He knows too that, if left to itself, the Italian CP will condone an incomes policy in order to boost their prestige and prospects as a responsible and respectable party of government.

What worries Schmidt and the financiers and Britain's Labour government is not the intentions of Berlinguer and the Italian CP leadership. Rather they know very well that the programme of the Italian CP does not challenge the wealth and the profits of capitalism in Italy, does not challenge Italy's membership of NATO, aims no further than a coalition government of the CP in "historic compromise" with Italian Christian Democracy.

What does worry him and the paymasters is that the Italian CP's entry into government will actually encourage the self-activity and the fighting spirit of the Italian workers — that the CP will not be able to sell 'historic compromise' and 'incomes policy' to its supporters.

That's why Schmidt, the partisan of 'independence' and of 'non-intervention' is leading the chorus of international financiers directly intervening in Italian politics to secure their profits and investments from the workers of Italy.

Clamp-down in Yugoslavia

ONCE LOOKED to as a model of 'democracy' and 'socialism' by those who should know better, Yugoslavia is facing severe problems.

Mounting foreign debts — \$1 billion borrowed from the Western banks last year — and unemployment running at 10% at the end of the last year are only manifestations of a deep economic crisis in Yugoslavia. At present 2 million Yugoslavs (including dependents) out of a population of 20 million are forced to work abroad. Racialist-controls by, for example, the West German and Swiss governments over their 'guest workers' will mean that the ranks of the unemployed in Yugoslavia will grow.

Against this background there is a political crisis inside the Yugoslav bureaucracy. The impending death of President Tito, coupled with mounting economic difficulties, has opened up serious divisions and conflict inside the ruling party. Sections of the bureaucracy clearly see a return to the centralised and tightly-policed model of Russia as fitting their needs. Russia, anxious to re-assert its control over Yugoslavia and its access to Mediterranean sea ports, is clearly encouraging such sentiments. The friction within the Yugoslav bureaucracy is also expressed in a sharpening of the conflicts between the nationalities that comprise Yugoslavia — most importantly between the Croats and the Serbs.

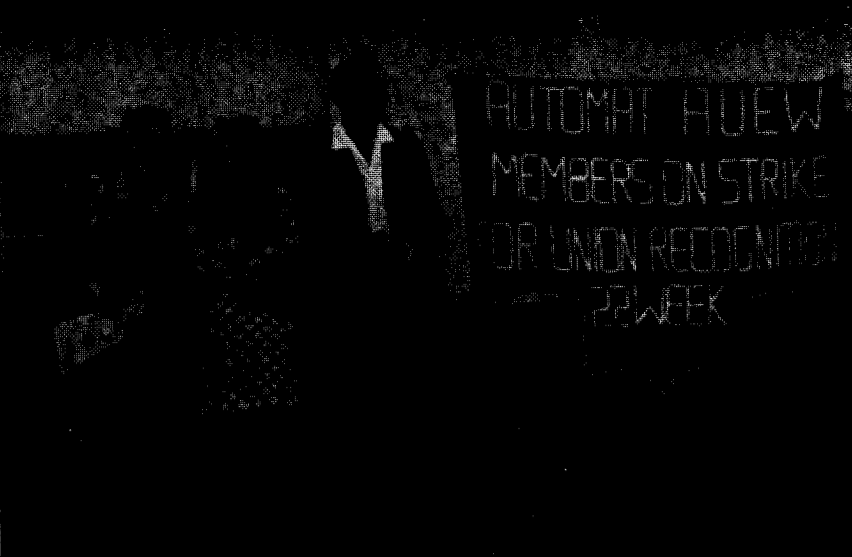


Tito

In this situation the screws of repression are being tightened in Yugoslav society. By the beginning of last year the left wing Praxis group — centred in Belgrade University philosophy faculty — had been closed down. Trials followed not only of Praxis supporters but also, in lavish show trial form, of pro-Moscow 'agents' organising to 'subvert' the Yugoslav regime.

The wave of repression has taken a sharper turn recently. In February 1974 Dragoljub Ignjatovic was given a 3½ year prison sentence for 'hostile propaganda'. He had questioned publicly the progress towards Socialism being made by the Yugoslav bureaucracy — criticising them from the left.

Ignjatovic's defense lawyer has now been summoned before the Belgrade courts. S M Popovic, who defended Ignjatovic, is accused: "for having said in his final speech... that the facts qualified by the District Attorney as hostile propaganda in the accusation against Dragoljub Ignjatovic are true facts". If Popovic had argued that Ignjatovic was insane for doubting Yugoslavia's socialist credentials he would have been safe. Ignjatovic could have been consigned to a lunatic asylum. Popovic, however, argued that Ignjatovic was sane, and that his argument was consistent and legitimate. For this Popovic has been summoned before the District Attorney!



Still deadlock at Automat after 6 months

STRIKERS AT AUTOMAT, Swinton, who have now been out for six months in their fight for union recognition, have received the support of local Labour MP Stanley Orme. Orme is chairman of the AUEW Parliamentary group, and some of the Automat workers come from his constituency. However, all Orme has

done, even at this stage, is ask Employment Secretary Albert Booth to resolve the dispute in the workers' favour.

Support for the Automat strikers is still growing. The mass pickets are well attended, and blacking of Automat products is spreading. But management are still not prepared to reinstate the sacked

JBH inquiry called for

A CALL has come from two branches and several stewards for an inquiry to be held by the Northampton AUEW District Committee into why the recent 2½ week strike at J. Blackwood Hodge resulted in a defeat for the fight to reinstate steward Ken Butterfield.

This inquiry is necessary in order for trade unionists in the area to learn the lessons from this defeat and to prepare for future struggles. Especially so as the JBH men were thought to have a good case and appeared to have a strong hand with effective picketing and other trade union support.

It is important to see the role of the trade union officials in the dispute, and how their behind-the-scenes manoeuvring disillusioned the men and strengthened the management. ACAS [Arbitration, Conciliation & Advisory Service] was involved by the District Secretary without informing the men. No help was given in the blacking of parts from the factory in Scotland; workers in Barnsley were told by their district secretary that the strike would be over, and they therefore returned to work after coming out in response to a flying visit by JBH men.

All this raised doubts in the minds of TASS strikers, who supported us, of our ability to win.

Even if the District Committee refuses an inquiry, the local Socialist Engineers group will be working to drive home the lessons and will make it their business in future to ensure support, official or otherwise, for workers in struggle.

B. JONES.

LAST WEEK the Junior Hospital Doctors decided to take national action if the government did not reconsider its plans to break the contract they agreed at the beginning of this year. That contract was agreed on after prolonged sanctions by the doctors.

Throughout the country junior doctors have been meeting to decide what course of action to take. In Rochdale they voted unanimously to ban overtime. Why are they taking this action again?

Junior doctors have to work overtime. They regularly work an 80-hour week, and may work up to 120 hours. They cannot choose not to work this amount of overtime. Now the government has decided not to pay them for the normal 80-hour week during their allotted four weeks' holiday.

In Rochdale, the doctors are angry over what they see as a breach of contract. Many of them are also very concerned at the working conditions which place such a heavy reliance on overtime. Most trade



workers or recognise the union. Fresh orders for the firm have spurred the bosses to stand firm, and they are trying to bring in extra staff by advertising in local papers.

Recent information shows what sort of an outfit the strikers are having to deal with. Automat, in fact, is not one company, but four — Certina, Northworks, Amaton, and Electro Automat. The head of all these is John Chamberlain, who lives locally in Worsley. According to him, Automat is a 'poor' company.

But Chamberlain himself is probably one of the richest men in Salford. In the past he reaped high profits by paying very low rates. Until a few months ago, for example, most workers could expect no more than the flat rate for overtime work.

It was conditions like that the workers were fighting to change. Because of that they ended outside the gate.

Despite Stanley Orme's initiative and the blacking, there is no sign of the deadlock being broken. As they enter their seventh month on strike, the Automat workers need every possible support. Messages and donations to: T A Smith, 549 Liverpool Rd, Irlam, Manchester. **BILL COPPOCK**

THE UNIONS



JUNIOR DOCTORS BAN OVERTIME

unionists would be appalled by the demands put upon the junior doctors. Compulsory overtime involves 2 nights at work after a full day, and weekends which begin at 1pm on Saturday and end 9am Monday.

One Rochdale doctor described a typical working day for me. He works in the Operating Theatre from 9am to 6.30pm, on his feet all the time. After that he goes over to his surgical unit to check on the 30 patients under his care. By this time he feels tired and hungry and his concentration is flagging. But a wrong decision could mean the difference be-

tween life and death. Quite often there are some needing an operation that night, but tiredness might lead him to it off until the morning.

Such a day is part of the 100 hour week. It's obvious why, under these conditions, mistakes are made.

These long hours are not only very disruptive for the doctors' personal life but also make it more difficult for them to do their job properly. Industrial action for shorter hours and better staffing ratios would get the support of the labour movement as part of a strengthening of the Health Service.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

NOVEMBER 13th is the day set for a conference called by the London Region Committee against the Cuts. The time has come to coordinate the fight back, said Claire Weingarten of the London Region Committee at a conference called by the Lambeth Trades Council last weekend and involving representatives from the NUT, Working Women's Charter Campaign, and Furzedown College of Education, recently occupied by students in protest against the education cuts.

Dick North, of the NUT Executive, said that the recent limited increase in NUT sanctions came as a direct result of the college occupations. He showed how the employers were using racistist methods to cut back on the teaching work-force. Of 25 teachers recently referred to him because of 'contractual difficulties', 20 were black. He was determined to fight these cases publicly.

Margaret Page, WWCC speaker and a Workers Action supporter, showed how a woman's right to work was being undermined by cut-backs in nursery provisions and facilities for old people. It was the women, she said, who were expected to get back into the home to look after old

and young alike. Lack of abortion facilities, too, undermined women's right to work.

At local factories employing many women workers, such as Tannoys and Freemans, large-scale redundancies are rumoured. These must be fought.

GLC councillor Ken Livingstone said that Labour was now spending only as much in real terms as the Tories were on housing when they controlled the GLC.

He said that the Chief Education Officer

at ILEA had recommended disciplinary action only against 2 of the Tyndale 6 Terry Ellis and Brian Haddow — but the Labour group had overruled this and got for all 6.

The conference decided on support for the Garnett College students' pamphlet, "For a Woman's Right to Work — Fight the Cuts", support for the Tannoys workers, and mobilisation for the November 13th conference.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, £5 per column inch. Paid ads, 8p per word. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Thursday 29th July. NAC public meeting on ABORTION, 7.30pm at the Grand Committee Room, House of Commons.

Saturday 14th August. Cardiff demonstration AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM. Assemble Museum Place, 2pm.

Saturday 21st August. Revolutionary Communist Group day school on THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT. 10am to 6pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Further info from "Day School" (WA), 49 Raiton Road, London SE24 0LN.

The Troops Out Movement fact-finding DELEGATION TO IRELAND will be leaving on 17th September. If your organisation would like further information or to send a delegate, contact Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland, c/o

TOM, 1 North End Rd, London W14.

"PERMANENTE REVOLUTION", organ of the Internationale Kommunistische Liga of Austria. 1010 Wien Postfach 1454

"SPARTACUS", monthly organ of the German Trotskyist organisation Spartacusbund. R. Engelhardt, 43 Essen, Postlagerkarte 064395A, West Germany.

"BULLETIN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST FACTION": Italian Trotskyist monthly. Antonella Marazzi, CP 30093, Roma, Italy.

"LUTTE OUVRIERE", French Trotskyist weekly. LO, BP233 - 75065 - Paris Cedex 18 - France.

Revue "QUAN SAT", organ of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. 48 rue Mazarine, 75006 Paris, France.

"WOMEN'S CHARTER", paper of the Working Women's Charter campaign. First issue includes articles on Equal Pay, the Trico dispute, recent legislation, the CIS report, etc, plus supplement on the National WWC conference. Price 10p. J. Daniels, 16 Crookham Rd, London SW6

"REPUBLICAN NEWS", Irish Republican weekly. 170 Falls Rd, Belfast.

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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

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

Name

Address

WARRIORS IN ACTION

ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

"SELF defence by black people is provocative". "Some immigration controls are necessary". "The fight against racism is wholly ideological."

That these views should have been expressed at a meeting to set up a Committee against Racism shows the level of confusion that exists in the labour movement on the question of what racism is and how to fight it.

The meeting, on Wednesday July 21st, did however bring together some sixty delegates from various Labour Party, trade union, trades council and other bodies in Brent (north west London) — who had come to the meeting to get something done about racism and the National Front.

FRANK HANSEN (Brent East LPYS, Chartists) had described correctly in opening the meeting the fact that racism was a product of imperialism, and that it infected almost all white people in this country, including the working class.

But TOM DURKIN (Chairman of the Trades Council and Communist Party stalwart) couldn't understand this: his view was that racism was something spread around by a few bad people such as the NF, in order to dupe the workers who were 'confused' by unemployment. And he thought that opposition to all immigration controls wasn't on, as it would not be acceptable to the broad labour movement.

The clearest argument for the adoption of firm anti-racist principles (and an idea of what these might be) was put by PETE FIRMIN (Brent East LPYS, Workers Action supporter) who outlined a number of proposals which were later put in a motion to the meeting.

The main demands included were: repeal of all immigration laws — for the right of all black people to work and live in this country; protest action against all racist statements in the press; no racist or fascist to hold any position in the labour movement; maximum mobilisation of the labour movement to prevent fascist marches or mobilisations; active support for the defence of black people against racist attacks, and for the right of black people to organise themselves within the labour movement.

Bans

The loudest opposition was to the idea of black self-defence: it was "provocative", there was a danger in having "vigilante groups prowling the streets", and the best way to fight fascist attacks was through "the broad labour movement".

But all resistance to oppression is provocative — to the oppressors! The "dangerous vigilante groups" image is in fact itself a reflection of National Front propaganda which plays on fears of black people as 'sinister'.

Many people hadn't thought about the need to ban racists and fascists from positions in the labour movement. On the case of a prominent local Labour Councillor, Alderman Hartley, who publicly supported Mellish's "Enough is enough" outburst, they hurriedly assured the meeting that Hartley's words had been repudiated. But Hartley is still a racist, and still a prominent member of the Labour Party locally!

How can a racist represent workers trying to build an anti-racist labour movement?

The outcome was that the supporters of the Socialist Charter (who had put a lot of work into organising the meeting) chose to support a quite inadequate "draft programme" presented by the convenor of the meeting. This failed to take up the question of black self-defence and the prevention of fascist mobilisations, although it did call on the labour movement to deny public meeting places to fascists to protest against racist statements in the press.

This programme was accepted, with minor amendments, while the motion put by Pete Firmin was dismembered and lost, though there should be another chance to argue for this kind of action at the conference which the committee is planning for the Autumn. Its importance was in fact highlighted by the presence of 40 National Front fascists who had turned up to disrupt the meeting. Effective stewarding — not an "ideological fight" — had kept them out.

SUNDAY WEEK ago the 'Express' devoted a front page lead to the 'dilemma facing the Labour Government because of calls from 21 CLPs for an anti-racist campaign.

That proposals for such a campaign should be 'controversial' is a good indication of the desperate need for it.

One of the resolutions mentioned came from Wallasey CLP. Though we don't go along with all it proposes, we do feel that the vital thing is to start a serious mobilisation against racism in the labour movement.

The key points of such a campaign must be:

* The physical defence of the black community, or other minorities, against attacks by racists;

* Purging the labour movement of racists;

* No platform for fascists or racists;

* An end to institutionalised racism;

* The building of local anti-fascist committees.

The question of physical defence of the black community can only mean, given the present distribution of forces, black self defence. There is no equivalent in this country of the politically powerful white liberals in the USA. The Labour Party and the labour movement are riddled with racism. Those in the Labour Party who do not actually support or advocate racist policies generally keep quiet about it.

In the unions the left has been weakened by its past errors. The years of equating industrial milit-

ancy with political advancement, the crude idealisation of the working class, the adaptation to national chauvinism on Ireland, on import controls and on the "No to the EEC" campaign — all these are now being paid for by our helplessness in the face of a real racist threat.

Black people, and in particular black youth, are organising and fighting back against the racists. It is our duty to support that fight, unconditionally — not to isolate ourselves from it by asking these black militants to wait for the workers' defence force which for the near future will exist only in the fairytale world of avid sectarians.

We must purge the labour movement of racists because the racist is by his nature a scab. He sides with his white boss against his black brothers and sisters, and in doing so divides and weakens the movement.

Open racists and fascists should be expelled from the movement. Where we do not have the strength to force expulsion, they must always be opposed on a clear and open anti-racist platform — even to the extent that we support a 'moderate' who is a real anti-racist against an economic militant who is a racist or is ambiguous on the question.

Similarly in council or parliamentary elections, the Labour Party

must be forced to stand on an anti-racist platform.

No platform for racists and fascists is a controversial demand. Freedom of speech and political organisation are not illusions, they are hard-won liberties which should not be denied to anybody except in the most extreme circumstances.

The reason we advocate denying these rights to open racists and fascists is that the method of these people is that of gangsterism — their main political tactics are violence and intimidation; to extend these freedoms to them is to deny to their victims the even more basic right of a house, a job and a life free from the constant threat of violence.

Thugs

Our opposition cannot be limited to the thugs and cranks at the dirty end of racism. There is not, nor can there ever be, an acceptable face of oppression. The expanding racist institutions of the state, which to its eternal disgrace the Labour Party has helped to set up, must be destroyed. All anti-immigration laws must be repealed and no system of immigrant registration or creeping pass laws must be allowed

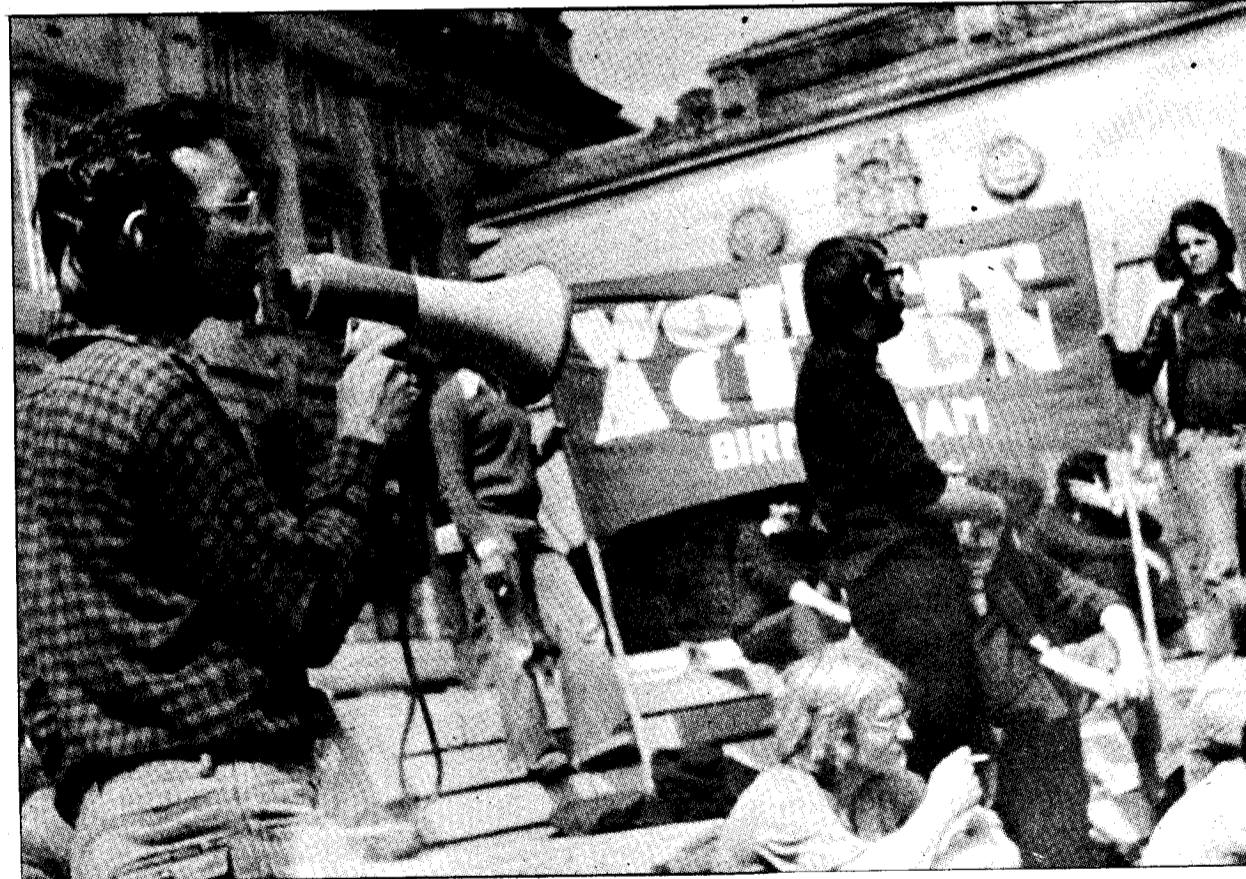
to exist.

Merchant shipping, the one British industry which practices open and legal apartheid with the concurrence of all concerned — state and unions as well as bosses — must be forced to abandon this practice. There must be one set of conditions and one pay scale for all seamen, regardless of race or country of origin — not because their cheaper labour is "taking British jobs" as some officials of their own union have whined, but because we are in favour of the rate for the job, against divisive wage differentials and above all against such differentials when they are RACIST. In fact, there should be a system of preferential hiring to guarantee the livelihoods of Asian and black seamen so they won't be dumped at such time as they win equal pay.

In order to effectively fight the racists, that is, to make our propaganda, to mobilise against them on the streets and in elections, to protect our meetings from them, we need to unite our forces against them.

We are pitifully weak; to weaken ourselves further by disunity is to invite disaster. We must build local anti-racist and anti-fascist committees to ensure the greatest possible mobilisation of our potential forces.

BIRMINGHAM ANTI-FASCIST DEMO



ABOUT 400 anti-fascists marched from Handsworth to Sparkbrook last Saturday — two areas of Birmingham that have borne the brunt of racist attacks from the local press.

The demonstration (in two parts) was called by the Birmingham Anti-Fascist Committee because of the need being felt in the city to make a stand against an increasing chorus of racist calls for tighter immigration controls.

The march therefore concentrated its attention on making clear that immigration controls are racist and should be scrapped altogether. And speakers at the rally from the Anti-Fascist Committee, IS and the LPYS spoke of the need to give practical assistance to black people under physical attack by white racists, and to support the right of black self defence.

Speakers also attacked the role of the police and courts in harassing anti-fascists — contrasting this with the release of Robert Reff.

Solidarity with the demonstration was conveyed from the Kashmiri and Indian Workers' Associations; Tony Huq, National President of the Bangladesh Workers' Association, spoke of the importance of continued demonstrations against racism and fascism.

IS had switched its plans from a national mobilisation for the Birmingham demonstration in favour of countering the National Front in London. But when the NF cancelled their London march, IS branches, pulling out from a London event, failed to go to Birmingham either, and only the local branch was represented on the march.

COPS' 'DIRTY TRICKS'

TWO WEEKS ago, Birmingham Police's Central Lockup at Stöelhouse Lane was the scene of an impromptu demonstration in the middle of the night, as 100 young West Indians gathered at 3 in the morning and marched from Handsworth to demand the release of 7 of their friends who had been picked up and charged with obstruction.

THE MORNING STAR announced last week that Birmingham's Trades Council (Britain's largest) had set up an Action Committee "to combat racism and improve race relations".

Invitations to the organising meeting were sent to selected Trades Council members, full time union officials, and some immigrant group leaders.

The Action Committee is calling an Autumn conference of the labour movement in the city, jointly with "ethnic groups."

So far the Action Committee has provided a cover for Trades Council President Bill Jarvis who, while refusing to either resign or retract his racist statements as he was called upon to do by the Birmingham District Labour Party, nonetheless presided over the meeting which set up this Action Com-

BOLTON's buses came to a standstill for 24 hours last week, as crews struck in protest at an attack on driver Noor Hussein which sent him for hospital treatment. A 400-strong picket was mounted on Bolton's three bus depots in defiance of a union appeal to return to work. And pickets at the city's boundaries turned back incoming buses from nearby Bury.

ON TUESDAY July 19th the only two defendants convicted in the marathon Carib Club trial were freed. The only evidence brought against Denis Bovell and Royfield Dockery was that of police identification. The Appeal judges pointed out that this could not be taken as reliable.

The Judges' ruling is a damning indictment on the role of the police in

the Carib affair, which began in Autumn 1974 when over 100 police laid siege to the club.

Denis Bovell was a prime target for the Prosecution throughout the trial. They tried to prove he'd incited people to fight the police over his sound system. But the system had broken down and was being fixed when the police came in.

In their determination to frame Bovell and Dockery they intimidated witnesses.

Normally the police 'dirty tricks' go on all the time, undetected, bringing them successful prosecutions of black people. Luckily, this time it didn't. And may make them think twice in future.

LAST WEEK Manchester magistrates court was picketed by 35 demonstrators protesting against the police harassment of black youths in Moss Side and Hulme.

In court was 16-year old Joyce Rickett, appearing on charges of assault and obstruction. She was arrested on June 1st

when a group of black youngsters were coming out of a local youth club. They were confronted by six policemen, one police woman, and security guards. One youth was searched for no reason, and a crowd began to gather. The cops singled out the black kids and began to push them around. When Joyce tried to tell the police to leave her alone, she was knocked to the ground, and then dragged off to the police station. She was beaten on the way to, and at, the police station, and then charged.

Black organisations in the area are building a campaign to defend Joyce. Already they have got a local T&GWU branch to pass a motion of support.

Send messages of support and donations to: Defence Appeal, c/o Flame, Trade Union Books, 260 Deansgate, Manchester 3. NEAL SMITH

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