

# WORKERS' ACTION

No.46

Feb.17th-24th 1977

10p

## THE SOCIAL CONTRACT MUST GO NOW!

The rising clamour of opposition to another round of pay 'restraint' under the Social Contract is ringing in the ears of the bosses, the trade union leaders and the government.

Industry Secretary Eric Varley certainly got an ear-full when he visited the Leyland car plants in Birmingham to argue for another round of wage curbs when this round ends in July. And the campaign of opposition — which started on a big scale at the car plants of Fords, Leylands and Vauxhalls — has now spread to other industries.

Gormley and Scargill have lent their voices to the decision of the Nottingham area miners to have no more to do with the Social Contract; engineers at British Airways European

Division say they will call on other air transport workers to support them against wage curbs; while elsewhere, in the ASTMS, even the executive suite is buzzing with opposition.

So frightening has this sudden explosion of protest been that the CBI decided immediately to revise its suggested pay ceiling of about 4% upwards to nearer 10%. Meanwhile John Fryer of the *Sunday Times* could write: "Derek Robinson, a toolroom worker at the giant Austin-Morris plant and British Leyland's most influential shop steward, has sown some seeds of doubt (in the Social Contract), not only in me but, if I am not mistaken, in the Industry Secretary Eric Varley as well."

The reason for the "doubt" is the fear that the higher paid, more skilled

by Paul Adams

(and better organised) workers won't stick another year of eroded differentials. After the ASTMS Exec. voted 23-1 against a third round, Clive Jenkins made this clear: "The feedback from our members is that enough is enough. There will be no trade-off with the Chancellor, because tax concessions will not deal with our problems. It does not deal with differentials. There is overwhelming evidence that supervisors and first line management in industry are earning less than the majority they supervise."

"We want to return to free collective bargaining and we shall begin to instruct our members to start

getting ready to make sensible agreements."

But this approach has produced a backlash among leaders of unions representing low paid workers. Alan Fisher of NUPE argued that "In a free-for-all, it is the ones with the biggest muscles who get most". And he was backed up by Lord Allen of the shopworkers' union, USDAW, and Tom Jackson of the UPW, who claimed "Free collective bargaining means what it says — the weakest going to the wall and the prize going to the strong."

Of course, most of these leaders have never shown the slightest real concern for low paid workers of their own or any other union. And the wage curbs have brought a rapidly increasing number of workers hit by real poverty.

Whether or not the powerful battalions of the class win big increases, the wages of all workers need to be protected. But the way to do that is not to slap down the engineers and the miners, as Jackson proposes. The way to protect wages against rising costs is to have them rise automatically as the cost of working class living goes up.

To hear Fisher and Jackson, you'd think another round of pay curbs was all set to be designed for the benefit of the lower paid. But much of the clamour

### Rees goes ahead with deportation of Agee and Hosenball

Journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball are to be deported from Britain, Merlyn Rees announced on Wednesday. Thus the Home Secretary brings to an abrupt end the charade of an appeal tribunal hearing which (as set up under the 1971 Immigration Act) has allowed neither journalist to know the charges laid against him.

At a press conference called by the *Evening Standard*

(the paper Hosenball works for) Paul Rose MP alleged that "Mr. Rees has been supplied, quite deliberately, with false information". He claimed that British security agents had 'had their toes trodden on' by Hosenball's newspaper articles. Mr. Rees, according to Paul Rose, was simply acting under the pressure of Home Office Civil Servants out to get their own back.

"I'll have to take a serious decision with regard to voting for this government", Rose announced a little vaguely.

Every Labour MP should be flooded with demands to take such action to get the deportation orders cancelled. It makes a monkey of the labour movement if a Labour Government deports two journalists just for exposing the CIA — the same CIA that engineered the fall of Chile's President Allende, widely lamented in the Labour Party.

### THOUSANDS TO STRIKE AGAINST CUTS

OVER the next few days more than 20,000 NUPE members in South Wales are expected to take industrial action over the proposed cuts in the health service and in local government expenditure. The action, in the form of one-day strikes, will culminate in a mass demonstration on February 26th in Cardiff, which is expected to attract 15,000.

According to Adrian Jones, NUPE Assistant Divisional Officer, the call made by the union has met with a good response from a membership that is becoming increasingly worried by the attacks on their jobs and the services they work in.

Ambulancemen in Powys have already announced their decision to operate emergency-only cover on one day.

This action, one of a series planned to lead up to the conference of public sector unions on March 22nd, finds its counterpart in the one-day strike throughout Scotland called by Nalgo [the local government white collar workers' union] for March 9th.

It is important that rank and file public sector workers support these actions. But they should insist on using the demonstrations, conferences and rallies to voice opposition not just to the cuts and unemployment, but to the Social Contract as a whole. Otherwise union leaders like Alan Fisher will be able to use this commendable [though still largely token] action against the cuts as a diversion from the struggle now building up against wage control.

Public sector workers in Chelmsford, Essex, have called for a one-day strike and mass picket of the town hall to protest against service cuts and redundancies being made by Essex County Council.

### Toolroom strikers fight social contract now

ON Friday 11th, 4,000 to 5,000 Longbridge workers from all parts of the factory downed tools and marched to where Eric Varley, Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon were arriving for talks with Leyland management and senior stewards.

They greeted the visitors with shouts of "Jack the Rat" and placards with slogans like "Social Contract — Social Contrick". The crowd was so hostile that Scanlon and Jones could hardly get a hearing when they came out to address it. Derek Robinson (Works Convenor and Chairman of the Leyland Joint Shop Stewards) appealed for silence, but was met by booing

and "abuse".

Scanlon did make a speech of sorts, in which he said that the obvious militancy should be channelled into the AUEW Conference and Executive, and then insulted the workers present by demanding to know why they hadn't voted for Bob Wright as their Regional Officer. [In fact, resolutions to the forthcoming policy-making National Committee of the AUEW are, in Scanlon's words, "almost overwhelmingly" for an end to wage controls. He can address his lectures elsewhere...]

But, as these workers realise in a confused way, the Scanlons and the Wrights are not the sol-

ution to the problem of falling living standards. On the contrary, even if they are preferable to the right wing, they are part of the problem. And the shop-floor workers have seen this when these gentlemen of the left have come on TV and written in the press, and now come down to the factory itself, with one simple message to workers fighting for wage increases: "Get back to work".

But if this is true of Wright and Scanlon in the AUEW and of Kitson and Cousins in the T&G (apart from Beaver Jack

Contd. p.6

Contd. p.6

# Army torture: labour movement should probe

ONCE again a corner of the curtain drawn over the activities of the British Army in the north of Ireland has been lifted.

Last year, the European Commission of Justice condemned acts of torture carried out by the British military occupation forces and their local agents the RUC in the days following the start of internment in August 1971.

Now the Irish Government has taken the case a stage further.

Though Attorney General Sam Silkin said the British government now admits that internees were tortured (not merely "ill-treated", in the words of the notorious Compton Report) and promised not to repeat the use of hooding, hours-long spread-eagling against a wall, the use of "white noise" and sensory deprivation techniques, the Irish government has asked the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg to take into further consideration another 200 cases. Many of these, claimed to breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, relate to a much longer period covering 1971 to 1974.

Why is the Irish government continuing with the case, when it is eagerly applying its own repression in Dublin?

It insists that if it withdrew the case, that would imply that the situation had been rectified. But it isn't hard to see the real motive: a reluctance to let the Republicans accuse them of backing down to British pressure.

Bound to imperialism hand and foot, the government of the 26-County Irish "Republic" has to tread very

carefully, and certainly does not wish to hand any political capital to the Republicans. Least of all does it wish to see "support for republicanism growing in response to heavy government repression, censorship and emergency laws.

Privately the ruling coalition in the south wishes as ardently as Conor Cruise O'Brien that the Six Counties would disappear — or at least remain a British responsibility for the foreseeable future. But they dare not say so too loud, and need to stage a few "patriotic" acts like the European Court case to cover their tracks.

So the exposure of British brutality in the Six Counties should not be left in the

hands of the 26-County government. The British labour movement should organise an open and thorough inquiry into the Army's activities.

■■■

In the Six Counties, all indications are that the Provisional IRA are far from finished militarily. There is, too, continued opposition to the constant harassment of the Catholic population by the British Army, and to the attempts to bring the RUC back into Catholic areas.

The people of Ardoyne, Ballymurphy, the Falls and the other ghettos are not prepared to see the RUC take over where the British Army leave off — if and when they

do leave off.

Such feelings far outweigh any support from the more conservative and/or war-weary for the so-called "Peace Movement". Despite enormous transfusions of cash, publicity and moral support, this movement is rapidly running out of steam.

In this connection the re-starting of the bombing campaign in England has a certain logic. Mary Holland in this week's *Observer* quotes IRA leaders on the attitude of the civil servants with whom they had talks a while back: "We got their scale of values pretty quick. ... top of any agenda was how to keep the bombing away from England. A long, long way after came the lives of British soldiers. And a long way again after that came anything that happened in Northern Ireland."

The vindictive sentences on those convicted in the Balcombe Street trial ("life 12 times over") confirm that judgment.

The view of *Workers' Action* is that attacks on civilians in Britain — or Ireland — cannot in the last analysis

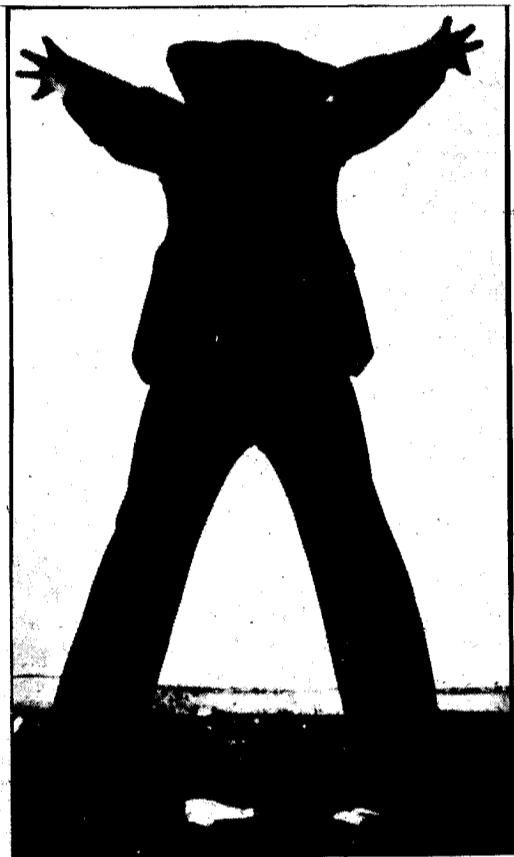
be supported by socialists, though it is the duty of every socialist to support the IRA's right to strike at military and state targets — in Ireland or Britain. However, the cause of the bombings of any targets lies nowhere but in British imperialist oppression of Ireland.

Mary Holland reports that "There has now grown up in Belfast a generation of angry, resentful teenagers whose adult experience has been of the British army in their communities. They are joining the Provos not because of the old Republican dream of uniting Ireland but to get their own back."

Uniting Ireland is not, however, just a republican dream, but a natural aspiration of those Irish people whose lives have been blighted by the conditions they face under British rule. And the British labour movement should uphold their right to determine their own future, and should take steps to force the withdrawal of the army of occupation as soon as possible.

CHRIS GREY

Hooded, spread-eagled against a wall on their fingertips and subjected to high-pitched noise — Britain's methods of interrogation. Have they really been abandoned?



## LITTLE ILFORD TEACHERS RESORT TO COURT ACTION AGAINST NUT

THE 30 teachers of Little Ilford school, in Newham, who were suspended from membership of the National Union of Teachers after some of them took unofficial action against the cuts, have had their appeal turned down.

They had refused to cover lessons for other teachers absent for three or more days, and when one of them got a 'breach of contract' warning for this action, they struck for one hour in protest.

The NUT then demanded that all NUT members at the school sign a form saying that they had never taken, and never would take, unofficial industrial action. The 30 — who include some who were not in the school on the day of the strike action, and some who did not participate in the strike — were initially charged with refusing to sign the form. When they came before the union's disciplinary hearing, the charge had been changed to breaking Rule 8, which forbids union bodies to take action without the consent of the national executive.

The NUT bureaucracy has forbidden the membership to discuss the issue, saying either that it is sub judice, or that the disciplinary action was in accord with the rules of the union, and therefore there is nothing to discuss (catch 22!). The NUT paper "The Teacher" did not mention the case until, in the most recent issue, union president Alf Wilshire launched a sharp attack on the Little Ilford teachers and their supporters.

Backing has come from some local NUT branches, school groups, and other labour movement bodies; and there have been pickets of NUT headquarters every time the Little Ilford case has come up. However, the victimised teachers have felt so isolated that they have now decided to bring court proceedings against the union. One of them, David Lane, has served a high court writ on NUT general secretary Fred Jarvis, and the others will follow suit.

Socialists must oppose this, not as a question of right or wrong tactics, but as a matter of principle. In general, we have nothing against using the courts or other state bodies when we can, to defend our democratic rights against the bosses and their agents.

But the NUT, bureaucratized as it is, is a labour movement organisation. The courts, like the police, the army, and so on, are organs of the ruling class, controlled and run by the wealthy minority who dominate society — not neutral bodies which act as referees. Thus one of the central demands of socialists in the unions must be for their complete independence from the state.

Even if the court's verdict goes for the Little Ilford teachers — and it will be something new to see the courts upholding the right of unofficial industrial action! — the precedent for settling affairs between trade unionists by appealing to the courts will be harmful. And nothing will have been done to redress the bureaucratic regime in the NUT and its suppression of militant action on the cuts.

It's not a matter of it being 'unfair' on the NUT bureaucrats, who we recognise as selling out the struggle, and whose concept of democracy is, "we rule, you obey". The point is this: we cannot accept that the Dennings, the Lawtons, and the Melford Stevensons have any right to regulate trade union affairs!

Unfortunately the left in the NUT have refused to take a stand on this question. The IMG, for example, regard it as simply a matter of tactics, possibly wrong "at the present time".

We have to recognise that the resort to court action comes from the Little Ilford teachers' isolation, and increase the rank and file fight to get them reinstated as full members of the union: particularly mobilising for the conference being called in defence of them by the London Education Cuts Action Committee.

PETE FIRMIN

## MAKE WOMEN'S RIGHTS RALLY A BIG SUCCESS

ONE YEAR ON FROM THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT  
JOINT BENEFIT  
for Rally for Women's Rights and  
Broadside Mobile Workers' Theatre

Alexandra Palace - 26th Feb

LEON ROSSELSON  
BROADSIDE  
Divide & rule Britannia & songs

FRANKIE ARMSTRONG  
COUNTERACT  
Songs & scenes from 'The Double Shift'

TERRI QUAYE  
Conversation with the drums

MAYAPI  
Chilean music & songs

TOBY  
Juggler, fire-eater, acrobat

at Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Pk, London N22  
On Saturday 26th February, at 8pm  
Tickets: £1.00 (rally + benefit £1.50)  
O.A.P.s, claimants, unemployed: 75p (£1.00)  
Wood Green & BRW... Bus 115

The Working Women's Charter Campaign is calling a rally 'One Year On From the SDA — A Rally For Women's Rights' at Alexandra Palace on 26th February. The rally will look at the con the legislation really is, and women from struggles — equal pay strikes, cuts and nursery campaigns, will show that the way they won anything at all was through fighting for it. The key issue in the debate at and around the rally is the way forward for women's rights: 'Workers' Action' argues for a fight in the Working Women's Charter Campaign, in the women's movement and in the labour movement to build a working-class based women's movement that takes up the real needs of working-class women.

# Conspiracy against 18 black teenagers

Some weeks ago Labour MP Maureen Colquhoun, justifying her statement that Labour should take Enoch Powell's rabble-rousing at face value, told of her 'terrifying' experience during the Notting Hill carnival battle.

It seems that Ms. Colquhoun had to sleep the night at her son's flat instead of proceeding home! Considering some of the repercussions being suffered by black people who were there, she should count herself very privileged.

Not only did the police, during the three days of the Carnival, stage a number of provocations which eventually led to the fighting. They have since used the carnival as a launching-pad to stage sweeping arrests of black youth in other areas of London.

120 people were in fact arrested during and after the battle. But that, it seems, wasn't enough. Photographs taken by police during the Carnival were used two months later to arrest 18 black youths in Islington, North London. They have been charged with "conspiracy to rob", and a number of equally vague offenses.

"Conspiracy" is a perfect weapon for a police frame-up. It can allow them to make wholesale arrests and levy heavy sentences. It was what

they used to get the Shrewsbury 24: they were arrested some six months after the "crimes" (militant picketing) were supposed to have taken place. Six of them served jail sentences.

The Islington youths (one of them is only 14, and five are — or were, before being jailed — still at school) were arrested over a period of two weeks at the end of October. Some were taken from their homes by police refusing to identify themselves.

Sergeant Gallagher, in charge of 'operations', toured the various stations where they were being held, and it is claimed that force was used to get confessions. Certainly, some of the youths showed signs of bruising when they got to court.

Parents seeking their sons say they were misled about where they were being held, and some didn't get to see them until they came up at Highbury Magistrates Court.

For most of these black teenagers, police harassment is something they've grown up with. One of them has had trouble from the police since he was eleven. But this case seems to differ from the daily, casual bullying meted out in such cases as that of Cliff McDaniell (the Hornsey schoolboy assaulted by police in the dinner-hour and then charged with ...

assault on police; an aggressive Defence Campaign cleared him, but his police assailant is still loose on the beat). The concerted, pre-meditated arrests and the conspiracy charges indicate a plan of frame-up and intimidation.

The charges certainly read as if they were thought up to fit anyone the police decided to pull in. They range from "Between 21st August and 21st October 1976 in the Greater London Area conspired together and with persons unknown to commit robberies" to "on a day unknown in the months of August or September 1976 at Sussex Way N.19 did rob a man unknown of approximately £4 cash."

Eight of the charges relate directly to the Notting Hill Carnival. Just how rough and random the haul was is shown by the fact that one of the accused, who was charged on the basis of "photographic evidence", was away on holiday at the time of the Carnival.

That charge was dropped. But undeterred, the police are proceeding with others against this lad, and have placed him under a system of personal curfew. He is only allowed to leave his house between 7am and 7pm, and between 5 and 6 each evening has to report to Hornsey

Road Police Station.

Yet among the 18, he is one of the lucky ones with bail. Others are still inside, at Latchmere and Ashford Remand Centres. As the police put it to them: "We're going to put you away for a long time. Even if you do get off at the trial, you'll have been inside for six months."

For those allowed bail, sureties went as high as £3,000. One who was refused bail at first was told it was because it was "irresponsible to live off the state" — he is among the tens of thousands of school leavers unable to get a job...

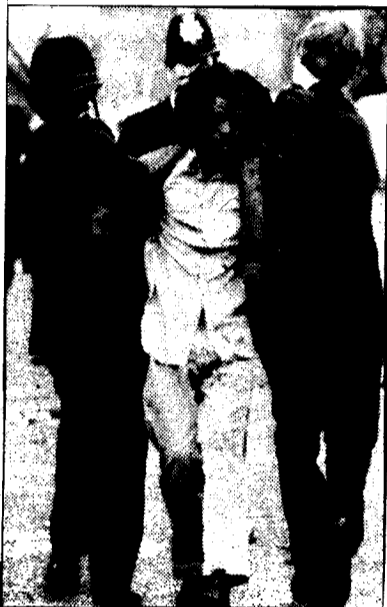
At first, the court told defendants that Legal Aid would only be given if they accepted a solicitor chosen by the court: one of the choices

offered was a solicitor who frequently represents the Police Federation! It's taken a struggle for the 18 to get solicitors of their choice. And, according to a recent article in *West Indian World*, "At the courts black barristers are being bluntly refused legal aid while white ones defending members of the same set of youths do get Legal Aid."

The cases of the Islington 18 will be heard at the Old Bailey, possibly in April but perhaps as late as September — which will mean that some of them could have served a 10-month sentence by then.

A Defence Campaign has been set up to publicise the case and win support. It can be contacted at 01-607-2461.

MARY CORBISHLEY



These are Socialist Policies?

The police picked this fight in Notting Hill and lost. Now they're out for a second fight — on their own ground: the courts and the jails.



## Immigration rules not OK

NOT ONLY has the Labour Government not repealed the 1971 Immigration Act, it has done nothing of substance to make its operation more liberal or less brutal. Indeed, it has done much in its own right to 'tighten up' immigration regulations and their implementation.

There was one exception. Back in August 1974 Roy Jenkins, then Home Secretary, introduced new regulations removing the restrictions which the immigration regulations imposed on wives and fiancées.

It was the previous Labour Government, in 1969, which had introduced these restrictions; but it was something that they were removed.

Now, however, Rees is poised to reverse even this minor concession. Under the guise of getting round marriages of con-

venience, Rees threatened in Parliament on 9th February to introduce new regulations on fiancées and wives. Given what Labour governments have done to date, these can be expected to be racist and sexist, and much like the 1969 regulations.

They are to be part of a general tightening-up on investigation of immigrants not abiding by the police-state-like rules imposed on them. The investigation on overstaying and the discussions on "the taking of employment contrary to conditions imposed on entry" will mean increased harassment and snooping.

What is most sickening is the role of the TUC in all this. All too frequently of late, the TUC has been involved in immigration regulations and tightening up on permits. Now, app-

arently, it is encouraging the tighter regulation of migrant workers in sticking to the conditions imposed on them for entry.

It is one thing to be indifferent to the plight of migrant workers, which most of the TUC bureaucrats are; it is another to actively encourage their rigid containment in one particular area of employment. Especially when the area is likely to be one with low pay and harsh conditions, like the catering industry. The TUC are now guilty of this crime, if nothing else by their participation in the discussions with employers and Government mentioned by Rees.

The TUC role in this makes nonsense of their anti-racist campaign. Those trade unionists who take the campaign ser-

iously will be obliged to fight the TUC itself on the question of racism.

Likewise, Rees is making nonsense both of official Labour Party policy of opposition to the present immigration laws and the Labour Party anti-racist campaign. Yet the Labour Party Race Relations Group had Rees as their speaker at a meeting on race relations and immigration a couple of weeks ago! Serious opposition to racialism on the part of local Labour Parties is going to involve opposition to Rees and his new regulations, and pressure to get the present Labour Party campaign put at least on the lines laid down by the last Labour Party conference, which include demanding the repeal of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts.

DON RICHIE

ON SATURDAY 5th February 60 delegates and visitors attended the annual Yorkshire conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

The majority of resolutions were moved by the dominant 'Militant' tendency. Most of what they called for — like work or full pay, no redundancies, and the 35-hour week — was good; what was dismally lacking was an idea as to how these should be fought for. All they had to propose was — as resolution 3 from Leeds North East LPYS put it — demanding "that the Labour Government takes immediate action".

And, if the major demands, like "Nationalise the 200 Monopolies" seemed too radical, Hull West offered advice on "how to win elections and solve the economic crisis" by adopting Labour's election manifesto as a minimum programme — a programme that would include wage restraint.

An amendment moved by 'Chartist' supporters took up the need for a fight against the Social Contract and to make the left MPs, such as Benn, vote against the cuts. But this amendment, too, seemed to assume that the problem with the Labour Party is just right wing infiltrators at the top, whose removal would signal the arrival of a mass socialist party.

'Militant' got off the hook by arguing — correctly — that just to remove Callaghan and Healey is no solution; and the amendment was predictably lost.

Max Madden MP addressed the conference in the afternoon. After telling us how much he agreed with the 'need for socialist policies', he went on to explain why he would not vote against the Government on wage curbs or the cuts. He advocated selective import controls as a key 'socialist policy' to be implemented, describing it, in the most demagogic manner, as socialist planning.

TIM RILEY

"...the tips of the bayonets were touching the breasts of the first row of demonstrators. Behind could be heard the singing of revolutionary songs, in front there was confusion. Women, with tears in their eyes, were crying out to the soldiers, 'Comrades, take away your bayonets, join us!' The soldiers were moved. They threw swift glances at their own comrades. The next moment one bayonet is slowly raised, is slowly lifted above the shoulders of the approaching demonstrators. There is thunderous applause. The triumphant crowd greeted their brothers clothed in the grey cloaks of soldiers. The soldiers mixed freely with the demonstrators..."

That is how a Bolshevik worker described the crucial turning point of the 'Women's Day' demonstrations in Petrograd sixty years ago. Four days later the autocratic Romanov dynasty collapsed with only the slightest resistance — deserted even by its most fervent supporters.

### After 1905

In the years between the crushing of the 1905 revolution and the World War, Tsarism had appeared to recover its balance. The soviets, which first appeared in 1905, were disbanded, the revolutionaries exiled and the liberal bourgeoisie, more terrified than emboldened by the revolutionary upsurge had resumed their familiar cowardly attempts to reform the system from above.

The Tsar's minister Stolypin had even begun to create, through his agrarian reform, a stratum of rich peasants who he hoped would act as a bulwark to protect the autocracy against revolutionary change.

For the working class 1905 was a defeat. But an exploited class has no other school but struggle and the workers had learnt their lessons well. They had leaned on Tsarism

and the rottenness of its fabric was apparent; in the Soviets, the general strike the armed insurrection they had felt their power.

As early as 1910 the working class was beginning to re-awaken to political and trade union activity. The huge strikes in protest at the massacre of the goldminers of Lena were the most dramatic example. In the years leading up to the war the Bolshevik Party, despite the attentions of police and censor, was able to produce a mass circulation daily paper.

### In hock

The outbreak of war interrupted this process temporarily. In 1914 Russia, like the rest of Europe, was engulfed in a wave of jingoism. The autocracy, in hock to French imperialism to the tune of 9,349 million gold francs, naturally declared its war aims to be only of a high moral character — the 'defence of the fatherland' etc.

But if the war strained the economies of Europe it shattered that of Russia. By mid-1916 inflation was raging, production slumping, the railways had broken down and food supplies were running out.

**Russian soldiers, herded into battle without guns or bullets were dying in thousands. They became resentful ... demoralised ... rebellious.**

At the top, gangrene had set in. The Romanov court was dominated by Rasputin; the General Staff was riddled with corruption and treachery. And from the misery of workers and peasants, overnight fortunes of millions of roubles were made by unscrupulous war speculators.

The liberal bourgeoisie had welcomed the war — not only because of their financial ties to France but also because they reckoned that war must lead to a reform of Tsarism from above. They were to be disappointed. As his empire fell about him the

Tsar closed his ears to even the mildest changes.

On the evening of February 26th 1917, the day before the autocracy fell, Rodzianko, President of the Duma (the Tsar's tame parliament), sent a telegram to Nicholas II: "The situation is growing worse by the hour. Measures must be taken immediately... The last hour has struck, the fate of the fatherland and the dynasty is being decided."

**"This fat Rodzianko has written me some nonsense to which I will not even reply"**, was the Tsar's remark.

The liberals had cause to rely on such pathetic appeals. They had learnt their lessons from the 1905 events. They had seen that the Russian workers had soon passed from the struggle for 'democratic' demands to the struggle for their own, specifically proletarian, aims. They had fearfully observed that the factory committees and Soviets were generally unresponsive to liberal democratic rhetoric — but eagerly took up the demands of the revolutionaries.

The financiers, factory bosses and speculators hoped and prayed for some deal with the landlords and autocracy. It was, therefore, with genuine horror that they privately greeted the events of February 1917.

### Coal ran out

During the early weeks of that year the shortages and price rises had become acute.

As temperatures fell to -40°, coal ran out and bread prices rose by 60%. On February 22nd, desperate housewives invaded bakeries and other food shops. At the same time the workers of the huge Putilov works — the most politically conscious in all Russia — were locked out.

The next day, "Women's Day", 90,000 workers came out on strike. The working class district of Vyborg was crammed with demonstrators whose first demands of



# How the Russian Revolution began by Arnie Prou

"Bread!" soon became "Down with the autocracy!", "Down with the war!" From the start the crowds appealed to the soldiers to join them and met with a sympathetic response.

By February 26th the

strike was general and districts like the Vyborg were in the control of the workers. But the autocracy still had supporters. The police were able to arrest several hundred militant workers, including the entire Bolshevik

## FROM INSTRUMENTS FOR STRUGGLE TO INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

The Soviet, or workers' council, was the almost natural product of Russian working class struggle. Although Russian capitalism was a late-comer it developed in a highly concentrated and monopolised form. For example in 1905 the largest factory in the world was in Russia — the Putilov works in St. Petersburg.

At the same time trade unions were illegal so that a permanent trade union bureaucracy never developed. Workers were forced from the beginning to elect organisations responsive to the rank and file. The formation of the Soviets in 1905 was an extension of this principle.

The first Soviet was formed in May 1905 by the textile workers of Ivanovo-Voznensk, and grew out of a joint strike committee. The Petersburg Soviet, formed in August 1905, is more famous. But it too grew out of factory-elected committees which had mushroomed during the events of February earlier that year.

From the first days of their existence the Soviets were compelled to adopt the tasks of government.

The position of the working class within the Russian social structure made it, despite its relatively small size, the only class capable of rescuing Russia from the crushing weight of autocracy. But it could only do this by extending its political rule over the whole of society. When the Soviets were created a situation of 'dual power' was implicit.



In 1905-6 this ended in defeat — but the workers never forgot the lessons. So in February 1917 the Soviets reappeared immediately. In fact two days before the army mutiny, factory elections took place and local Soviets were formed. Within days an all-Petrograd meeting took place where soldiers' deputies were present. On the same day 51 factory delegates met to form the Moscow Soviet.

By the end of March the central industrial area had

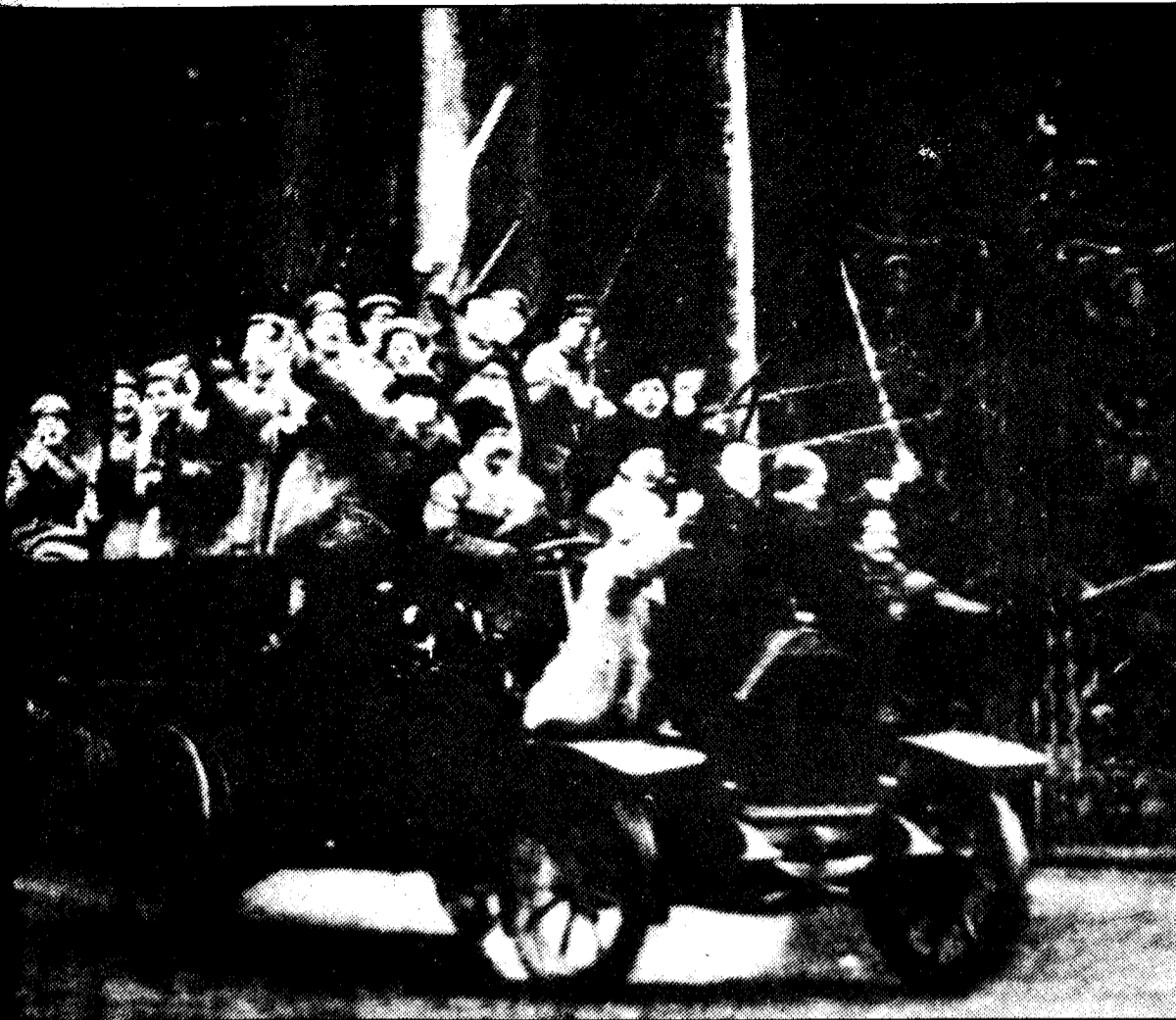
Soviets in more than 70 towns; they covered 1½ million men and women workers. In the Urals 100 Soviets had been formed. Links between them were forged and on March 18th an unofficial 'first conference' was held: 470 delegates represented 120 cities and towns. A similar process was taking place throughout the entire Russian empire.

The Soviet was entirely different from a parliamentary institution like the Duma. It worked rather than debated, having executive as well as legislative powers. Delegates were elected on proportional representation, but it was parties and programmes which were voted for, not individuals. Finally, the delegates were subject to recall at any time.

"It became clear" wrote Bukharin "that these soviets, which had originated as instruments for use in the struggle for power, must inevitably be transformed into the instruments for the wielding of power."



The factory committees eagerly took up the demands of the Bolsheviks. Above, a Moscow crowd reaching out for revolutionary propaganda in February.



Committee in Petrograd. Demonstrators had been fired on. There were casualties.

Ironically the arrests had an opposite effect to the one intended.

The political militants had been taken aback by the spontaneous fury of the Petrograd masses and were acting as a brake upon them. Their removal let more audacious elements take the lead. Several public buildings were set alight; the angry demonstrations went on.

At this point the attitude of the soldiers would decide everything. A company of the Pavlovsky regiment, when ordered to fire, turned their guns not on the workers but on the police. On returning to their barracks they won over other companies and sent messages to other regiments.

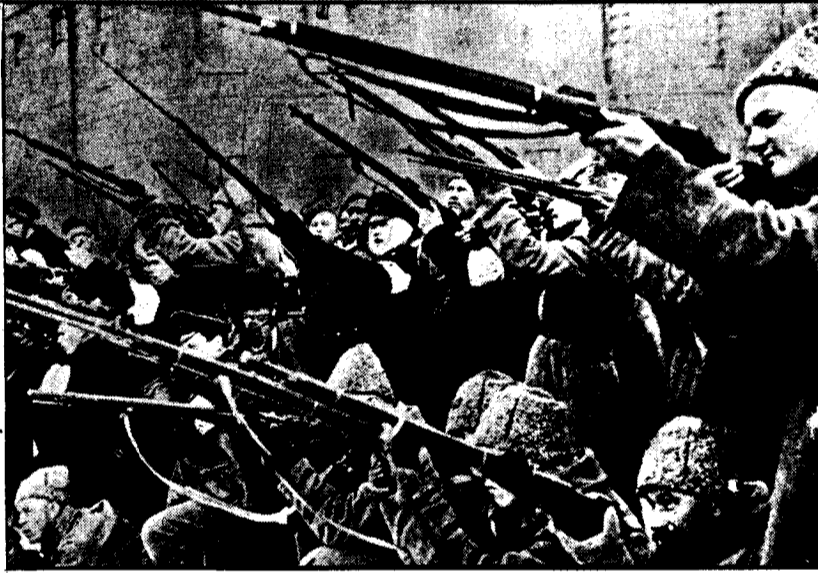
The mutiny spread rapidly and by one o'clock on February 27th, 25,000 soldiers, ignoring the orders of the officers, marched to the Vyborg where they fraternised with the workers. In just a few days the pent up fury of soldiers and workers, expressed in an apparently spontaneous uprising, had toppled the autocracy.

## Hostile forces

By the next day Petrograd was in the hands of the revolutionary masses, and Tsarism was dead — though it took another couple of days for Nicholas to realise this. Later that day the Moscow workers declared a general strike and, there as throughout Russia, the transfer of power was a formality.

But transfer of power to whom? Everyone recognised the fall of Tsarism. But what was to replace it?

The Duma leaders had done their best to calm the situation. Many saw the fall of the Romanovs, or at least the manner of their demise, as a disaster. A French observer, Comte, personally close to many of the Duma Deputies at the time, says: "Officially they were elated; they celebrated the revolution,



ion, shouted hurrah in honour of the fighters for liberty, donned red ribbons, marched under red flags... But deep down they were terrified, and felt like prisoners to hostile and dangerous forces."

They, therefore, were reluctant to take power. Even when the regime had clearly collapsed they vacillated. On the afternoon of February 27th a massive and angry crowd surrounded the Tauride Palace where the Duma was then meeting. Miliukov, leader of the Cadet Party (Constitutional Democrats), told them "For the moment we cannot take any decisions ... it is early days yet."

Behind the scenes he was desperately attempting to save the monarchy as an institution.

Only one thing persuaded the liberal bourgeoisie to take power: their sudden realisation that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies had been re-born.

Duma Deputy Shulgin convinced Miliukov with only one argument: "...If we do not take power, others will take it for us, those rotters who have already elected all sorts of scoundrels in the factories."

Thus it was only fear of the Soviet assuming power that caused the Duma to transform its Provisional Committee (formed a few days earlier to 'restore order') into a government.

Once this step had been taken Petrograd, and soon the whole of Russia, found itself ruled by two institutions: the Duma representing the liberal bourgeoisie (which would become increasingly less 'liberal' over the next months) and the Soviet representing the proletariat. This situation, familiar now from other revolutions, has entered political vocabulary as 'dual power'.

## Two worlds

The relationship between the two bodies was to determine the course of events until the Bolshevik seizure of power in October.

And what different bodies they were! Initially meeting in the same building, the Tauride Palace (the Soviet in the left wing, the Duma in the right) they presented two entirely different pictures. The Duma Deputies, with a few exceptions, were drawn from the most privileged sectors of society — landowners, industrialists, the army top brass. They were elected by a system which was openly loaded against the workers and peasants. And they debated in circumstances which betrayed their origins.

The Soviet delegates were largely working men and women elected in their factories and residential districts usually at mass meetings. They worked in virtually constant session — hearing

new reports, sending off delegations and organising the means of life.

These were not simply two different bodies. They represented two different worlds, two different classes and potentially different social systems.

Conflict between them was inevitable from the start.

## A compromise

The Provisional Government was determined to win the most conservative outcome from the February events. They knew that they held no real power — from the start the Soviet had taken control of all aspects of public life: transport, food and production. This was privately admitted by the Minister of War: "The Provisional Government has no real powers. Its orders are not obeyed unless they happen to fall in with the wishes of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies ... the Provisional Government only exists inasmuch as the Soviet accepts and authorises its existence."

But the Soviet did "authorise its existence"! The leaders of the Petrograd Soviet took a conciliatory attitude from the beginning. They set up a Liaison Committee to co-ordinate activities with the Duma and by March 2nd a compromise had been agreed.

Of course there had been clashes. At first the Cadet Miliukov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had put forward a plan to save the institution of the monarchy. The Soviet delegates had greeted this with derision, and eventually Miliukov's more realistic colleagues prevailed upon him to drop the idea. Similarly the Soviet had protested against the Duma plan to send the Romanovs into exile in England.

## "Defensive"

But on the crucial issues — war and peace, the continuation of the general strike etc — the Duma won, despite its weak position, important concessions.

In the previous few days the Soviet leaders had supported the popular demand for an end to the war. Now they agreed with the Duma that a "defensive war" must be continued. Overall the Soviet declared that it would give its "full support" to the Provisional Government inasmuch as "it effectively combats the old regime."

The problem was that opinions differed about what exactly the 'old regime' was. The Romanov family? The

autocratic system? The war? The social conditions of the workers?

Within a few days the conservative press, re-opened by permission of the Soviet, began a reactionary campaign. It attacked the power of the Soviet as unconstitutional, it called for a renewed war effort and a return to work by the strikers.

But the workers of Petrograd had other ideas. For them the 'old regime' included capitalist exploitation, long hours and starvation wages. Despite a call by the Soviet to end all strikes the struggle for shorter hours continued. When troops were sent to suppress the strikes the workers took them around the factories to illustrate their grievances.

Eventually the Soviet reluctantly took up the campaign for an 8-hour day and forced the Provisional Government to introduce it.

This well illustrates the role that the Soviet began to play during the first month of the revolution. Although it spoke for the masses it also acted as a brake upon them. Though it held effective power, it subordinated itself to the Provisional Government — acting only when goaded forward.

## 'moderates'

The bourgeoisie knew well that without the support of the Soviet it was lost. Through the Provisional Government they hoped to gradually defuse the situation by pulling the Soviet leaders into their orbit. But why should the Soviets have gone along with this?

Firstly the socialist parties — both Menshevik and Bolshevik — had been taken aback by the suddenness and violence of the revolt. To this extent they were somewhat disoriented by the speed of events. There were, however, deeper reasons.

The Petrograd Soviet had a majority of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Both these parties were 'moderate': the Mensheviks within the socialist movement; the SRs nearer to liberalism than socialism. Neither party held the view that it was possible for the working class to take power.

To understand this we must return to the 1905 Revolution. All socialists agreed that this had been a 'bourgeois revolution'; all agreed that the Russian capitalists were too cowardly and too closely tied to the autocracy to contemplate overthrowing it. Therefore the working class must make the

Contd. p 7



Trotsky (second from left) among a group of revolutionaries on their way to exile after the 1905 Revolution. Only his analysis of 1905 envisaged a workers' state in Russia as a next step.

IN the USA, several large companies including Fords have effectively smashed the shop stewards' movement by their system of a "master contract" for a whole combine. This effectively brings down not only the weight of the bosses, company-wide, but also unions' own disciplinary action, onto the necks of plant or shop representatives, or groups of stewards, who try to fight for their members' interests.

The unions' campaign against the Social Contract must not be allowed to turn into a bosses' campaign for a "master contract" in British Leyland.

# DONT REPLACE SOCIAL CONTRACT WITH MASTER CONTRACT



## THE UNIONS



by DICK BRADLEY

**British Leylands Joint Shop Stewards Committee met on Wednesday February 2nd and voted to launch a "campaign against the Social Contract".**

But what the 28 Senior Stewards really launched remains a mystery. "Left" talk by some of them after the meeting was balanced by other statements like this one by their chairman, Eddy McGarry: "I want to see an end to the social contract as it stands at the moment unless the Government categorically assures us on the price controls I have mentioned" — which could mean anything, including what the Government is limbering up to offer and what the CBI is preparing to accept.

Furthermore this "opposition" to the Social Contract is already being re-defined as the preservation and restoration of differentials by Derek Robinson, McGarry and others.

Of course "flexibility" on this question of differentials between grades and on anomalies between plants is precisely one of the main formulae the Government, the CBI and the TUC leaders are discussing for their "next phase" of the Social Contract after July.

But the challenge to pay restraint in the car industry will not be turned aside easily by the trade union leaders. Since the heroic but dead-end struggle at Rubery Owen (which ended up with the workers' gains being given to charity so that the Contract might be preserved) there have been literally dozens of little disputes,

all reflecting the frustration which is threatening to explode into action all over the industry and beyond.

The British Leyland bosses themselves are adopting quite a subtle strategy. Secure in the knowledge that the Government disagrees, they profess to sympathise with the frustration over wages among carworkers. And meanwhile they're anticipating "Phase Three" by offering discussions to "iron out" anomalies, restore differentials and establish a single pay structure for the whole of BL.

The first step was their "Security of Earnings" document which was offered to every Leyland plant 3 weeks ago. Because this included a "penalty clause" in the section governing lay-off pay, workers throughout Leyland rejected it. But the clause which proposed a "common termination date" for all plant agreements was also very important to the company, and we can be certain that they will be back with this proposal again.

Now there is a very real danger that the whole "campaign" against the Social Contract will be hijacked by the company and the union leaders and turned into a campaign to establish "corporate bargaining" on the bosses' terms.

In the context of the Government/TUC talk of "flexibility" over differentials, the Leyland participation scheme, this is the logical aim for the Leyland bosses to pursue.

For the bosses, "corporate [i.e. company-wide] bargaining" is supposed to take wage negotiations out of the hands of the shop stewards and put it into the hands of the senior bureaucrats, 'participating' convenors etc and/or full time officials.

Now for militant trade unionists the idea of trade union unity across a whole company or combine is very desirable. But we must always avoid confusing schemes for unity which are peddled by bosses and bureaucrats to insure themselves against rank and file actions, with the fighting unity we seek.

Just as much as they can divide and rule, the bosses are able to get their way by tying down sections of workers into a unitary structure that they can control more easily.

That is why the resolutions of Rover shop stewards (reproduced uncritically in *Red Weekly* of Feb. 3rd and apparently a central plank of IMG car workers' policy on wages) must be opposed. The first resolution accepts the "common termination date" unconditionally, and then goes on to mention "taking account" of the "rise in the cost of living over the past 12 months" — which is nowhere near as adequate a formulation as "sliding scale of wages".

In a separate resolution, the Rover stewards propose a company-wide negotiating committee, responsible to a delegate conference, to do the actual talking with management.

This is exactly the sort of structure the present BL Trade Union Committee can accept! And it is exactly the sort of thing Lord Stokes was pressing for two years ago.

The stranglehold which the Broad Left and Right wing between them have in the two main unions would guarantee them, at present, a docile conference, and hence a spineless negotiating committee. And that would be that.

Given the present leadership in the unions we must fight determinedly against the fake "unity" which the bosses and bureaucrats are cooking up to take wage bargaining further out of the hands of the shop floor.

The Rover stewards apparently did not feel it necessary to put the "Security of Earnings" document, or their two resolutions, to mass meetings. But when the summer negotiations come up — if not well before then — they are going to have to choose between their

dangerous scheme and the interests of the shopfloor workers

A real fighting rank and file unity does not depend on schemes like this, which essentially hinge on regulating the relationship of workers and management. Such real unity can be built at any time between workers and workers. It can be helped along by forming combine- or industry-wide structures but its essential foundation is class solidarity as against trade, company, regional and national ties and loyalties. Such a foundation can best be laid by the fight for aims and demands which express class interest and by the rejection of all divisive and parochial schemes such as import controls or the cry of "save our factory, close that one instead".

From page one

## Toolroom strike

and Moss Evans who hardly even bother to pose as lefts any more), then it is also true of the "Communist" trade union leaders.

After a dressing down from Bert Ramelson, and aware of the feelings on the shopfloor and among CP stewards, Derek Robinson finally made a few mild remarks against wage control after July — and gave his name to the Joint Stewards' "campaign" against a third stage of pay curbs.

But terrified now by the explosion the Joint Stewards have sparked off, Robinson — and the Communist Party leadership as a whole — are backing down even on what they said at first.

They said nothing at all when Scanlon and Wright defended the Social Contract aggressively at the last AUEW Broad Left meeting. They just listened, and then silently adopted Wright as the Broad Left candidate for the job Scanlon is getting out of.

Again, at the meeting with Varley, Jones and Scanlon at Longbridge, Robinson said not a word against the present Social Contract curbs.

The *Morning Star* has, unobtrusively, dropped the question of wages from the list of subjects to be discussed at the Liaison Committee Conference in Defence of Trade Unions on February 26th.

But they have a tiger by the tail. The lynchpin role that Robinson and a handful of others have been playing in holding the Social Contract together has been completely exposed — positively by his actions in Longbridge, negatively by the incredible speed of developments once the Joint Stewards' statement came out, showing what could have been done by fighting before now.

The left talk of those opponents of pay restraint who have been shouting about the next round is being put to the test with the question: what about NOW? With over 20 disputes

OVER 20,000 British Leyland workers are now involved in the series of strikes that have hit all the company's major plants, putting eleven different car models out of production.

The main reasons are all to do with work arrangements, as the company tries to restructure production at a time when the men are in a difficult position to argue for extra pay for working the new conditions.

At Castle Bromwich 1,300 workers are on strike and another 3,000 are laid off because management tried to sack 32 workers who refused to be shifted to jobs they don't normally do.

This stoppage has halted Jaguar production at Coventry where 1,950 have been laid off. Also resulting from this have been 2,700 laid off at Longbridge and 1,085 sent home at Solihull. Production of some lines has stopped at Cowley.

A dispute at Cowley itself involving 150 maintenance engineers is also over proposed changes in working arrangements. And at Triumph Canley [Coventry] strikers have voted to continue their stoppage, which arose in connection with management's attempt to reorganise work procedures.

going on in British Leyland and the toolmakers' strike about to start on Friday 18th, these bureaucrats of all shades have no leadership to offer. On the contrary they will work to sabotage the important toolmakers' strike — which is due to involve 6,000 workers directly and affect 20 of the 33 Leyland plants.

Thus the most crucial and telling line of divide in the car unions and, in a sense, in the whole labour movement, this week is for or against the toolmakers?

There will not necessarily ever be a better time to launch a struggle on wages than right now. It is essential that the rest of the class does not sit back and watch how the toolmakers get on, but acts in concert with them to finish the Social Contract

once and for all. (The overtime ban and work to rule by Coventry GEC Telecommunications toolmakers is a start, but neither their tactics nor their demands — which include staff status, ie a way around the Pay Code — are adequate.)

WORKERS ACTION supporters in Longbridge will be fighting for all workers there to strike in sympathy with the toolroom and for our own demands: a flat-rate increase to include full compensation for the past year's inflation, and a rising scale of wages for the future to increase automatically with the cost of living.

Of course we'll all be laid off anyway — but the best tactic would be to make it clear to the toolroom and the bosses that neither the present strikers nor we will be going back to work till we've won.

This may find little support right now. But a big, deep rooted movement is beginning on the wages issue and revolutionaries must fight to eventually organise and lead it on the only basis which can win a real class victory. We will be seen to be right.

But we must also fight in the unions at every level for the policies that are needed and against the class collaborationist leaderships which exist.

Immediately this means to build the Conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (Birmingham March 27th); and to intervene in the LCDTU Conference on 26th February firstly to get wages discussed and then to raise the sliding scale demand as the only adequate solution. The forthcoming T&GWU and AUEW elections will also be crucial.

But the actual struggles going on are, and will continue to be, the most important developments of all. We must campaign for the most widespread support for all workers fighting for wage increases and against the Social Contract.

From Page One

## THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

now going on in high places against the Contract is in fact nothing other than lobbying and pressure for the next round to be designed to restore the differentials eroded by Round One in particular. This will of course mean relatively little for the low-paid.

This has been common knowledge for some time. The problem for the employers, the union top brass and the Government is how to restructure pay agreements and permit productivity dealing (another thing they're after) while keeping a tight grip on shop floor representation.

The last two years have whetted their appetite for some approximation to the German system of "tariff rounds" where senior union officials negotiate rates for an entire industry once a year. They want the phrase "orderly return to free collective bargaining" to mean collective bargaining in big units well away from the shop floor with strong union officials to police the agreements.

# THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

bourgeois revolution on behalf of the bourgeoisie.

Here agreement ended. The experience of 1905 was interpreted in widely different ways. For the Mensheviks the proletariat had gone too far. It had 'failed' to limit its objectives to those of overthrowing Tsarist feudalism and had scared the liberals, driving them into the arms of reaction.

In 1917 they wished to avoid this at all costs. February, they decided, was a bourgeois revolution and hence power should be handed over to that representative of the bourgeoisie, the Duma. The Soviet, and the working class, should moderate its demands and even be prepared to make large scale concessions lest the liberals once again prefer reaction.

Thus it was not stupidity

from p5

or even cowardice which led the Mensheviks into conciliation. Rather it was their empty, schematic and lifeless version of "Marxism" which became a crippling ideological impediment.

What of the Bolsheviks, the militant wing of socialism? They had drawn different lessons from 1905. They emphasised the significance of the Soviets as 'organs of direct struggle', stressing the leading role that the proletariat had played and the contrasting reactionary role of the bourgeoisie.

This meant that the workers must press forward their victory to ... the most radical form of bourgeois democracy possible. Lenin referred to this as the "democratic dict-

atorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

So even the Bolshevik approach was ambivalent: the proletariat should lead the struggle in the most militant possible way but should stop just short of actually seizing power.

This sums up the role of the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd Soviet in February and March of 1917. They formed its militant wing, constantly raising the struggle for working class aims — except the aim of the proletarian revolution itself.

Only Trotsky took Bolshevik thinking on the leading role of the proletariat to a fully revolutionary conclusion. In his brilliant analysis of 1905, "Results and Prospects", he had argued that the workers must achieve a socialist as well as a democratic revolution in a continuous process — "permanent revolution". But since 1905 Trotsky had become isolated from both wings of the socialist movement and, unlike

Lenin, had failed to build up a firm party cadre within the proletariat itself.

So although Tsarism was overthrown, the direction of the revolution was immediately in doubt. It could only proceed to its socialist conclusion if two conditions were met.

Firstly, the militant party of the workers, the Bolsheviks, had to be won to the perspective of the proletariat taking power. Exiled in



Kerensky led the Provisional Government from July

Geneva, Lenin had begun to grasp this nettle.

Secondly the Soviets, the only possible basis for the proletarian revolution, had to be won to a Bolshevik majority.

Meanwhile the liberal bourgeoisie had political power. But they were incapable of carrying through the social tasks of the bourgeois revolution, in particular of liberating the peasantry from landlordism. Had the post-February bourgeois political regime proved capable of satisfying the peasants, there could have been no proletarian seizure of power in October.

Central to the whole dynamic of the period between February and October was this weakness of the bourgeoisie. And it was this which allowed the Bolshevik workers to ally themselves with the left SR peasant party, and proceed to the seizure of power which Lenin was to begin advocating in April 1917.

## Immigration Act - who's to blame?

Dear comrades, The recent interest and concern on racialism in the ranks of the Labour Party has led to numerous meetings on the issue. At these meetings, and in left newspapers, we hear much talk of the 'Tory Immigration Act'.

But in what sense is the Immigration Act 'Tory'?

It is true that it was the Tory Party in Government which drew up and passed, against Labour opposition, the 1971 Immigration Act. But before then Labour Governments had implemented the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act despite opposing it when in opposition.

The Labour Government supplemented and tightened the Act with various administrative changes, the most notable being the 1965 White Paper. They also passed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act which introduced, in all but name, the concept of 'patrials' spelt out in the 1971 Act. In short, they helped pave the way for the 1971 Act.

The Labour Manifestos for the 1974 General Elections did not pledge a future Labour Government to repeal the 1971 Act. Instead, in speeches, Wilson & Co. promised a review of the Citizenship and Nat-

ionality law which would involve changes in immigration law — thus hinting at repeal. The proposals resulting from the review have been 'expected' for some time now.

As for implementation of the Act, Labour are more responsible than the Tories. The 1971 Immigration Act came into force in January 1973. Out of the four years it has been in force, Labour has been in office for three. They have introduced only minor changes to the administration and implementation of the Act, and some, like the 'amnesty' in April 1974 and the rules on students issued last year, are not really liberalising steps.

The law has been implemented with severity and rigour, resulting in constant harassment and in deportation of migrant workers, overseas students, dependents, black passport holders, etc. Beside the constant support they provide for racism by keeping the Act on the statute book, the Labour Government is guilty of severities in implementation which the Tories did not sink to.

### Threat

The use of the immigration law in the cases of Franco Caprino, of Agee and Hosenball, and of the Cypriot refugees and the Rhodesian students now under threat of deportation, are peculiarly Labour government interpretations of the 1971 Act.

Not only have the Labour Govern-

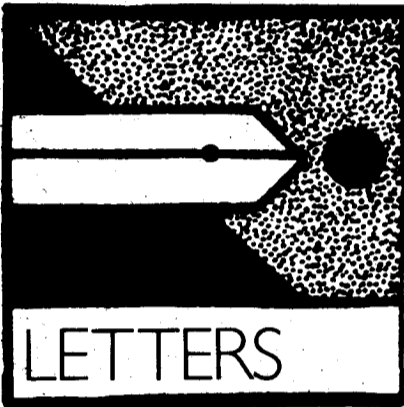
ment implemented the 1971 Act for three years, they look like doing so for some time to come. Proposals resulting from the review of citizenship and nationality law are promised. Even if these come out in a couple of months — and there is nothing to say that they will — proposals aren't legislation. The drawing up of a Bill, getting it through Parliament, and the period between enactment and enforcement, all take time. (There are exceptions, of course, such as the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974, both panic repressive measures introduced by Labour governments). As things stand, Labour is going to continue implementing the 1971 Immigration Act for another 18 months at least.

### Fight

It does not make sense to call the 1971 Act just 'Tory'. It does to call it racist. The Labour Party correctly does so, in the resolution passed at the last Party conference which also calls for labour movement support for black self-defence and for the expulsion from the labour movement of members of racist organisations.

So let us draw the conclusion. The Labour Government is as guilty as the Tories of racism over immigration. We cannot expect its coming proposals to be non-racist. We need to fight the Act now, and prepare to fight the new proposals. Labour's fight against racism needs to include a fight against its own Government.

ALAN CARTER, North London.



Dear comrades, After several attempts, Workers' Action supporters in Cardiff North LPYS finally got a full report-back from its delegates to the local Cardiff Labour and Trades Union Campaign against Racism.

This report from the 'Militant'-dominated campaign finally admitted after silent months that the delegates were not going to meet in the foreseeable future. Plans for further meetings and a delegate conference were dropped as "further campaigning against racialism in Cardiff was not needed in the present period". However, our delegate tried to assure us, whenever a mobilisation is needed, such as against the Anti-Immigration League last summer, the campaign can again step in.

The campaign has achieved little here, partly due to the fact that nothing has been attempted since a poorly attended demonstration last August. The campaign excluded the left of the labour movement (IS, IMG etc.) while the right (e.g. Plaid Cymru) were welcomed. Due to this IS withdrew, taking with them a large quota of the few trade union and Trades Council delegates the campaign had.

While it is true that in Cardiff there have been few murders, and beatings-up of blacks to get morally indignant about, this is no reason for thinking there is nothing to be done except to wait for and react to fascist and racist initiatives. Racism is no less rife in Cardiff in general, in our Labour Party and trade union branches in particular, than it is elsewhere.

Instead of waiting months to ease the embarrassment of closing the campaign, that time should have been used to get the membership of the affiliated groups active in the campaign, to build an ongoing fighting campaign in Cardiff excluding no-one. We cannot afford to rest on our laurels until our conscience is once again pricked by some atrocity or until the racists next try to spread their poison. We must fight this menace now before it is too late.

ROB MCGONIGLE  
(Cardiff N LPYS & NALGO)

## Essex: fees fight stifled

Dear comrades, At a recent Union General Meeting (24.1.77) at Essex University, we saw the Broad Left and the Tories lining up together to stifle an effective campaign on the issue of tuition fees which the DES is using to introduce cuts — reducing the number of overseas and other students by putting up fees means they can cut back on lecturers and facilities as well as campus workers.

The motion proposed by Steve Scully (Broad Left) and seconded by Roger Baker (Tory) argued that a referendum should be held on the question of direct action since not everyone attended union meetings and a ballot would be more democratic and involve more people.

It was no surprise that these arguments should have been used to sabotage a real attempt to fight the cuts and we expected the Tories to use them. But the Broad Left's support of the motion seems indicative of their general decline and an attempt to bureaucratically out-manoeuvre and isolate the rest of the left.

Obviously we want to involve all students in the union, but on an active basis of attending meetings and arguing, not just voting in a referendum.

### Drinking

Those who are involved are not going to be harnessed by those whose level of involvement is restricted to drinking in the Union bar and are not fighting for the Union and within it for their point of view. They should get involved and we want to encourage active participation in order to build a strong union. The Broad Left and the Tories who talk so much about democracy seem to want less active participation and hence less democracy — their

motion discourages participation.

The motion in effect was an attempt to change the union constitution, but since it was not presented as such it could not be deleted in accordance with union statutes. However, union president Hilary Bryan declared the motion invalid and it was deleted from the agenda.

This was followed by a spontaneous motion of no confidence in the Executive, which was supported by the Socialist Workers' Party and IMG, for the Executive's failure to carry out a mandate. Bob Findley, who is on the Exec, tacitly admitted that the Exec were wrong in not carrying out the union mandate, passed last term, for an occupation from January 31st.

### Afraid

In the first week of term the Proctor issued a statement to the effect that in the event of any further occupation, the police would be called in and action taken to discipline those involved.

The Student Union has urged all post-grad students to join ASTMS, which they are apparently entitled to do, as a means of protection.

An SWP member told me that she didn't think an occupation would succeed at this stage because of lack of support amongst students and campus workers — of the campus trade unions only ASTMS showed any support of last year's occupation. The other unions on campus are apparently afraid that action will lead to closure of the university and redundancies. But as Bob Findley says, they'll probably lose their jobs anyway because of the cuts unless there is a fight back.

PAUL CLEGHORN, Essex Univ.  
[This letter has been cut slightly for reasons of space].

# workers' ACTION

supporters' groups

BASINGSTOKE, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, CAMBRIDGE, CARDIFF, CHELMSFORD, CHESTER, COVENTRY, EDINBURGH, HUDDERSFIELD, LEICESTER, LIVERPOOL, LONDON, MANCHESTER, MIDDLESBROUGH, NEWCASTLE, NEWTOWN, NORTHAMPTON, NOTTINGHAM, READING, ROCHDALE, SHEFFIELD, STAFFORD, STOKE.

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

# WORKERS IN ACTION

## Leicester workers seize the works

At 7.30am on Monday February 14th, the 800 workers at Wildt Mellor Bromley works in Aylestone Road, Leicester, arrived for work, and proceeded to occupy the factory. The occupation, which is to be indefinite, was planned over the previous weekend. With it, the Wildts workers have entered into a struggle against the 386 redundancies announced by the Bentley Group, which owns Wildts.

Within two weeks of the red-

undancies being announced, the 800 workers have employed their strongest weapon — the seizure of £1½ million-worth of unfinished knitting machinery, some already paid for, together with buildings and equipment.

The reasons behind the redundancies announcement are now becoming clear. When the Joint Stewards Committee met Sir Monty Finniston, head of Sears Holdings (which owns the Bentley Group which owns Wildts...) he stressed that the

problem wasn't orders, but productivity.

To put it simply, Finniston (who is ex-exeman of the British Steel Corporation) thinks the Wildts workers are too well organised and too well paid.

As management sees it, the redundancies threat can either be used as a bargaining counter to force the sort of wage-cutting new bonus schemes they've put through in other plants; or they can go ahead with the job-bashing, cut the Wildts workers

down to size (in both senses), and get the work done in Bookham, Surrey, where the rates are a lot lower.

As Alf Wilson, Chairman of the AUEW Shop Stewards Committee, has said "It's not the jobs which are having to go, but the men — that is, relatively well paid, well organised and militant men."

In taking on such workers, Bentleys must have reckoned on starting a pretty savage fight. Round One of that fight shows

the Wildts workers ready to give very little quarter.

This occupation is going to need strong support in the coming weeks. Start by sending cash and messages to the Wildts Support Group, which was set up while the occupation was being planned over the weekend by wives and families of the occupation force. The address is 2 Granby Road, Aylestone, Leicester.

DAVID JEWSON

## DOCKERS' STEWARDS PLAN NATIONAL STRIKE

THE FEBRUARY 5th meeting of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee (NPSSC) had over 70 delegates, representing 22 ports. It was certainly the biggest NPSSC meeting since the downturn in docks militancy after the Jones-Aldington report in 1972, and probably one of the biggest since the NPSSC was started. It was called to plan the defence of the National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS).

If the threatened closure of Preston docks by the local Tory council goes ahead, the jobs of 450 registered dockers will be lost. The first mass sackings of registered dockers since the NDLS started in 1947 will take place. The NDLS will then be open to this attack in all ports.

The NDLS gives registered dockers a unique job security. Dockers have an equal say in hiring and firing through having 50% of the delegates on the local Dock Labour Board. No docker can be sacked against the veto of those dockers' representatives. But the system does not deal with the problem of total closure, as at Preston.

For the Tories, this closure of Preston docks is an attack both on the NDLS and on growing militancy in Preston. The financial reasons they give do not make sense even in their terms of profit and loss.

On March 5th the NPSSC will reconvene, and, after hearing reports from across the country, fix the date for a one-day national docks strike.

The defeat of the Tory move will depend on the success of the NPSSC action. For the Labour Government will not protect dockers' interests. The Dock Work Regulation Bill,

which was intended to ensure that the NDLS cover all ports and docks, and create a 5-mile corridor of "dockers' work" along the coast and up rivers, was mauled by Tories and right-wing Labourites. And the Labour Government gave up the fight. Jack Jones, who had originally demanded this Bill as his price for the Social Contract, made no protest. The national T&G docks officer opposed action at the National Docks Delegate Conference.

In the period of the great 'container boom', dock employers were willing to make big severance payments to cut down their workforces. Now they are aiming to undermine and ultimately destroy the NDLS. The Labour Government is going along with them. But dockers who have seen large areas of London dockland close, and over 50,000 dockers' jobs disappear, in the last 20 years, stand to lose everything if the NDLS is broken.

The revitalising of the NPSSC is a major threat to the bosses' strategy. But the NPSSC must go on the offensive: not just defending the jobs, but campaigning for a national wage fight and for a reduction in hours. To this end, the NPSSC should link up with the car industry stewards who have recently declared their opposition to a new round of wage curbs.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

## Grunwicks: will ACAS verdict win this strike?

OF ALL THE SUPPORT that the workers on strike at Grunwicks, North London, have received, none was more effective than the four-day blacking of Grunwicks mail by post workers last November. The Grunwick bosses immediately gave in and agreed to an ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) ballot on the strikers' demand for union recognition.

Then, however, under threat of a court injunction initiated by the National Association for Freedom (NAF), the UPW executive seized the opportunity, took management's word at face value, and removed the ban. Meanwhile the intervention of the NAF and of the Tory party in Parliament gave fresh confidence to the bosses, who, after delaying for a fortnight, announced that the strikers, being no longer 'employees', could not be included in the ballot!

The strikers asked for the mail blacking to be immediately reimposed. The Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) leadership equivocated. At a meeting held on 12th December, where no less a person than Len Murray spoke, Maurice Styles from the UPW Exec promised that an executive meeting on 15th December would consider the request for reimposition of the ban, made officially by Roy Grantham, General Secretary of the strikers' union, APEX.

At the Executive meeting the


buck was passed to UPW General Secretary Tom Jackson. He decided to delay until ACAS produced their report on the dispute.

ACAS set about its investigations, balloted the strikers, and said they'd report in January. As the time came near, they promised the report for Feb 11th. ACAS say that APEX should be recognised. But if this does not result in a win for the workers, the question of postal blacking must be faced by Jackson.

The strikers have waited patiently through the winter. If they have to fight on now, they must have full, official UPW backing.

DAN ELIRAM

**Rebel** 10p No.2  
A BULLETIN FOR YOUNG SOCIALISTS



**UNITE AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT!**

Available (10p + 6½p postage) from Basement Flat, 118 Tollington Park, London N4.

## 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 to *Events*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for the following week's issue.

FRIDAY 18 FEBRUARY. "Women & Ireland" — public meeting with speakers from TOM and Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland. 7.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall (Room 125).

FRIDAY 18 FEBRUARY. First performance of "We have the power of the winds", a new play about workers' control in Portugal by Broadside Mobile Workers' Theatre. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. For bookings contact Broadside, 58 Holbein House, Holbein Pl, London SW1 (05 6992/730 5396).

FRIDAY-SATURDAY-SUNDAY 18-19-20 February. "Portugal-Chile-Britain" conference at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

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

THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY. National Abortion Campaign procession and rally, against the Beynon Bill. Assemble 6pm at Bressenden Place, Victoria.

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference. Credentials (75p) from J Hiles, 137 Wanstead Pk Rd, Ilford, Essex.

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

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY. Joint Benefit for Rally for Women's Rights and Broadside Mobile Workers' Theatre, 8pm at Alexandra Palace, N22. Featuring Broadside's "Divide and Rule Britannia", Frankie Armstrong, Leon Rosselson, Terri Quay, Mayapi, and acrobatics, fire-eating etc by Toby. Tickets: Benefit only, £1 (OAPs, Claimants, unemployed 75p); rally & benefit, £1.30 (£1). Bus: W3. Tube: Wood Green. BR: Wood Green (Alexandra Park).

## Strikers at Haskins escalate action

LAST TUESDAY 1st February, a Judge in Chambers momentarily swapped his brandy and cigar for a pen and paper, and with a "glad to be of service" signed a court order for Managing Director Alec Wizard for the re-possession of the Haskins (Shutters) factory in Basingstoke, after a 3-week occupation by the workforce.

The writ became effective last Wednesday 2nd February, when the workers left, without a struggle, to continue picketing at the gates.

Despite this setback, the 100-plus shop floor workers remain determined to continue the strike and step up their action against the management in other ways. One threat to the strike is the possible importation of blackleg agency labour. The local District Committee of the AUEW has issued a statement on blacklegs that says:

"If the company attempts to employ blackleg labour, such as agency workers, not only the Basingstoke factory but all the Brady group will be blacked throughout the country.

"And any agency labour employed in any organised Basingstoke factory will be blacked".

Although these statements are to be welcomed, one can't help asking why, in the tenth week of the strike, the blacking of all other factories in the Brady group hasn't already been organised by the union.

The strikers themselves are escalating their action. This week they plan to send a delegation to Manchester to meet stewards from another Brady factory to find ways of increasing sanctions. An approach has already been made to dockers to black exports and imports of the Brady group, and plans are being made to black the maintenance of Haskins Shutters doors in Basingstoke shops and factories. There is also to be a meeting of the shop stewards to discuss these and other ways of putting pressure on management. One further form of action that is being seriously considered is a mass rally at the factory gates as a show of solidarity to the management and the scabs who are still working.

The local District Committee of the AUEW feel that Brady's were planning to close the factory and that "this dispute will be made the reason for it". Although this could well be true, as the lease on the buildings runs out in five years, it is vitally important that the strikers don't let the threats of closure affect their action. It certainly hasn't affected their determination so far. In the words of one striker after the eviction, "This has not finished. This is just the beginning".

It is clear that effective action against the whole Brady group is necessary to bring the strike to a successful conclusion. The strikers have accepted an offer from local Workers' Action supporters of assistance in producing a leaflet to be distributed around the other main factories of the Brady group.

Money is still a major problem for the strikers, so readers should make every effort to organise collections in their workplaces and send money to: F. Kitson, 13 Lundy Clos Popley, Basingstoke.

— ADVERTISEMENT —  
**"INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST"**  
No. 2-3: January 1977  
Articles on the new race relations act, problems of internationalism; discussion on the programme; reviews. 30p.

Out soon: 'International Communist' no.4, including 'The I-CL and Women's Liberation'; the development of capitalism in Russia; and the debate on the Workers' Government at the 4th congress of the Communist International. 25p.

All orders to G Lee, 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF. Add 15% for p&p, with a minimum of 10p and maximum of 70p. Cheques should be made payable to 'ICL'.

International-Communist League public meeting  
**"IMPERIALISM & THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST"**  
Speaker: JACK PRICE. 7.45pm, Sunday 20th February, at the 'Roebuck', 108A Tottenham Court Rd, WC1 (Tube: Warren St.)