

workers' ACTION

No. 43

Jan. 27 - Feb. 3, 1977

10p

Inside

CENSORSHIP & NORTHERN IRELAND

p. 4-5

PARTICIPATION IN BRITAIN AND GERMANY

p. 6-7

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS AND DEMOCRACY

p.3

As jobless figures soar, unemployed action militants are jailed

No place for Powell

ENOCH POWELL'S latest racist speech is a calculated challenge to the Government and its new Race Relations Act (1976), soon to be in force.

Powell shouts his defiance, daring the Government to prosecute him, now or after the new Act becomes law. Will the Government show that it does take its new anti-racist law seriously, or will it show by its inactivity that it is not prepared to impose the law on Powell or on any other sick, foul-mouthed, black-baiting racist bigot, demagogue or crank?

If the Government prosecutes Powell, **Workers' Action** will raise no objection. If it jails him, that would be a good thing too. Mr Powell bears the direct moral responsibility, shared with the **Sun**, the **Mail**, and the **Express**, for the murder of three Asians last summer.

Prosecution of Powell would also be a clear token from the government to the immigrant and native British blacks that it is not just 'talking big' with its new legislation, that it is not scared by a challenge from Powell and his supporters.

But we doubt that Powell will be prosecuted. The Government will probably argue that over time the new Act will structure and change public expression of racism, and thus lessen it. Yes. Like the 1965 and 1968 Acts did?

Meanwhile — what will the black population do, which last summer, in East London, Blackburn, and other places, faced wide-scale highly-organised thuggery. Knifing Asians was **illegal** last summer.

So was the fomenting of race hatred for that murder. The police didn't protect the black communities.

The black communities found that they had only one reliable resource — self-defence, aided here and there by white militants. Any hopes pinned to the new Race Relations Act, any reliance on the State, or on the good intentions of the Government, can only undermine this defence. In the crunch the black community can only rely on its own strength

When the Standing Committee of Pakistani Organisations demands that the Government prosecute Powell, they demand not more than their legal rights to protection. But at the same time they express illusions in the possibilities of relying on the State. And inevitably they sow illusions.

So does the **Morning Star**, paper of the Communist Party. Smitten with legalist and parliamentary cretinism, they see Government action as the desirable and only effective action. They don't say it would not be a bad idea: they say it is the only idea. And CP militants are thus encouraged to keep away from black defence work.

This pernicious — and deliberate — illusion-mongering can only do harm. Socialists should adopt neither an ultra-left 'repudiation' of the Race Relations Act, nor an open-mouthed reliance on the often



But the 'Law' is an enemy too...

racist police to deal with the racists and fascists.

Even if Powell is prosecuted, by the Government or privately, there will still be vast numbers of active racists who aren't. Remember the previous Acts? The first victim was a black man. Michael Malik was jailed. When Powell made his notorious 'rivers foaming with blood' speech, he got off scot free and became a hero for parts of the nation.

Fundamentally, the provisions of the Race Relations Act (1976) cannot solve the problem faced by blacks now. Next summer may well be another long, hot, murderous racist British summer. We must be prepared.

- Cleanse the labour movement of racism.
- Build black self-defence groups.
- Organise active labour movement support for black self-defence.

DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS

NATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON ABORTION RIGHTS DAY OF EVIDENCE JANUARY 29 1977

Central Hall Westminster SW1 From 11am All are welcome Tribunal Committee NAC 30 Camden Road London NW1 Telephone 01-485 4303



A FEROCIOUS police campaign against the Right to Work campaign has already resulted in jail sentences for four people. And the last of the marchers arrested last March to come to trial, John Deason, faces an array of charges including malicious wounding and grievous bodily harm, which carry a maximum sentence of life.

Mike Lynch, an unemployed miner and a Labour Party member, was jailed last week. His crime was to be knocked unconscious by the furious and unprovoked attack by a gang of police just as the march from Manchester reached the outskirts of London. Though knocked unconscious, he was, the magistrates and the appeal court insisted, still capable of assaulting a police officer! As he went 'inside', he shouted: "I will be back".

In Skelmersdale, Liverpool, Billy Castly, secretary of the unemployed action committee and a Right to Work marcher, has been jailed for six months, convicted of assaulting the police.

When young workers who dare to protest against unemployment wind up in jail — then it's time to take notice! John Deason may not in fact get life imprisonment, but he can face a long sentence nonetheless. The case must be brought up in every Trades Council, trade union branch, and Labour Party ward, and resolutions carried against this victimisation.

The issue comes up in court next on Tuesday 1st February, with Bobby Burids' appeal. A demonstration has been called from the court [10am at Middlesex Crown Court, The Guildhall, Westminster Square, London] to Pentonville Jail, where Mike Lynch is imprisoned. Bring banners!



Mike Lynch

Vote against the Social Contract!

The TGWU is the main prop of the Social Contract. If it didn't police its own members and the rest of the trade union movement, the Social Contract would probably be long dead.

Now it's time for the election of a new General Secretary to replace Jack Jones and even the stalwart supporters of Jones's reactionary policies feel they need to make some oppositional noises.

This is a fine tribute to the widespread unpopularity of the wage freeze. But the widespread feelings that these aspirants for Jones's job are playing to has been permitted no expression in the union. It had to wait until election time.

Callaghan gives a cake to Tribune

ON Thursday January 20th, *Tribune* celebrated its 40th birthday with a rally at the Methodist Central Hall. It must rank as one of the most unpolitical political rallies in 40 years — in fact it was more like a mass seance arranged to contact the ghosts of the dear departed Aneurin Bevan and Stafford Cripps.

As befits an ex-Minister of Technology, Wedgwood Benn came armed with a tape recorder (no ouija board for this man!). He began his contribution with the playing of a recording of Stafford Cripps addressing an election meeting in 1935. It was a ringing piece of socialist rhetoric: cantankerous but vague.

That set the tone for the better bits of the evening. Benn did a passable imitation of Cripps, the aged Fenner Brockway did a passable imitation of the young Fenner Brockway, and the rest quoted Nye.

As long as the utterances remained oratorical things were bearable. The audience could imagine itself back in the Good Old Days. But the reminders of *Tribune's* living 1977 presence could not be repressed entirely. For there on the platform was Barbara Castle, for ever infamous in the working class movement for her attempt to impose a straitjacket on the trade union movement. (And even at that archly reactionary moment, the old Tribunitte Castle had reached to Bevan's memory for a name for her proposed legal assault on the unions.)

Foot, of course, was there too, to close the proceedings: no-one seemed aware of the problem of his present role in the midst of these steamy memories. And Jack Jones was there, roaring his ridiculous remedies to an audience embarrassed at being reminded of what day it was.

There is nothing very wrong in old Tribunittes reminding each other of what, to them, are evidently glorious memories. But none of them seemed to be asking the question: if Ian Mikardo was right when he recalled the days of the *Tribune Brains Trusts* that followed Bevan's resignation from government in 1951 as days when ticket touts could be found outside *Tribune* meetings, what does that say about *Tribune's* demise today when it has a greater parliamentary following than it ever had in the fifties?

For those who might seek an answer to such a question, there was a graphic one only a few days before the rally. The Prime Minister threw a little party for *Tribune* at No.10. He donated a cake with candles and wished his opponents well.

That would be killing with kindness ... if only life were there.

But if some of the time-serving officials have suddenly found a voice, some of the contenders for the election (which will take place between February 21st and March 19th) have always opposed the Social Contract. These are not along the lofty full time officials, of course: they are the rank and file fighters who are standing for the union's leadership.

One of these has a national reputation for the fight he has led at the Cowley plant against management's attempts to straitjacket the work force. This is Alan Thornett, who is standing as the candidate for the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

The other is Tommy Riley, who works for Metal Box in Westhoughton and is the candidate of the Right to Work Campaign.

A vote for either of these candidates is a clear vote against the Social Contract. But a clear vote against the Social Contract ought to be combined with a clear vote for an alternative policy.

The programme Thornett is standing on does provide such an alternative. (There are some oddities in it, but these are minor.) The key demands of this programme are for:

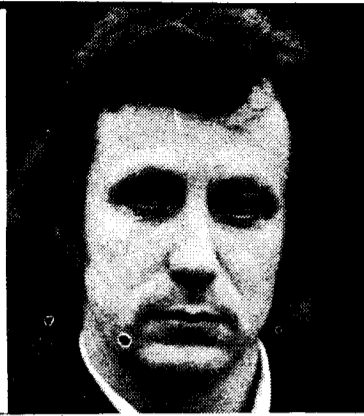
- a rejection of wage controls — to which it counterposes a sliding scale of wage;
- a rejection of cuts in public spending — to which it counterposes a sliding scale of public expenditure and nationalisation of public sector suppliers;
- opposition to redundancies — where it raises the slogan of work sharing on full pay.

Tommy Riley's programme has none of this. He proposes that the TGWU should fight for

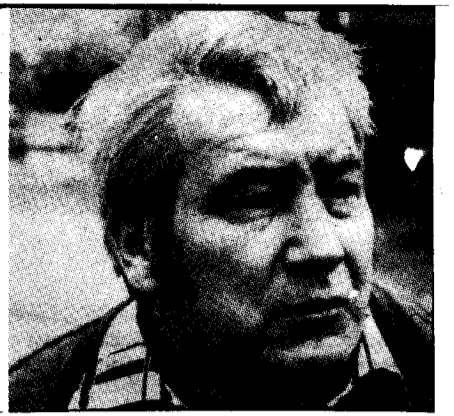
Vote for Alan Thornett!



John Cousins



Alan Thornett



Tommy Riley

the right to work. Fine! But he proposes no alternative way of organising the job so that there will be work for all. This is typical of the SWP (IS), of which Riley is a member: all fight and no solutions.

The core of Tommy Riley's error can be traced to his explanation of the actions of the trade union bureaucracy: they have, he says, "forgotten how to fight". Perhaps they have. But the central problem is the crisis of reformist solutions; without any recognition of this, Riley's campaign has no proposals that go beyond reformism.

One of the biggest issues in these elections will be the question of trade union democracy. This is always a focus of attention when elections are due. And it is clearly especially relevant in the TGWU.

Despite the fullsome praise showered on the union's structure as a model of democracy by the union's official handbook, the TGWU has always been one man's empire — whether it was

the right winger Deakin or the "left"-wingers Cousins and Jones.

On this point both Thornett and Riley are standing on a platform calling for the election of all officials. But rightly Thornett goes further than this and demands that full-time officials be recallable and be paid no more than the average for skilled members. (This used to be a slogan of IS too, but it seems to have dropped it these days.)

Of course, the most likely winners will come from among the present full-time officials, people like Moss Evans, John Miller, Alex Kitson, Larry Smith and Cousins.

The Right will vote for Evans; that will be a vote for "the same again please". The Communist Party and their broad left allies are likely to vote for Kitson, who used to be the leader of the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Union before he led it into a merger with the TGWU eight years ago. Neither of these

have made really unequivocal commitments to ending the Social Contract.

John Miller is the leader of the chemical workers' section of the TGWU and has been connected with the Institute for Workers' Control (though, given its tendency to butter up Jones himself, that could mean anything), and claims to be opposed to the present series of wage freezes. Cousins also claims that the Social Contract is dead, but it is unclear what he wants to replace it with.

Larry Smith will get the vote of anyone who wants the TGWU to transform itself into a coffin club.

Thornett's candidature must be used by socialist trade unionists as a chance to make the utmost effort to propagandise against the dead-end reformist solutions whose only logic is wage "restraint" under one guise or another and a destruction of trade union independence both "at the top" and on the shop floor.

Egyptian masses retaliate against Sadat measures

SIXTY PEOPLE were killed, and nearly 800 injured by Sadat's riot police as the Egyptian regime tried to beat back the workers' protests at the new price rises. Over 2,000 people have been jailed, some for participating directly in the protests, others for breaking the curfew imposed on Cairo as part of the attempt to quell the demonstrations.

When the new year's budget was announced on Monday 17th January, it created uproar in the People's Assembly. Salah Ahmed, the Finance Minister, declared increases on import duties on consumer goods of between 25% and 100%, and an end to subsidies on food and other necessities like butane gas, the normal domestic fuel in Egypt.

Fierce

The Cairo workers were quick to respond to this attack on their living standards. Tens of thousands came out onto the streets to show their opposition to the measures. This was not the first time of late that they had responded to the increasing economic attacks of the Sadat regime. In September 1974, the workers at the giant Helwan steel works south of Cairo went on strike and escalated their action in the following January when they demonstrated in support of their demands in Cairo itself. That demonstration, on New Year's Day 1975, drew the support of other

Cairo workers and ended in clashes with the state forces.

In March of that year the textile workers at the Mahalla al-Kobra works protested their dissatisfaction with the regime's economic policy. A year later workers at the Damietta textile works did likewise. Each time the demonstrations were met with fierce repression.

Two factors forced Sadat to concede to the demonstrators' demands to maintain the price subsidies and withdraw the tax rises. Firstly, the undoubted spontaneous strength of the workers' movement itself. (It is difficult to tell what role has been played by the Egyptian Communist Party formed on May Day 1975, or the remnants of the previous ECP dissolved itself in 1965, or by the tiny left grouplets that have emerged mainly amongst the students of Cairo.)

Secondly, the regime feared that the riot police would go over to the side of the rioters. The police are not paid much more than the average, and would have felt the full impact of the price rises — while the senior state officials were getting pay rises under the budget to soften their opposition to Sadat's reorganisation of state services.

The attacks on the working class are directly attributable to the huge deficit that the Egyptian economy is running. The present indebtedness is huge, as the government attempts to haul itself out of each crisis by massive foreign borrowing. The trade deficit now is over

ten times what it was before 1972. And increased expenditure on arms announced in December shows that despite the state of peace between Egypt and Israel, the deficit is likely to grow even further. Last year the arms budget stood at nearly half of the national budget.

Although Egypt could cover its present deficits by further borrowing, both from international banking institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD] and from the individual Arab states, such borrowing will only stave off for a short time the internal economic and political crisis associated with the swift dismantling of Nasserite state capitalism, and in the meantime turn Egypt into a carcass for the nourishment of the various aid-giving economic jackals.

'Infitah'

Each new loan is associated with another less of Egyptian economic independence. For instance, a recent borrowing from the World Bank gave the Bank the right to vet staff of the Suez Canal Company; another from the IBRD gives it the right to dictate policy to the nationalised cement works, while a second from the same source gives the IBRD the right to sell or dispose of goods or equipment of the National Railway Company.

This is all the conscious result of the 'Infitah' or Open Door policy that Sadat embarked on after the

October war of 1973. A government minister explained it clearly: "The government is set on the open door policy. One of the first priorities has been to dissolve the public institutions and give individual economic units complete freedom to reform their administration and remove all obstacles and hindrances to the realisation of this objective. Any unit failing to achieve these ends will be regarded as a burden and liquidated".

In breaking up the state enterprises, inviting foreign capital to invest, and forcing the remaining publicly-owned enterprises either to serve the private sector directly or transform themselves into competitive units, Sadat has introduced bit by bit a whole barrage of new laws whose general immediate effect is to raise prices, to send rents sky-rocketing, and to facilitate the expropriation by big business of the poor peasants.

What we have seen over the past weeks is the result of Sadat's attempt to remove state control from consumer goods pricing in the interests of the big producers, in line with the open door policy. But his concessions will not last. The economic situation of Egypt and the pressure of the national and international capitalists will force him to reintroduce the same measures, though most likely phased over a longer period. In order to do that Sadat will certainly increase repressions to "remove all obstacles and hindrances to the realisation of this objective".

PAUL ADAMS

LCDTU: First steps after the long recess

ON Saturday February 26th, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) has called a Conference "to plan action to oppose public service cuts, unemployment and the Social Contract", which "could help develop... an ongoing movement and give it both an organised national as well as local expression fully involving industrial and public sectors."

The LCDTU is dominated by the Communist Party. This is its re-appearance after two years in limbo.

The LCDTU was prominent in the late '60s and early '70s, with its activity against Labour's *In Place of Strife* and the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill and Act. It called important actions like the December 1971 strike against the Industrial Relations Bill.

But the CP's willingness to mobilise always depended, first and foremost, on the left trade union leaders whom they supported.

When these left bureaucrats organised some fight — as under the Tories — the CP could act as slightly more militant outriders. Now with the bureaucrats propping up the Social Contract, the CP has had to find ways of suppressing militant pressure or letting it discharge harmlessly.

LCDTU conferences have always been run undemocratically — no amendments, no alternative resolutions, no debate.

Outflanked

Why has the LCDTU been revived after its two-year sleep?

Some of the trade union leaders, mainly in the public sector, have started to organise some action on the cuts — like the November 17th demonstration, called jointly with the Labour Party NEC. This gives the CP more room for manoeuvre.

And rank and file anger against

cuts, unemployment and wage restraint has put pressure on the CP to do something or find itself outflanked by the revolutionary left.

But the CP is doing no more than the minimum. Having announced the recalled conference, and heralded it as one of the things to "spearhead the fight" in a situation requiring "speedy action", the *Morning Star* has done little to date to organise for it. It has scarcely reflected "the party [working] might and main" to boost the mass struggle."

Both the SWP (IS) and the IMG are supporting the Conference. The SWP is proposing a one-day national strike for 23rd March, support for initiatives of the "Right to Work Campaign", and a coordinating committee between the LCDTU, the organisers of the Labour Assembly, and the "Right to Work Campaign".

Nothing further does it propose

on policies or initiatives in action. What it does propose, a strike set for just 3½ weeks after the LCDTU conference, can only be sectarian posturing.

No debate

The IMG's call for the LCDTU to "sponsor a democratic conference of the rank and file one month later to plan for strike action, and to call for the National Assembly organisers and the Right to Work Campaign to sponsor it also" is correct as against the SWP's call to unite the campaigns on the level of a coordinating committee and without debate. The IMG proposal in relation to strike action and lobbying for such action of "any conference called by the public sector unions" are also correct, although it's not clear why the lobbying should be limited to conference of public

sector unions and why it shouldn't include meetings of, for example, the unions that called the November 17th demonstration and the Labour Party.

Crucially, though, neither SWP nor IMG mention *political demands* for the fight back, though the "ongoing movement" that the CP is organising for is a nationalist and reformist one.

Against the CP, *Workers' Action* supporters will fight for the policies in relation to cuts, unemployment, equal pay and wage restraint that have been consistently argued for in the paper. We will also fight for a democratically run Conference, to allow debate about the way forward.

We will also fight to commit the militants at the Conference to build in their localities. The history of the LCDTU has never been one of much built locally, precisely because that is the point where policy is translated into consistent action.

QUESTIONS OF DEMOCRACY



AT the outset of Labour's Year of the Witch-hunter Ms. Shirley Williams is bidding for the title of Chief Inquisitor against Marxists in the Labour Party.

In a well publicised speech, Williams argues that Trotskyism is not compatible with "democracy" and that there is no place for Trotskyists in the Labour Party.

Ms. Williams is a liberal, part of that section of the Labour Party that the press has named as "social democrats". She argues entirely as a bourgeois liberal, essentially demanding that the liberal bourgeois definition of democracy should be given a monopoly in the Labour Party, now and for all time.

Her central argument is a species of intellectual card-sharping. She berates Marxists from Karl Marx to Trotsky for not regarding "representative democracy" as an essential part of socialist society — but identifies representative democracy solely with one of its possible forms, that is, its bourgeois form; parliamentary democracy.

Since Marx can be cited frequently speaking of bourgeois democracy or (as she quotes him) of the results of elections in tones less than reverential,

and Trotsky can be quoted speaking of "throwing democracy aside" and replacing it by, as she herself quotes him, "the mechanism of the proletariat" — she then triumphantly concludes that Trotskyism is not compatible with democracy.

But this is hardly serious. Marxists believe that bourgeois democracy is limited, formal and weighted in favour of preserving a social system in which the working class is exploited. Even in a country like Britain it has become increasingly hollow as more and more power has passed from Parliament to the state bureaucratic and military machine.

We want to replace bourgeois democracy with workers' democracy — that is, with a new type of state. Such a state will be built on a network of democratically selected and democratically functioning workers' councils. Even in a situation of extreme crisis and danger, full functioning of loyal opposition parties and groupings would be tolerated — as they were by the Russian Bolsheviks throughout the Civil War.

Nor are Marxists indifferent to the bourgeois democratic liberties of this system. (Shirley Williams, to judge by her silence, is not in a hurry to stop the proposed gags on the press by her Cabinet colleague Roy Mason.) Trotskyists have often been foremost in defence of bourgeois democratic rights against bourgeois democracy's right wing fascist enemies. During Hitler's rise to power, Trotsky urged both social democrat conservatives and Stalinist ultra-lefts to join in a united front to stop Hitler.

However, he wanted, as soon as the relation of forces allowed it, to overthrow and



Chile — where the bourgeoisie ditched their 'representative democracy' without a second thought.

go beyond bourgeois democracy to the higher democracy of workers' councils.

And so do we.

Williams asks — if socialism and democracy clash, which will you choose? This is a question that can only be asked by somebody who does not believe that socialism is a fundamental transformation of society from a state based on rule by a minority class (necessitating violence and coercion behind the democratic facade) to a state based on the rule of the vast majority of the people — the working class.

Nobody who sees socialism as a product of the mass class struggle of the working class against the capitalists and their system could say that if socialism and democracy clash you should choose "democracy". For what on earth can it mean, this "socialism" apart from the orderly transference of government from the hands of one parliamentary group to another one which shares its fundamental commitments in society (as the Labour leaders

share theirs with the Tories and Liberals)?

One cannot counterpose the socialist revolution to democracy, because such an event is not possible without the mass, creative, self-controlling and fully conscious activity of the vast majority of the working class. All the writings of Marx, of Lenin and of Trotsky place this activity and this political consciousness at the core of socialism.

When the chips are down it is the capitalists, not the working class, who ditch bourgeois democracy. If a parliamentary majority decided, according to all the right procedures known to Westminster, to relieve the ruling class of its vested interests, then capitalism would resort to violence and do away with Westminster before you could say Shirley Williams.

Never in history has the capitalist class peacefully accepted its own defeat. The latest example of how the capitalists make their choice and how they rate their own dem-

ocracy was the coup in Chile 3 years ago.

Ms. Williams would do better to address her questions to the CBI and the Services General Staff: would they peacefully 'choose' socialism, however impeccable its parliamentary credentials. In fact this very animal (in its British breed, not the Chilean or the Greek variety) was, according to Jack Jones last week, contemplating a military coup in this country during the turmoil of 1974.

Williams' concept of democracy is one where the rank and file of the Labour Party is to be subjected to purges to ensure its complete subservience to the operations of Parliamentary leaders who respond more to the CBI and the permanent state bureaucracy than to any democratic accountability. Our concept of democracy is one based on the maximum involvement of and accountability to the rank and file. That, and not 'democracy or totalitarianism', is the choice in the Labour Party.



Williams — mental card-sharping

MASON wants to black out all news of the Republican resistance in the Six Counties. The TV and newspapers are unhappy at the idea of official censorship. They can rightly claim that they don't need to be censored officially, for they are well-schooled in censoring themselves. They do publish accounts of killings and explosions now. But they never present to readers in Britain any account of the normal daily activities of the British Army in the Catholic ghettos in Belfast and in the predominantly Catholic rural areas and country villages, as in South Armagh. In a very large number of shootings by the British Army of people who were unarmed, the British press has usually printed the official Army version and suppressed news of the accounts given by dissident eyewitnesses. What Mason wants is that the self-censorship that now covers this side of things should be extended.

Some of the most graphic accounts of the daily British Army terror are to be found in the sworn statements of its victims. Some of the most convincing evidence that these statements are true is to be found in the protests of politicians and churchmen who are fundamentally pro-British, pro-Partition, and hostile to the IRA.

The Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise in his New Year message attacked the political vacuum left by Britain in the Six Counties and criticised the British Army. He called for a new attempt at setting up power sharing. 'The Times' attacked him in an editorial for not distinguishing between 'legitimate state violence' and the violence of the IRA. The following speech by the Bishop takes up that point in passing:

I have severely criticised British security policy and practices. I emphatically deny any suggestion that I am thereby equating force used for subversive purposes with force used by legitimate [sic] authority in accordance with the law for the preservation of public institutions and for public order. I do not contest the legitimacy and necessity of security operations. I contest the effectiveness of current security operations to achieve their stated end. I criticise their all too frequent disaccord with normal respect for the personal dignity of innocent persons and with the presumption that people are innocent until proved guilty. I contend that many of the methods used are not securing respect for public institutions and for public order.

... Security in this situation has as much to do with a battle for minds, for credibility and for confidence, as with military successes. From these aspects present Army policies must be pronounced counter-productive. Methods of interrogation are too often unjustifiably rough, sometimes [!] even [!] brutal, the middle of the night searches too frequent, too destructive, too often based on mistaken identity, the language and the gestures of Army personnel too often obscene and insulting, the signs of what can only be described as a 'Paddy-bashing' mentality are too frequent for one to remain silent about them.

What I am saying is not anti-

NORTHERN IRELAND: WH

For a Labour Movement Inquiry into Army terror

British prejudice. It is not said in anger [!]. It is said with great sadness. It is said with regret and with searching of conscience, for one is fully aware of the danger of being misunderstood, of giving comfort to the IRA. But what I have said is said with moral concern, for by such methods security forces do not eliminate men of violence, they begin to resemble [!] them. They do not crush violence, they spread it. Such methods are providing a constantly-renewed source of recruitment for the IRA. (Irish Times, 14 January 1977)

Truly the Bishop is a patient and forbearing man. But then he is an observer, not the victim, of what he describes.

MR. PADDY DEVLIN is politically a sort of Tribunate. But he lives in an occupied part of Ireland, in a society dominated by communal divisions. So he is a member of the SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party), and was formerly in charge of housing under the short-lived power-sharing executive.

The 'Irish Times' (1st-3rd January) carried this account of a letter of protest he wrote:

"In his letter, Mr Devlin said any 'victims' who complained or made statements to the police were later arrested or beaten by members of the Parachute Regiment." (the RUC is being pushed into a subordinate role by bully-boys!)

"The first incident happened two weeks ago in Ballymurphy,

said Mr Devlin, when a soldier was said to have struck a man with his rifle butt. The man reported to Springfield Rd RUC station, but as he left he was arrested by a soldier for trying to steal the rifle. But the RUC refused to charge the man because they believed the soldier was lying.

"In two other incidents, said Mr Devlin, a busdriver was badly beaten by soldiers that another man had to be found to drive the bus, and a passenger in a taxi was beaten up in front of the other occupants and arrested as he left the Royal Victoria Hospital after treatment".

The soldiers claimed they thought the taxi was stolen — but the driver was not questioned.

Devlin chooses to forget the torturers inside the RUC. He has decided that the best thing would be a power-sharing Stormont government, relying on the RUC. If, however, the RUC, a heavily Orange and sectarian body, intervenes against the British Army in the Springfield Rd, Belfast, that is itself a measure of what the Army is doing.

Neither Paddy Devlin of the SDLP, nor Cathal Daly, Bishop, are pro-Republican. Nor anti-British. Nor anti-Partition. With their statements as introduction, let us hear what happens, routinely, in Armagh, a largely Catholic border area.

The statements we publish on these pages were sworn in the presence of a Republican priest, Fr Denis Faul, last



Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason

September. They describe just one army 'exercise' in Crossmaglen. It is worth keeping in mind that devout Catholics in rural Armagh do not take oaths casually.

The treatment they describe is the normal treatment for all the people in the predominantly Catholic areas. We quote these statements because they are sworn statements. The Republican press carries weekly accounts of the same brutality.

The level of Army terrorism has two obvious causes. The British Army sees the whole Catholic population as the 'water' within which the Republican guerrillas 'swim', and thus every Catholic is an

enemy. The same situation in Vietnam led to mass extermination drives against all Vietnamese civilians in whole areas of the countryside.

In Ireland, contact with the Orange element in the British Army (the UDR) provides the soldiers with a ready-made rationale: the Catholic Fenians are an inferior species. The paddy-bashing mentality takes hold. The normal methods of assassins and professional terrorists like the SAS regiment spread throughout the Army.

In addition, the antics of the Army indicate a high degree of demoralisation. This should not be exaggerated into a belief that Britain is about to crack and give up. Comparisons with the French Army in Algeria and the US in Vietnam are used by some Republican commentators — but the comparison is limited. The social effects in the imperialist country, the blow to the ruling class's ability to continue the war, is crippling when there is mass demoralisation in a large conscript army. The effect is different in a small professional army like that of Britain in the Six Counties.

The British labour movement must throw its weight into the scales against the Army.

WORKERS' ACTION believes that the labour movement should organise an enquiry into the army terror in Northern Ireland. And we should help put an end to the activities of that Army, from which its terrorism is inseparable, by demanding its immediate withdrawal from the Six Counties.

Wall slogans demand the freeing of Eddie McClafferty, who got an 8-year sentence after being framed by British troops. He was released last October after 2 years in jail, because one of the paras disclosed the frame-up by his former regiment, which he described as "a bunch of thugs".



WHAT'S BEHIND THE BIG HUSH-UP?

Mason tries to gag the media

THE BBC 'is disloyal, supports the rebels [in the 6 Counties], purveys their propaganda, and refuses to accept the advice of the Northern Ireland Office on what news to carry'. That, according to the "Daily Mail" and the "Observer", was one of the things that Roy Mason, 'Northern Ireland Secretary', had to say on November 4th at a private dinner party given by the BBC at the opening of new BBC buildings in Belfast.

The BBC was 'trying to stir it up', was 'the divider, not the healer' in Northern Ireland. Mason compared the BBC unfavourably with the "Sun" and the "Daily Mirror". The Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland supported him. So did General D. Young, Commander of Land Forces in the Six Counties.

This military gentleman allowed himself to upbraid some of the Governors of a Public Corporation for not being a complete propaganda appendage of the military machine.

Banned

Since his appointment to replace Merlyn Rees in September, Mason has conducted a campaign to stop all news reports of the guerilla war in Ireland being published in Britain.

The government already issues 'D notices' as a guide to newspaper editors on matters it considers 'security'. These are optional, though in practice they are rigorously obeyed by editors. Mason wants a D Notice system to cover all news from Northern Ireland,

and the power of full official censorship. He has also tried to bring a whole new range of information under the Official Secrets Act — information on housing, for example. He has tried, in an official letter, to get elected councillors and others to accept this view.

Mason thinks that if information about the resistance in Northern Ireland is completely choked off, then that resistance will stop. He wants to go back to the situation that existed before 1968, when there was no critical comment on Northern Ireland affairs in the British Press, and there existed a Parliamentary convention that 'internal affairs' of the Six Counties would not be raised at Westminster. The BBC was so house-broken that when an Irish actress, Siobhan McKenna, made comments critical of the Northern Ireland regime on an American interview programme being carried by the BBC, BBC in the Six Counties banned the programme.

It is not enough for the Army and its mouthpiece, Mason, that the media in this country impose a self-censorship, join in boosting such things as the 'Peace Movement', and suppress all accounts of the daily terrorisation of the Catholics in the Six Counties by the Army. They demand a complete clampdown on all news.

In fact, what they are demanding suggests that they want an entirely free hand in the Six Counties, free even from the possibility of honest reporting in the British press. Already Army brutality is on the increase. What would the Army, the RUC, and the Orange British

army reserve, the UDR, not do under the blanket silence of compulsory censorship?

No country can repress a community, as Britain is now repressing the Catholic community in the Six Counties, without a deterioration in the rights of its own citizens. The British labour movement has generally remained passive and silent while the British Army terrorises the Six County Catholics: but the lesson we are being taught is that freedom in Britain is indivisible from freedom in Ireland.

By law

The army brass, with its spokesmen like Mason, is becoming more and more intolerant of civilian control, or even, now, of the possibility of civilian comment on its actions. It demands that such comment be controlled by law — that is, ultimately, by force — in Britain, just as it 'controls' the situation in the 6 Counties.

If the labour movement does not resist this attempt to interfere with democratic rights in Britain, and begin to seriously oppose what the Army needs to cover up, then we will find ourselves facing military repression in Britain in the working class struggles of the future — in any situation like the miners' strike of 1974, for example.

NO CENSORSHIP!
BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!



The "Peace People" have been showered with publicity on an international scale. Meanwhile the media ignore this woman's demand.

The torture victims speak out...

■ Extracts from statement of Edward Cassidy (30), 34 Ard Ross, lorry driver and well-known GAA referee.

■ I was never 'lifted' by the Army before. On Tuesday, 31 August, at 7.10pm, I was in the my brother-in-law's car (John McCusker) with my child, Louise, aged five, coming from his house at 4 McCormack's Place, to my own house, and I was outside Murtagh's house when the soldiers blocked the car with their Saracen. They told the two of us to get out. They said: "Take the young fellow", meaning me, and did, by the hair of the head, and flung me into the landrover.

Into the barracks; I was hit by fists and boots and gun butts and points of guns. A soldier 5'8" with a fortnight beard said, "You know the bastard, mate", and he hit me with the gun in the eye (I could identify him). I thought my nose was broken, my jaw was left very sore. I got three cuts on the back of my head.

Numb

They made me take off my boots and immediately stamped on my toes. My stomach was badly injured by thumps and jags of the rifles. They kept saying, "You know who done it, mate".

In the helicopter they said they were going to throw me out. At Bessbrook I was taken by the hair of the head, boots taken off, and put in the stress position. Pulled by the hair across the road to a wee yard, search position again. I asked, "Could I pull my feet in an inch, sir?" (he made me call him 'sir'). He said, "Put them out two inches, mate", and he kicked them out. I was numb in my arms with leaning against the wall. I saw a doctor who noted my injuries and I saw an officer on the way out and complained. I was treated in Craigavon hospital. I am a peaceable man. I do a lot of refereeing around here....

□ Statement of Paddy Rooney (53) 33 Rathview Park.

■ I am a diabetic. I was never 'lifted' by the Army before. I came from Castleblaney to Crossmaglen in my car with my son aged 15 on Tuesday 31-8-76 at 7.30pm. Near my own door I met the soldiers. They shouted, "Get him out the Godfather". They pulled me by the hair of the head. They took the young lad out and kicked him. My boy saw the blonde soldier who had called me the Godfather hit me with the butt of the rifle on the back of the head, inflicting a wound requiring three stitches in Craigavon hospital. I went unconscious. My neighbours saw me dragged past with my head down. My shirt was covered in blood. I was taken to Bessbrook, to Daisyhill Hospital, and then to Craigavon hospital and from there I arrived home at 2.30am. My ribs were fractured and I was scraped across the chest.

□ Statement of James Teelin (19) 42 Ard Ross.

■ On Tuesday 31-8-76 I was coming through Ard Ross with my cousin John Parnell of Newry at 7.45pm. The soldiers dragged both of us out and threw us in the Saracen.

In the barracks they made me stand against the wall, pulled me by the hair, hit my chest (I have a bad chest — asthma), stomach, kicked me in the privates behind three times, kicked my ankles and knees. They hit me with the butt of a gun on the side. They made me walk through glass in my bare feet. They threatened if I put in a claim or statement, they would cut my throat.

I was taken to Bessbrook by helicopter, dragged out of it by the hair of the head — made to take off my boots, made me walk through stones in bare feet; made us stand against the wall for three hours.

I saw the doctor; the next day I saw my own doctor. My nerves are badly shaken and I find it difficult to sleep.

□ Extract from the statement of Francis Murtagh (20), 12 Ard Ross, Crossmaglen, motor mechanic.

■ On Tuesday evening, August 31 at 7.30pm, I heard shouting and screaming outside and I came to the sitting room window; one of the soldiers saw me at the window and he said, "Get that bastard in there". They pushed in the door and grabbed me and ran me to the Saracen and kicked me on the floor.

When we got to the barracks was kicked from all directions by the soldiers. I was pulled out of the Saracen. In the yard I was put up against the wall in the search position, arms and legs outstretched. I got two belts of the butt of a rifle in the ribs and I was told to take off my jacket and empty the contents and open the belt of my trousers and take off my shoes.

I got a couple of thumps in the face from a man who said he was



injured and I got about three kicks between the legs from behind. I fell on the ground and was told to get up again. I got a couple more kicks between the legs and I was asked were they sore enough.

We were told to run to the back of the barracks with our belongings. They made us run through the glass — we had no shoes on us and they made us stand up against the galvanise in the search position: one came to me and the man with me and asked us did we fancy a few rounds with

him. He gave me a thump in the groin. Then by helicopter to Bessbrook. A soldier wanted to have a go at me with the butt of his rifle; he was told to sit down.

We were landed in Bessbrook; we had to run the gauntlet of the troops out of the helicopter at the landing place. We were lined up against the wall in a field and told to take our coats and shoes off again. One soldier allotted a civilian to each soldier. He said: "Run for the road". He twisted my arm above my shoulder, told me to make a run for it or he would break it. He ran me into the barracks in that position.

was brought to the top of the yard and he put another fellow with blood on his face beside me. I was standing on a wooden pallet for a fork lift. He told the other man to get on it as well. The pallet was 5 feet from the wall. I was told to get my feet to the outside of it and to each corner and stretch out my arms until my finger tips were touching the wall. The same for the man beside me. My left arm collapsed completely. I was told to move one piece of the timber and hold myself up with one arm. I was there twenty minutes in that position when I fell. I was told to put my toes in between the timbers and get my arms up and sit in that position for twenty minutes — there was aching in my ankles. Another soldier came in and asked what was I doing in that position. He told me to get back into the more difficult position.

I could not get the left arm up. He said he would do it for me. Then he told everybody else to stand back from the wall and wriggle their fingers to get the circulation back, but to keep their noses to the wall. Two men had collapsed. I fell on the pallet and I was pulled over on to the yard and told to do press-ups. I got my elbows on the ground and tried to raise myself, but my ankles failed. Another soldier hit me a kick and smashed my watch to pieces. He told me: was a fl...ing pansy...

I asked for a doctor — he noted my injuries, arms, legs, testicles, and nose. I was interviewed by the Intelligence of Special Branch. They made no effort. The soldiers boasted of running Crossmaglen and I think the operation was an effort to terrorise us. After release I was in Craigavon hospital for treatment. This was the first time I was 'lifted' by the Army.

□ About 20 men were arrested on 31-8-76 and ill-treated by the Army. The pattern of the ill-treatment is outlined in the statement of Frank Murtagh. Here are some shorter extracts from other statements.

Blood

□ Other statements describe the experiences of an 18-year old youth "thumped on the jaw, kicked in the stomach, deprived of sleep".

A second 18-year old youth was "taken to the barracks, caught by the hair of the head, kicked on the back, thumped on the side of the face, 2½ hours in the stress position, threatened".

On the following morning the soldiers assaulted a 16-year old youth, Noel White, of 22 Ard Ross, on his way to work.

■ On Wednesday 1-9-76 was going to work at 8 am. At the flats I met the soldiers. I was alone. One soldier said, "Take him over here; I like him". He put me against the wall, kicked my legs apart, and called me nicknames. He hit me with the gun on the left temple — the blood came down my face. He hit me a thump in the mouth. He was 6'1".

A wee blond soldier picked up my lunch box and flung my lunch around the box and made me drop the box on the ground. I was still bleeding. The soldier said: "It was a good f...ing job you did not put any blood on my rifle or I would have broken your two legs."

Bullock's boards have pro-employer majority

According to a report in the Observer on Sunday [23rd], the Bullock Report proposes company boards should be made up of three sections: shareholders' representatives, trade union representatives and a third group.

For the third group "Bullock has in mind bankers, accountants, solicitors, and union officials". It is clear from the start, then, that the boards will have a pro-employer majority. Board chairmen are also to come from the shareholders' side.

The Bullock scheme makes sure that the "worker" members of the board will not represent workers' interests. Direct election of representatives from the shop-floor is rejected, and so is mandating of representatives. "An employee representative ... must be a representative, free to express his opinions and to reach his own conclusions about which policies will work for the greater good of the company, not a delegate, told how to vote by his constituents."

And if the web of participation does not stop a strike erupting, then — the report decrees — trade union representatives on the board should abstain from voting, and the bosses' negotiating position should not be the "subject of detailed and practical consideration by the board."

Taking a hand in our own exploitation



THE Bullock Report on worker participation, commissioned by the Government, must be "challenged and discredited" according to John Methven, chief of the bosses' association the CBI.

But most trade union leaders will firmly support the report. Jack Jones of the TGWU and Clive Jenkins of ASTMS were on the Bullock committee.

So are these 'participation' schemes a workers' challenge to capitalism? The experience of similar schemes in

Germany gives a clear answer: No.

In Germany, too, the capitalists at one time opposed participation. It was introduced in 1947 as part of post-war reconstruction, but in 1950-52 the German trade unions had to threaten massive strikes in order to retain it.

Throughout, 'participation' has operated in Germany as a means to make workers' representatives take responsibility for running capitalism. In Germany in 1950-2, or in Brit-

ain now, many or most capitalists may prefer to operate in the old, simpler way, rather than take on the trouble of making the system of co-opting workers' representatives work. But once the system is established, it can only work to the advantage of capitalism. Already most big capitalists accept 'participation' in principle, and several are already operating it.

This 'participation' can never strengthen workers' independent power and our ability to control our own con-

ditions. It can only sap that power and ability. That is why we fight:

- Against 'participation'.
- For workers' control over hiring and manning, over work-sharing, over working conditions.
- For opening the books of all companies — and all their financial and state connections — to workers' inspection.
- For the complete independence of the trade unions from the state and the employers, and for democracy in the trade unions.

HOW IT WORKS IN GERMANY

IN every workplace with five or more workers, the employees elect a 'Betriebsrat' (works council) which then negotiates with management.

In companies with more than 500 workers, worker representatives (until the recent change of law) occupied one third of the seats on the boards of directors. In the iron, steel and mining industries 5 out of the 11 board members are nominated by the union, and there is one worker-director on the executive responsible for personal and social questions.

The rights and duties of the Betriebsrat are laid down in the BVG (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz, or Works Constitution). This declares that the Betriebsrat must work with the management "trustfully ... for the good of the employees and the company".

This duty to collaborate is extended to "a duty to help to settle all industrial disputes" and "consideration of the interests of the factory can lead to limits being put on the right to participate."

The Betriebsrat "may not undertake activities which endanger the industrial peace of the factory".

The capitalist keeps his weapons (eg threats of closure, redundancies, moving production elsewhere etc), while the right to use the workers' means of struggle, eg strikes and occupations, is restricted.

Indeed, the "employment of means of struggle between Betriebsrat and management" is forbidden. If a member of the Betriebsrat does attempt to bring about a strike, he makes himself liable to pay compensation. He can be sacked without notice, or expelled from the Betriebsrat.

The BVG does recognise the possibility of a conflict of interests between workers and capitalists, while denying the workers' representatives the right to take action in those conflicts. It says that the conflicts should be dealt with by an arbitration board.

The arbitration board consists of equal members of management and Betriebsrat members. They must agree on an 'independent' chairman who has the deciding vote; if they cannot agree, the chairman is named by the State industrial court. "The board makes its decisions in keeping with the interests of the company and of

the employees affected, according to fair judgment".

If they believe "fair judgment" has not been made, either management or Betriebsrat can take the case to the industrial court. But strike action at factory level remains unofficial — and illegal.

As a final safeguard for capitalist interests, if an "employees' majority" should ever reject a proposal by the executive then a shareholders' meeting can be called, which can reverse any decision of the board by a 75% majority vote.

It is not for nothing that the German constitution protects the right to own the means of production!

Supplementing all this is the banning of "party political activity in the factory" on the part of the Betriebsrat or the employer, except in the "treatment of matters of wage negotiation, social or economic concerns which directly involve the factory or its employees". As one employer put it "the law correctly proceeds from the viewpoint that party political activity in the factory serves only to stir up discontent".

This provision can be used to block any militant propaganda, especially as it is the industrial court which, in case of dispute, decides whether activity is subject to being banned as "political" or not. One union official was banned from attending a factory meeting because on a previous occasion he had stressed the necessity of having trade unions and had "spoken against the ideology of the company as a family".

Industrial lawyers have interpreted this section as meaning that the Betriebsrat has actively to prevent political activity in the factory.

What can the Betriebsrat influence? As might be expected, the right to decide prices, investment, the siting of production and the number of jobs, are all left as the sole prerogative of management. "In a free market system", as one DGB leader (also a SPD MP) has said "the rights and responsibilities of the companies must be left alone."

The Betriebsrat has a limited influence over employment, sackings, promotion and transfers. But its influence is most extensive in matters like where to put the showers and what loo paper to order. Yet even here the right to participate in decisions can be taken away if these extend beyond the level of the individual factory.

The Betriebsrat helps to decide piece-work rates, the start and finish of the working day (but not the number of hours worked) and it can negotiate re-training schemes when rationalisations result in redundancies.

In short, the participation scheme allows workers to influence inessential details of how they are exploited, in exchange for stifling and blocking the struggle against exploitation.

The influence of the rank and file over the Betriebsrat is minimal. The Betriebsrat must call a meeting of all employees

every three months and give a report of its activities, and these can be discussed and criticised. The meeting can pass recommendations to the Betriebsrat, and express opinions on Betriebsrat decisions, but the Betriebsrat is not bound to the decisions of the meeting.

A vote of no confidence cannot be passed, and early dissolution (election is every 3 years) can only be obtained through the industrial court.

Furthermore, in informing the rank and file of its activities, the Betriebsrat is bound to keep 'company secrets', and its members are liable to one year's imprisonment or a fine if they do not.

The participation scheme thus foists the responsibility for capitalism not only on the worker directors who sit on company boards, but also the representative bodies of the workers themselves (the Betriebsrat). The Betriebsrat and the worker-director posts become means to make a selected group of workers identify with the employers rather than with rank and file workers.

Sixty per cent of worker directors were previously white collar workers, union secretaries or Betriebsrat chairmen, and a further 20% occupied higher positions.

Thus it was the chairmen of the Betriebsrat who led a group of German workers, armed with spanners, in beating up Turkish immigrant workers during the unofficial strike at Fords in Cologne in August 1973 — for which he was publicly praised by management. On the other hand, militants in the steel industry have been sacked through the Betriebsrat for leading strikes.

Union bureaucrats do their best to ensure that militants are not elected to the Betriebsrat. Three shop stewards at the Opel car works in Stuttgart were threatened with expulsion



The gent in the suit flanked by henchmen is one of Germany's top union leaders — and chairman of the Volkswagen Supervisory Board

More participation is not a demand of enemies of the system, it is an alternative to the class struggle.

SPD leader Willy Brandt, 1974

The unions must pay the price for the fact that in future their officials will have a half share in the decision-making and with equal responsibility on the boards of companies producing about 80% of the social product. One thing they can no longer do is denounce the employers for their actual or alleged failings. This means that in future, when a company raises its prices, decides on a merger, makes a mistake in its investments, takes advantage of the consumer or disregards the government, then these decisions won't have been condemned by those who sit on the board. It is no longer just the shareholders and the bankers who have to push such policy publicly, but also the union officials. That is, unless they loudly and clearly condemn this policy. (And they have little opportunity of doing so. WA.)

In the history of participation in the iron, steel and mining industries, which were the model for the new extended system of participation, it is unknown for a union official to refuse to vote for such a decision in the interest of the general public, of the employees or of the consumers.

The union officials' complaint against the system usually comes several hours after the agreement has been signed by the board of directors. By participating, the unions become responsible for the action of the company, they are integrated into the system. They can no longer denounce the employers, because they are in the process of becoming employers themselves.

from the German bosses' paper 'Handelsblatt'

from the union for standing in opposition to the official union candidates. At the Opel factory in Bockum, the Betriebsrat asked management to sack one of its own members who attempted to bring corruption (extra payment and privileges) to the attention of the rank and file.

For those who think that participation can be cunningly 'used' by organised workers, Germany shows the contrary: participation 'uses' and disarms the workers' own organisations.

PETE FIRMIN

EVER since 1947, the DGB [West German TUC] leadership has set the aim of 50% 'worker' membership on boards, or "equal participation". 'More participation' has also been a slogan of the DKP [German Communist Party].

The new law, passed by the SPD [Social Democrat]-FDP [Liberal] coalition government at the end of last year, falls short of that aim. There is parity on the boards, but the new rules provide that the chairman of the board "cannot be elected against the wishes of the capitalists" and that the chairman's vote decides in the case of a tie. Moreover, among the employees' representatives are counted representatives of "higher employees" — that is, employees "practising a management function".



Penalty clause bid by Leyland 'participators'

THE unholy alliance of British Leyland management and tame union bureaucrats that has been trying to destroy all forms of shop floor militancy over the last year has suffered its first major defeat at the hands of rank and file Leyland workers.

A new agreement that would seriously curtail "unofficial" action of any sort will now almost certainly be rejected by the majority of Leyland (Cars Division) workers at their shop floor meetings.

This agreement, secretly negotiated by the same unelected "Ad Hoc" committee that drew up the Ryder participation scheme, proposes some very marginal improvements on existing lay-off pay provisions (but still only for external disputes). But no lay-off pay at all would be paid to any workers who have been involved in "unconstitutional industrial action" (that is, any action that takes place before the lengthy procedure arrangements have been exhausted) of more than a total of four hours in the preceding quarter!

In other words, a penalty clause.

The proposed agreement would also mean the introduction of a common termination date for wage agreements throughout Leyland — a major step towards corporate bargaining, and yet another attack on shop floor strength.

Despite the determination of both management (who have launched a national press campaign plugging the package, and resorting to such tactics as sabotaging votes in areas most likely to throw it out, by starting the tracks during meetings) and union hacks like Bill Roche at Cowley and Derek Robinson at Longbridge (Robinson has invoked Works Committee "discipline" to silence

THE UNIONS



stewards opposed to the deal — despite all this, the shop floor will almost certainly reject the agreement.

Longbridge have rejected the deal by an 800 majority, despite "Robbo"'s influence; Rover (Solihull) is expected to come out against; Triumph (Speke) and Jaguar (Coventry) have already massively rejected it, as have the Cowley Assembly workers.

Even if the bureaucrats do manage to fiddle a small majority for acceptance, it could only be a pyrrhic victory, and an important blow to the rapidly diminishing credibility of the Ryder scheme and the "Ad Hoc" committee.

However, we should not rest on our laurels. A "Company Spokesman" has already told the press "If we do not get agreement first time round, it does not mean the package has failed". Most Leyland workers will know what to make of this: the management are planning to use their old trump card, the "total closure" threat.

This time, though, they won't get away with it so easily — and probably not at all.

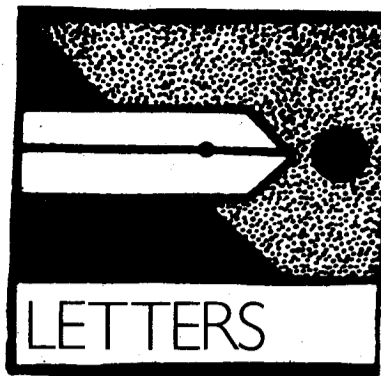
JIM DENHAM

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

Campaign against Post Office Act



The decision of the UPW leadership to call off the proposed week-long boycott of mail and phone calls to and from South Africa, following a temporary injunction by the Court of Appeal, ought to be viewed with alarm by all members of the union.

The Court, in granting an injunction to the extreme right wing "National Association for Freedom" to stop the UPW action, have set a dangerous precedent.

Coming after the judgment on Grunwicks (stopping us blocking the firm's mail orders in solidarity with the strikers) what they are telling us is that we can't take any industrial action that will disrupt the mail, either in support of ourselves or anyone else.

As this is the only action that is likely to have any effect they might as well tell us to pack up altogether.

Yet Tom Jackson and the union leadership have meekly accepted this. Such is their respect for the niceties of the bosses' law that they would rather obey it to the letter than see their union as a fighting organisation.

Fighting is, after all, the last thing on their minds at the

moment. Our leaders' slavish support for the Social Contract has seen the living standards of postmen slashed over the last two years and many in the industry, especially on the telephone side, put on the dole.

And even the now celebrated South Africa boycott was little more than an empty gesture. Lasting only a week, few members would have noticed it and then only at a small number of offices.

Such was its importance that the leadership didn't even bother to tell us about it in advance. We had to hear it from the press.

Militants in the union have to start a fight against the present spineless positions of the leadership. A campaign must be mounted to challenge the court ruling and the reactionary 1953 Post Office Act that inspired it.

The membership as a whole must be informed as to the real significance of it. Deprived of the right to strike or take other industrial action, we will be helpless in the current onslaught against our living standards. Either our leaders back such a campaign or they will have proved in practice that they are not fit to lead.

UPW member
Cardiff

Militant split after losing control of Cardiff YCAU

THE ASSEMBLY of the Youth Campaign against Unemployment [YCAU] next weekend (29th January), will receive a resolution from the Cardiff YCAU to sharpen the political basis of the campaign, and to turn it from its present Sunday-socialism policy towards a combative, campaigning united-front approach.

The resolution reads:

"This conference welcomes the initiative of the YCAU in calling the conference as part of the continuing fight against unemployment. In order to strengthen this fight, we call on the organisers to add the following to the list of demands for the campaign:

Work-sharing with no loss of pay;

An end to overtime working.

"Conference also considers that if the campaign is to have the maximum impact, initiatives have to be set up on a local level. These should include organising delegations of young unemployed to go into factories to argue their case with the workers there and organising youth to participate in the struggles against closures and the cuts. They should also include fighting for the facilities of schools, colleges etc to be opened to the unemployed, and setting up centres for the unemployed to be financed and organised by the local labour movement.

"We recognise that if the fight is going to be successful then it must

unite the widest forces possible. We therefore call on the YCAU to unite with all other initiatives being taken at the moment, such as the LCDTU and the Right to Work Campaign".

Experience in Cardiff indicates that the 'Militant'-controlled platform at the YCAU Assembly will probably refuse to take this resolution. Cardiff YCAU was initiated by 'Militant' supporters in the Labour Party Young Socialists; but when a plan of action proposed by 'Workers Action' and 'Red Weekly' supporters was passed by the YCAU, and a WA supporter elected as campaign convener, 'Militant' decided to withdraw from the campaign (taking with them the funds collected at the first meeting!).

At present, while the YCAU certainly has an impressive array of labour movement sponsorships, it has no policies that go beyond imploring the government to introduce social reforms. A debate on the Cardiff resolution is essential if the YCAU is to play any positive role in mobilising youth against unemployment.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

YCAU Assembly: doors open 12.45 at Seymour Hall, Seymour Place, London W1. Credentials for delegates from bona fide labour movement organisations, 20p from Nick Bradley, 22 Frankham House, Deptford Church St, London SE8, or at the door. Observers' tickets also available at the door.

WORKERS IN ACTION

AT THE RANDOLPH Hotel in Oxford, the strike of 15 sacked TGWU members continues over the basic right to belong to a trade union.

Last year in May, the Trust House Forte management advertised locally for chambermaids, specifying that there would be no weekend work, in order to attract married women with family commitments — usually the weakest, least organised section of workers.

However, as in many strikes stretching back to Annie Besant's match girls in 1889, women show they have the guts and staying power to take on reactionary bosses. The women at the Randolph have shown consistent militancy, watching other TGWU members scab, but maintaining an outdoor picket in often freezing conditions since late November. They have kept the strike solid despite daily abuse from scabs, workers as well as patrons, and from the local bourgeoisie, who resent any interruption to the tourist trade.

When the women started work during the busy summer period, they found they were being lumbered with twice the expected number of rooms to clean. The AA was threatening to withdraw a star because of the faults arising from understaffing. The workers started to unionise, and membership rose to over 50% despite harassment from the employers and their refusal to recognise the union.

After one worker in charge of chambermaids was sacked because

Hotel workers fight anti-union sackings

of 'falling standards', the women decided to work only the proper number of rooms. Management had had enough. Rather than employ more hands they issued an ultimatum in November — either work weekends for no extra money or be sacked. This unrealistic 'offer' meant working 5 out of 6 weekends. Impossible for women in this society, and management knew it!

As one striker told *Workers' Action*, "They just used weekend work as an excuse to get us out, knowing that us women wouldn't be able to manage it. They [the management] don't want us in

unions". The women and one male worker are calling for:

□ reinstatement of the chambermaids;
□ recognition of the union.

Local trade union support has been widespread for picketing, and national backing of all Trust House Forte companies, including Gardner Merchants, the caterers for British Leyland canteens, would, as with the Trico dispute, resolve the struggle in favour of this section of low paid workers.

Sectionalism divides us — solidarity action will win!
SUSAN CARLYLE

Magnavox strike

200 mainly women workers, at Magnavox in East London, voted to return to work on Friday 21st January, accepting a compromise deal. The women had been on strike for nearly two weeks over the results of a job evaluation scheme which had fitted the women workers into the bottom three grades of an 8-grade scheme, and resulted in a drop in wages for the coil-winders and some solderers.

The union, the AUEW, took the women's case to the tribunal under the Equal Pay Act, but were told that it wasn't a case of equal pay because the jobs had all been evaluated. It just so happened job evaluation placed women assemblers in a lower grade than the 'line-feed boys' whose job it was to supply them with work.

Through the services of ACAS management and the AUEW came up with a deal to move the women in grade 8 up to grade 7, those in 7 up to 6 and those in 6 up to 5, with pay rises of £1.32, £1.32, and 72 pence respectively, and an agreement that new coil-winders would start on grade six, on a different rate to the existing coil-winders.

This shabby deal would not tackle the fact the women's jobs were still the lowest-paid, lowest-status jobs in the factory, but most of the women were unclear, fed up, and wanted to get back to work.

Magnavox is the living example of the failure of the Equal Pay Act to bring about real equality. Only through struggle will that equality be won.

Police patrols as redundancies announced

THE WILDt, Mellor, Bromley factory in Anglestone Rd, Leicester, is to close.

400 workers, mainly AUEW, have been given 90 days' notice. Wildt is part of the Bentley group owned by Charles Clore's Sears Holdings, and makes textile machinery. Management, despite full order books, plan to move work from Anglestone Rd to St Xaviers Rd. Hundreds of jobs have already been lost in the group (see WA nos. 13 & 14). The Parker Drive plant has been closed, and St Xaviers Rd has had substantial redundancies.

This is the best organised group of workers in Leicester. However, recent defeats could make the outlook bleak. In addition to the loss of jobs, Bentley workers were recently defeated over a bonus scheme.

The manner in which management had limbered up for the redundancies showed that half-hearted attempts at fighting to save jobs will fail. The announcement came as the Friday shift was ending. While the workers were being told, security men were swarming in the plant, and a number of police patrols were waiting outside the factory.

The management are certainly not as naive as the local full time officials seem to be. In addition to the elaborate security measures, the union officials were called out to be told the news. The officials of AUEW, ASTMS and TASS were given a 5-minute interview in Barnleythorpe, headquarters of the Engineering Employers' Federation, 30 miles from Leicester.

The bosses mean business. The workers must respond equally ruthlessly, opposing all redundancies. The factory was working overtime before the announcement: but, to secure the jobs, the workers must seize the plant. They must occupy to force the management to concede work-sharing with no loss of pay.

A stewards' meeting is scheduled for Monday 24th January.

STEVE PUNTER

ONE YEAR ON FROM THE SDA
FEB 26th
1977
11am
A RALLY FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS



Massey Ferguson Pickets keep warm on burning writs

Massey Ferguson (MF) management are at it again, provoking strikes at the Banner Lane plant in Coventry. This year's provocation is over a new line in tractors, the 500 series, built with cabs. MF think it's a winner. But to screw the most profit, they tore up the procedure agreement and took on section after section to get the cheapest prices on the jobs. Then three days before Christmas they refused to pay two gangs of assemblers working on the new tractor, because they hadn't produced 48 tractors a day — an impossible target. The whole assembly shop came out on strike, losing their Christmas holiday pay. Since then the strikers have closed the whole factory.

As in summer 1975 the workers hit back where it hurts most by occupying the giant skyscraper office block — the nerve centre of MF's European operations. Now Massey's have presented 379 writs against named strikers to get the office block clear.

The strikers have burned the writs in their picket line to keep warm. The company have even managed to get the

law working faster by bringing forward the hearing of the writs to this Tuesday, 25th, and the 28th. Last time the management in convoy broke the picket line with the full backing of the law when the picket line was weakest — on a Sunday afternoon in the blazing heat (summer 1975). This time the workers came prepared.

MF are a Canadian based multinational firm with 132 factories around the world. They have recently hired one Scott Glover from Chrysler International who has a reputation for disciplining trade unionists. In this he has given some lessons organisationally to the working-class.

National and multinational trade union links are needed to fight these firms: experts in fighting them need to be drafted in from other unions. Solidarity on the picket lines has been maintained and built up by involving trade unionists throughout the district.

A defeat at Massey's would be a serious blow to trade unionists throughout the Coventry area — already hit hard by unemployment and miserable sell-outs at national level.

South Africa picket

Over 140 people took part in a day long picket of Barclay's High Street Bank in Coventry on Friday 21st February. The picket was part of a week's activity in support of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' week of action on South Africa.

The theme of the picket was Solidarity action with South African trade unionists, as shown by such posters as 'They fire you, They shoot us', and 'Our cheap Labour, Your Unemployment'. The encouraging aspect was the response, not only from the numbers participating, but from the public. All of the anti-Apartheid literature was given out, while several people reported to the picket that they had cancelled their accounts with Barclay's.

It is clear from this picket that a firm basis exists for a mass campaign on the issue of South Africa; it is also clear however that such a campaign will receive scant support from the TUC. If the TUC had taken the ICFTU resolution on a week of industrial action in support of South African brothers and sisters seriously, it could have mobilised to force the multinationals to recognise the South African trade unions, and forced the Vorster regime to release those trade unionists at present in jail. But instead the TUC response has been totally cynical. Its leaflets to the trade union branches were too late to get any campaign started. It even refused to send leaflets to anti-Apartheid groups. As for Tom Jackson, he must be the puke of the year, when you consider black trade unionists in South Africa not only break the law every day for just belonging to a trade union, but stand a good chance of being shot or starved out into the bargain.

There is a firm basis for a mass campaign, but it must be built at rank-and-file level. The first task must be a mass mobilisation for the anti-Apartheid demonstration on March 5th.

Dave Spencer

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications), 8p per word; block ads, £5 per column inch. Send copy, with payment, if necessary, in advance, to Events, 49 Carnac St, London SE27.

FRIDAY 28 JANUARY. East London Workers' Action readers' meeting: "Hazards at Work". Speaker: Neal Smith. 7.30pm, 'Eagle & Child', Woodgrange Rd, E7 (near Forest Gate and Wanstead Park BR stations).

FRIDAY 28 JANUARY. Little Ilford teachers' appeal: picket from 4.30pm at NUT headquarters, Hambleton House, Mableton Place, London WC1.

SATURDAY 29 JANUARY. Youth Campaign against Unemployment conference. 12.45pm, Seymour Hall, Seymour Place, London W1. Credentials for delegates from bona fide labour movement organisations, and observers' tickets, can be obtained at the door.

SATURDAY 29 JANUARY. Abortion Rights Tribunal. 11am at Central Hall Westminster.

SUNDAY 30 JANUARY. Bloody Sunday commemoration demonstration. 1.30pm, Shepherds Bush Green, London.

MONDAY 31 JANUARY. Manchester Workers' Action readers' meeting on "Nationalism and the Crisis". 8pm at the People's Centre, Moss Lane East, Moss Side, Manchester 16.

FRIDAY 4 FEBRUARY. Revolutionary Communist Group meeting on "Women's Oppression under Capitalism", to launch 'Revolutionary Communist' no. 5. Speakers: Olivia Adamson, Carol Brown. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

THURSDAY 10 FEBRUARY. LECAC meeting on Little Ilford. 6pm at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, Theobalds Rd, WC1.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY-SUNDAY 18-20 February. "Portugal-Chile-Britain" conference at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Details from John Hoyland, 6 Southcote Rd, N19 (607 4845).

MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY. All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement public meeting. 7.30pm, Brixton Centre, 2 St Matthews Rd, SW2.

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference. Credentials from J Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Rd, London.

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY. "A Rally for Women's Rights", 11am at Alexandra Palace, London N22. Rally secretary: Mandy Snell, 33 Wemyss Rd, London SE3 (318 3763).

Published by *Workers Action*, 47 Carnac Street London SE27. Printed by Azad Press [TU] 20-22 York Way, London N1. Registered as a Newspaper with the GPO.

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