

**Bakers
Union calls
strike for**

workers' ACTION

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17,000 BAKERY workers are set to strike next Sunday to gain equal pay for women bakers. The Executive of the 34,000-strong Bakers' Union has decided to launch a campaign for implementation of the Equal Pay Act in the bakeries by bringing out half the organised bakers for a week. The other half will come out and replace them a week next Sunday.

One year after the Equal Pay Act became law, overall average earnings for women are still only 57% of male earnings. The law says that women are entitled to equal pay for equal work. But in fact only action to make this so can translate this legal fiction into actual fact.

That is the lesson of the Trico strike. It is the reason for the plan for a bakers' strike.

Legislation for equal pay does not achieve equal pay, though it

EQUAL PAY NOW!

helps open the way for direct action to gain equal pay. The Government is finding that deals like the Equal Pay Act are not such a cheap bargain after all, because more and more women workers are taking them at their word and demanding equal wages for equal work.

There are 6,000 women bak-

ers; they earn £5.69 less than male bakers doing the same work. 10 months of negotiation have resulted in an employers' offer to put all new bakery workers on a wage of £26.28. But that would mean a cut of £2.62 in the wage of new male bakers. The Union's Executive has decided on strike action instead.

Sam Madden, the Union's General Secretary, insists that the employers must give ground and abandon their attempts to get the union to agree to a general wage reduction as the price for equal pay. The union bases its claim on the Equal Pay Act.

The fight for equal pay is a battle to raise the general level

of wages and is therefore in the direct interest of all workers. The decision of the leadership of the Bakers' Union to use the union's muscle shames and scandalises the leaders of bigger and far more powerful unions like the AUEW — who at Electrolux (see p. 4) have refused to do anything to make the Equal Pay Act a reality.

REES'S deportation orders against Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball have been followed by a wave of arrests. Last Friday night six men were taken to Muswell Hill police station in North London. Three of them, all ex-Servicemen, were intensively questioned and, they claim, beaten up by police before being released. Three others — two journalists and a former member of Army Intelligence — have been charged with offences under the Official Secrets Act.

bugged

The arrests are part of an intensive 'dirty tricks' campaign directed against supporters of Hosenball and Agee and other radical journalists. The offices of "The Leveller" magazine have been ransacked, contact books of the Agee/Hosenball defence campaign stolen and their phone bugged. Reportedly the *Guardian* was prevented on Monday from publishing a story by the imposition of a D Notice.

Meanwhile several journalists have been phoned by anonymous persons offering classified information and inviting them to receive it at private addresses.

The widespread use of

SECRETS ACT ROUND-UP REES IS ON THE RAMPAGE

by Jeff Warner

rather obvious provocations and intimidation points to panic on the part of Britain's Intelligence Services. The fact also that journalists Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, and Agee supporter John Berry have been charged under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act shows scant attention to detail.

The last journalist charged

under the Act was acquitted. Subsequently the Franks Committee was set up to review it, and recommended scrapping section 2. Merlyn Rees was a member of the Committee. Only a few weeks ago he assured MPs this section would not be used by the Labour Government, which is committed to its repeal.

Campbell was the main author of an article in "Time Out" magazine signed jointly by himself and Mark Hosenball. The article, entitled "The Eavesdroppers", exposed the vast electronic network run jointly by British Intelligence and the US National Security Agency. It also revealed that the British Army in Ireland was capable of intercepting IRA bomb detonation signals. "General Communication Headquarters Electronic Warfare experts" "can simulate the quite sophisticated control signal, making the bomb go off prematurely". But the Army would not know where the bomb was when they detonated it.



Watergate

A packed meeting on Tuesday night called by the Aubrey-Berry-Campbell defence committee organised a series of actions to win support for the three, and to link up with the Agee-Hosenball campaign. The meeting also urged the NUJ Executive to organise a day of action around the issue, and demanded that MPs who are members of the NUJ vote against the Government until the charges are dropped.

It is essential in the defence of Agee and Hos-

enball, and of Rees's latest victims, as well as for the labour movement as a whole, that these cases are turned into Britain's Watergate. Many questions remain unanswered about Rees's motives and what he thinks is at stake. The campaign must now press home the attack on covert action in Britain. In this way the fight to remove the Official Secrets Act from the statute book can be started in earnest.

At the same time the issues must be taken up in every trade union and Labour Party branch. Labour MPs must be forced to withdraw support for the government until the charges and deportation orders are dropped. And the call for a labour movement enquiry into covert action and surveillance in Britain must come from union branches everywhere

SUPPORT THE ACTIONS

MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY. Picket Tottenham Magistrates Court, Lordship Lane, N17, where Crispin Aubrey, Duncan Campbell & John Berry will be appearing. 9.30am.

MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY. Public Meeting: speakers,

Tom Litterick MP, Philip Agee, Tony Bunyon, Denis McShane. 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq.

SATURDAY 5 MARCH. Demonstration: assemble 1pm at Embankment, march to Home Office and to Century House [M16 HQ].

Will it be a West Bank Bantustan for Palestinians?

CYRUS VANCE, the USA's new Secretary of State, has returned from his "fact finding" tour of six Middle East states only to make the frank admission that "I do not think any progress has been made on this trip."

Progress, in Vance's parlance, means an agreement on the form of the PLO's representation at any forthcoming Geneva talks on the Middle East. So far, Israel and the United States are both against any direct Palestinian representation, though other plans have been mooted: for instance, that the PLO form part of the Jordanian delegation.

For renewed talks on the Middle East to take place without the Palestinians is of course farcical. Nor is the PLO's refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the state of Israel the main obstacle to them having a delegation. There have been plenty of indications that the PLO is quite prepared to recognise an Israeli state minus the territories it occupied during the 1967 war.

Oil states

While Israel remains in its pre-election period, no change is going to be forthcoming on that side. But there are no indications of a change anyway.

But it would be foolish to conclude from the present diplomatic doldrums that there is no movement.

On the contrary, things are happening rather quickly.

Egypt is being increasingly penetrated by US and other imperialist capital in addition to being considerably in hock to the oil states. At the same time Sadat's



A life in exile. Will it be 'next year in Jerusalem'?

regime is extending its influence on behalf of US imperialism to Sudan and Syria via the tripartite agreement on "joint political leadership".

Syria itself, though it still gets massive supplies of Soviet weaponry, is drawing closer to the US.

Increasingly the oil states are playing the role of the economic and political brokers of the USA, while (in the case of Saudi Arabia) also exerting some pressure on the United States by means of threats to raise the price of oil — an action which would immediately trigger off a world wide oil price rise.

With Saudi Arabia showing itself the major economic power in the area the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation is now leaning towards Riyadh's political line. Once again the incapacity of the Palestinian leadership to develop a strategy independent of the established Arab regimes is displayed.

What the lean towards Saudi Arabia means for the PLO is chiefly this: that it is being urged to opt for a West Bank mini-state with a sister-enclave in the Gaza strip, instead of its present aim of

Palestinian self determination.

The terms of such a mini-state would of course be dictated by Israel and America. It would certainly be little more than a two-part Bantustan without real political rights.

Soviet Union

Although Israeli leaders are careful always to retain a front of complete intransigence against meeting representatives of the PLO, it is now known that contacts between Israel and the PLO have been taking place at different levels for some time.

These contacts started through the medium of the Soviet Union's World Peace

Council. The PLO then established a "contacts team". By July 1975 a number of Palestinian initiatives found a response in Israel on the part of the Council for Israeli-Palestine Peace.

But things started moving in a big way when Pierre Mendés-France, a former French Prime Minister, intervened to establish contacts.

These moves led to contact being established between Palestinians and Reserve-General Professor Matiyahu Peled, who was in direct

touch with Israel's Foreign Minister Yigal Allon.

Last November Peled was asked by the chief PLO representative Issam Sartwai to convey a message to Israel's PM Yitzhak Rabin from Yassir Arafat. The message was to the effect that the PLO would agree to suspend all military operations against the state of Israel, on condition that the Israeli government dropped its veto on the presence of an independent PLO delegation at Geneva.

Mini-state

The present composition of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, excludes any such agreement. Which is, of course, why Cyrus Vance had to return from his trip empty handed. And there is much dissension within the ruling Labour bloc on such recognition of the Palestinians.

But while there is no agreement in the offing, the overwhelming wish of the PLO leadership to discuss the mini-state options means that it is only a matter of time before the necessary capitulation is made by the mainstream Palestinian leadership, allowing the US to force Israel to make concessions.

Robert Orme

PORTUGAL: SOARES CHALLENGED FROM LEFT AGAIN

Instead of being threatened on its right, the Soares government in Portugal is more and more having to look to the challenge from its left.

Workers' struggles have reached their highest level since the right wing coup of 25th November 1975.

■ 30,000 workers in the fishing industry are on strike against government measures abolishing trade union control over hiring and firing.

■ More than 300,000 civil servants are in dispute over wages.

■ 300,000 workers in the textile industry have been taking strike action round the demand for a new contract.

Thus the gradual process, under way since 25th November, of re-consolidation of ruling class control and movement towards a more right wing government to take up where the Soares government leaves off, has been checked. For example the Government, after first being very intransigent, has had to agree to negotiate with the civil service workers.

Another expression of this was the trade union congress at the end of January. It was dominated, as expected, by the Communist Party, and thus not too much credit should be given to its programme of Action — more radical than expected. It did, however, mark a decisive defeat for the Socialist Party's attempts to create a more amenable trade union grouping.

On April 30th 1975 the "Intersindical" was recognised by law as the one and only trade union federation in Portugal. The Socialist Party agitated against what was, effectively, a legal guarantee of Communist Party domination in the trade union movement.

After 25th November the Socialist Party began to make some gains in the unions. An appreciable number of unions (in Port-

ugal, unions are generally local rather than national in scope) had separated from the Intersindical. On 14th February 1976, 29 of them put out an "Open Letter" for a unified congress of Intersindical and non-Intersindical unions.

The Intersindical responded favourably, but the Open Letter was revealed as a SP manoeuvre. The negotiations broke down over a demand by the "Open Letter" unions for 'parity' in the preparation of the congress.

Thus the "Open Letter" declined, from embracing 70 unions in June to only 20 (all in the services sector) now. 67 unions not affiliated to the Intersindical attended the January congress, which set up a new trade union federation, 'CGT-Intersindical'. Many of the unions which had been mainstays of the "Open Letter" were prevented from attending only by bureaucratic skulduggery.

Meanwhile the Socialist Party leadership has come into conflict with the trade unionists inside its own party. And at the Socialist Party congress late in January the leadership was not able to push through the offensive it has started by expelling several trade union militants.

True, the expulsions were confirmed; and Lopes Cardoso, reputed leader of the Socialist Party Left, refused to campaign against them. But the new party statutes adopted maintained, despite right wing opposition, the right of tendencies to exist within the Socialist Party and to express their views publicly.

The possibility of a radical new workers' upsurge in Portugal thus exists. But the problem of leadership for the workers' struggles is very far from being solved. And unless that problem is solved, a right wing comeback is, sooner or later, inevitable.

ARGENTINA: OLD DICTATOR IS 'HORRIFIED' BY THE 'CARNAGE'

ON March 24th the Argentine military dictatorship of General Jorge Videla will complete one year since it took power.

In that year around 2,000 leftists, militants, or simply unlucky victims have been killed by the regime's terror squads. There are more than 25,000 political prisoners; one or two of them have got out to describe the tortures — beatings, electric shock treatment and sexual assault — common in the concentration camps.

An additional feature of the regime's policy is a vicious anti-semitic campaign against Argentina's 500,000-strong Jewish population. Several Synagogues have been bombed.



Prices have gone up by 350% in a year while money wages have increased only 150%. All the militant left organisations have been banned; strikes are prohibited; all collective contracts in force last March 24th were suspended; the press is ferociously censored; and 30 trade unions are under direct military control.

The regime has not succeeded

in solving the economic chaos which led, in 1973, to the downfall of an 18-year old military regime and then, in 1976, to the collapse of the Peronist government which replaced it. Nor — despite the repression — has it managed to crush the working class definitively.

On 17th February the electricity workers' unions resumed a strike movement over hours and conditions. A government decree of 1st February had increased their working week from 35 hours to 45 and abolished certain gains on sick leave, holidays etc.

After a first round of strike action, the electricity workers made a settlement accepting the new working hours in some sectors and not in others. When soon afterwards, however, an army snatch-squad seized union leader Oscar Smith, the workers went back on strike.

This action demands a high degree of heroism. The last major strikes since the military coup — in the car industry, in September — were put down by army repression, with troops sent in to every factory. The technique the electricity workers have used is a go-

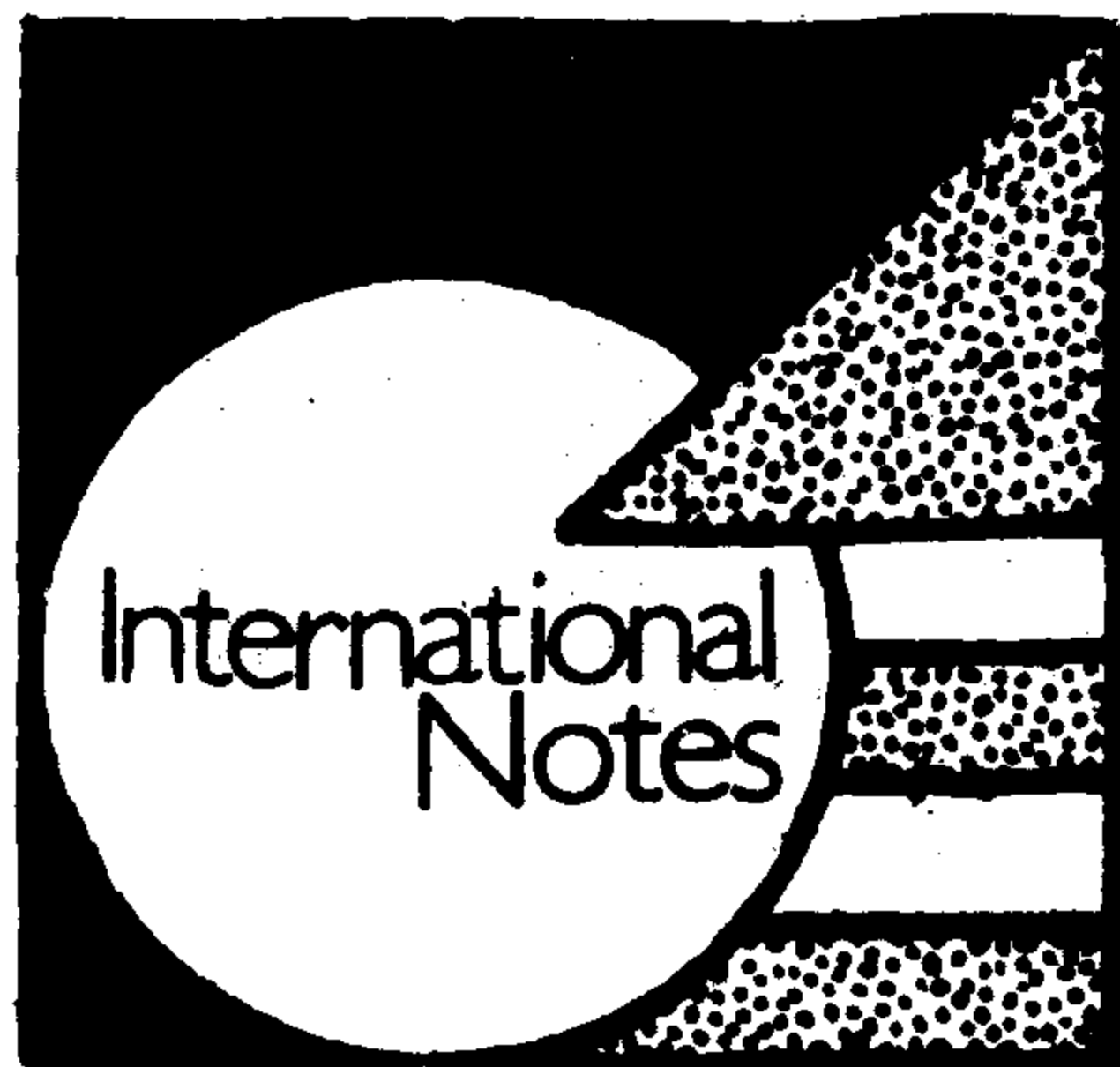
slow strike. They turn up at the workplace, but do no work until the troops arrive. Then they start work — but very slowly!

IF the electricity workers can keep up their action, then there is the possibility of it spreading throughout the public sector. Part of Peronist policy was a big expansion of the public sector, and consequently the public sector workers are suffering especially harsh attacks under the Videla regime.



The Argentine ruling class's confidence in the military dictatorship shows signs of cracking. General Lanusse — military ruler of Argentina before 1973 — has declared that he is "horrified" by the "carnage". The next few months could be crucial in deciding whether the regime falls or goes forward to a blitzkrieg on the model of Chile which will attempt to smash the working class decisively.

P. Adams





WORKING CLASS CAN UNIFY FOR INFLATION PROOFED WAGES



THE protests against another round of the Social Contract have gained more support among better paid, higher skilled sections of the working class.

The explosive storm of protest from miners, car workers, airport engineers and train drivers has been joined by the angry voices of dockers, boilermakers and engineering technical and supervisory workers.

Meanwhile to the government's immense relief — and no doubt with its connivance — leaders of unions representing poorer paid, less skilled workers are insisting on the fairy tale that a return to free collective bargaining would only victimise the lower paid.

Last week Alan Fisher of NUPE (who likes to pass himself off as a militant), Tom Jackson of the Post Office workers, David Basnett of the GMWU and Lord Allen of the shopworkers' union USDAW conjured up the vision of the wicked witch of wage rises versus the shining knight of wage control. This week the recitation is continued by Reg Bottini of the farmworkers' union and Roy Grantham of APEX, the clerks' union.

Grantham's attack on the Leyland toolroom workers as "putting their interests before everybody else's" is an ominous sign of how these union bureaucrats are gearing up to split the trade union movement and use the poorest paid sections to ram through another round of the Social Contract.

But the division is not simply between high paid workers and lower paid workers. The division is between those unions and sections of industry where the workers are self-assertive and militant and those where the rank and file has not yet found its voice, so that official leaders can appear

to be speaking for them.

For in the case of the protests against the Social Contract it is the authentic voice of the rank and file that we are hearing: the car workers on the shop floor, the miners at their area conferences, the engineers through resolutions to the AUEW's forthcoming policy-making conference, the boilermakers at district level and the dockers at the ports.

In the case of the voices in support of the present policy being continued (with some slight modifications no doubt) beyond July, not one of these voices comes from the rank and file. This is the voice — again the authentic voice — of the bureaucracy.

Fisher cannot quote the dozens of districts crying out for another dose of falling living standards. Jackson can't be photographed carrying a postbag full of Social Contract fan-mail.

The poorer paid workers in these unions are being told that they will be the victims of the better paid, more skilled workers' wage struggles. The task of socialists is to advance a policy capable not only of giving leadership to the stronger sections of the working class but also of uniting the poorer paid with them.

The Fishers, the Basnetts, and Granthams

of the trade union movement must be prevented from driving in a wedge between the higher-paid workers and the lower-paid. They will use the Leyland toolroom strike and its demands to try to do just that — to justify the betrayal of accepting a further period of the Social Contract. Militants throughout industry must give unreserved support to the toolroom strike, because victory there can break open the wages log-jam. If we do that the divisive demagoguery of Fisher and Basnett will begin to lose the power to justify a new deal with the Government. Victory for the higher paid toolroom workers, now, will make more difficult a bloc of higher and lower-paid unions for a new social contract wage limit round.

WORKERS ACTION has for a long time now been advocating straight wage increases, to be secured against inflation by rising automatically with the cost of living. To calculate just what the working class's living costs are and how they change, committees of trade unionists should be set up to monitor the movement of prices.

Workers in many lower paid unions will remember the benefits of the threshold agreements that NUPE, in fact, pioneered. The rising scale of wages that we advocate would operate like that but without a threshold, so that workers could get full compensation for the loss in the buying power of their wages.

Such a policy is capable, if taken up by militant trade unionists, of unifying the struggle of the stronger and weaker sections of the working class in a way that a single pay demand — like the "£10 now" demand of the Socialist Workers' Party — cannot and which the struggle for differentials rejects from the outset.

Since they embarked on an occupation on 9th February against the proposed rises in overseas students' fees, students at the London School of Economics have refused to budge, despite the willingness of the Broad Left to 'negotiate'.

The occupation of the Admin. centre has paralysed the School and is costing it £1,000 a day.

A PLAN OF ACTION FROM MIDDLESEX POLY

THE SIT-INS AT L.S.E. and other colleges could be the beginning of a large-scale and protracted struggle over discrimination against overseas students.

On Saturday 12th February, 200 student delegates met at Middlesex Polytechnic (on the initiative of the Overseas Students Society), and adopted this Plan of Action:—

"The NUS Polytechnic Sector conference and, the NUS Overseas Students Conference both issued a call upon NUS to launch a national campaign of direct action, particularly occupations.

"We feel that it is vital to take action at a national level. Therefore we call upon colleges to fight for the following plan of action:

□ Student Unions to demand that college authorities make their position clear over fees and the quota system by 18th February. Details

The fees increases of 200-300% are a clearly racist attack by the Government as part of its plans to trim higher education. But the possibility of this strategy of

should be sent to NUS by that date.
□ To step up action in the colleges from 19th February around the issues facing overseas students.

□ To initiate direct action, focusing on occupations of indefinite length, as soon as possible after the national deadline (i.e. week commencing Feb. 21st).

□ That these occupations be centred round the demands:

■ Reject the proposed fees increase
■ For a reduction of all fees to the level paid by home students in 1976-77 as the first step towards the abolition of all fees.

■ No discrimination in education — end the quota system.

■ Fight all education cuts. Public spending to rise to keep pace with inflation as a step towards the real expansion of public services".

This Plan of Action must be taken up in every college.

ALAN CARTER

divide and rule succeeding is fading as colleges and universities (12 so far, including Middlesex and Thames Polytechnics) go into occupation all over the country.

LSE Director Ralf Dahrendorf, well known liberal educationist and renowned as a diplomat, has come out of the occupation as a hardened enemy. He started out promising "adamant opposition" to the fee increases, but his only real action has been against the occupation. On February 18th he got injunctions served on four students, and on Tuesday 22nd a Possession Order was issued by the High Court against the occupation, while 200-300 demonstrated outside the Court.

37% of LSE students are from overseas, and these are organised by the Overseas Students Action Committee, who stand for the right of all students to study (including and especially self-financing students). They are demanding that the injunctions be

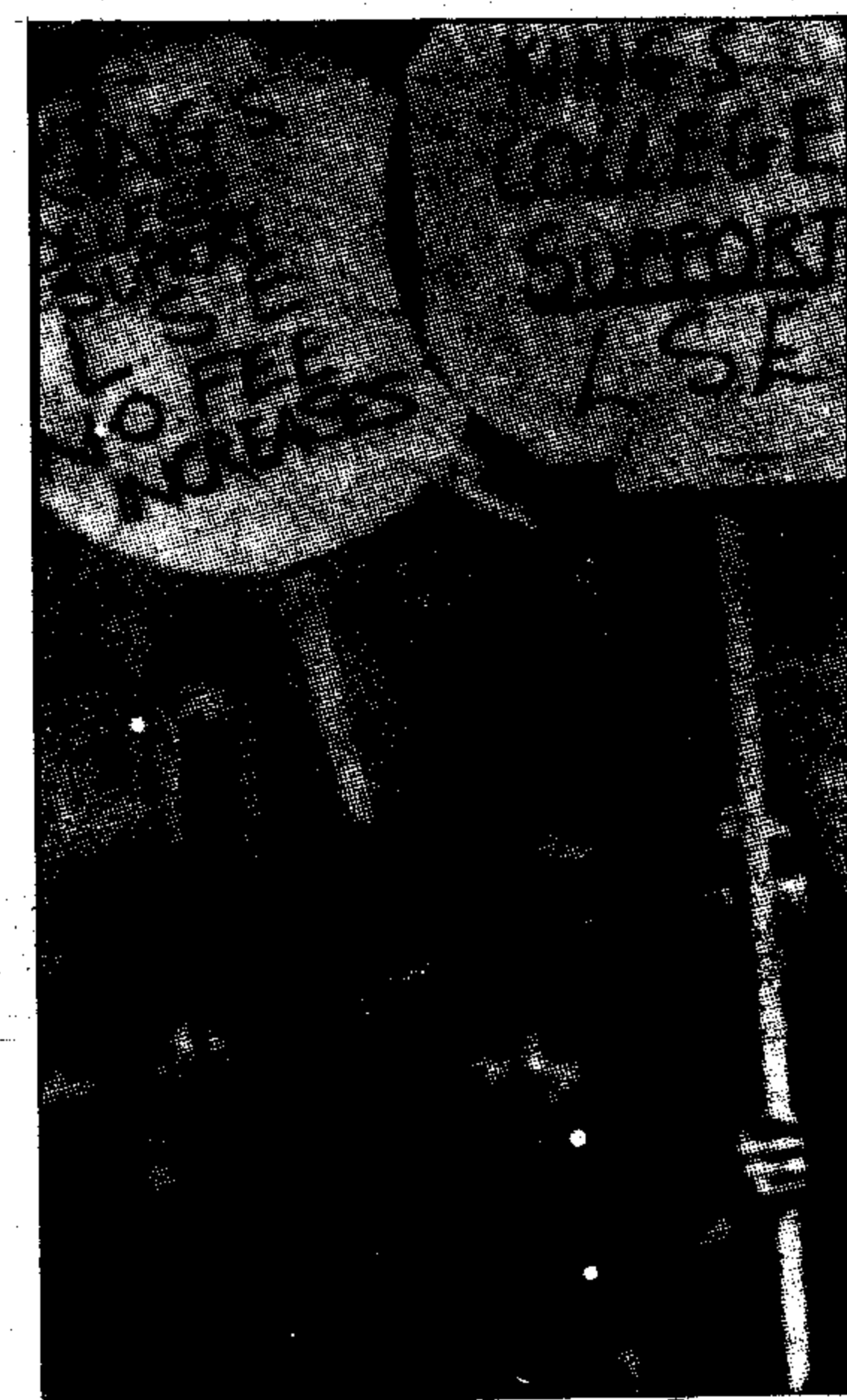
lifted, and intend to continue the occupation until a satisfactory settlement is reached.

It is imperative that students in all colleges keep these occupations firm until they have won substantial concrete gains, and not see them merely as a protest action. The occupied colleges should centralise their campaigns. A conference should be called very urgently to decide on the next steps forward.

MICK WOODS

COUNTRY	HOME STUDENTS	FOREIGN STUDENTS
UK	£182	£416
Eire	£150	£225
Canada	£350	£350
Netherlands	£90	£90
France	£15	£15
Germany	Free	Free
Scandinavia	Free	Free
Luxembourg	Free	Free
Australia	Free	Free

This Table shows how a few other countries treat home and foreign students. In fact the UK differential is far more than it looks, as students' fees are mostly paid by Local Authority grants. The figures are for last year — next year's involve rises in overseas students' fees to £650 for undergraduates, and £750 for post graduates.



Last Tuesday's High Court picket

IRISH PRISONERS: REES TRIES THE BIG LIE

A month ago the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg ruled that 200 cases of mistreatment of Irish prisoners by Britain could be examined. It had already found against Britain on a number of cases going back to 1971, finding that the use of five specified techniques of interrogation, and other incidents, were in breach of the European Human Rights Convention, which Britain has signed.

As the Court sets about examining these further cases, the Irish Government is now also pressing for a ruling that the notorious Civil Authorities [Special Powers] Act [Northern Ireland] 1922 — generally known as the Special Powers Act — should be declared in breach of the European Human Rights Convention. [This Act prohibits, among other things, the possession of "subversive" gramophone records!]

The Court will also be asked to decide whether Britain should be ordered to introduce legislation to protect Irish prisoners in British jails; whether Britain should be ordered to prosecute prison officers using techniques of interrogation prohibited by the Convention; and whether Catholics were discriminated against by means of internment.

All this grand Euro-litigation promises to stand the Irish coalition government in good stead as defensive armour against opposition Fianna Fáil.

But the whole manoeuvre misfired on the Government last week in the most embarrassing manner, when the country's leading and highly respectable paper the Irish Times published revelations about the treatment of prisoners inside the jails of the 26 County 'Irish Republic'. The report accused a "heavy gang" of the Garda Síochána of systematic beatings of people suspected of IRA membership.

It would appear that this excess of zeal on the part of the Dublin Gardai has been caused by difficulties in getting court convictions for offences outlined in the latest draconian legislation that Dublin has equipped itself with. It seems that whereas in the Dail the coalition can happily legislate for itself a full panoply of police-state 'Emergency' powers, the judiciary is not quite in step with this hasty slide into extreme repression. Hence, according to a report in the Sunday Times, "the police suffered a series of technical knock-outs in the courts."

This, surely, is enough to make any self-respecting policeman reach for his truncheon.

However, the embarrassment of the Dublin Government didn't do much to help Britain, where the Government seems to be adopting a two-pronged tactic. While the Northern Ireland Office keeps a dignified silence about Strasbourg, the Home Office has launched a bold counter-attack, accusing Irish prisoners in Britain's jails of ... victimising their warders! Rees must have been reading up Hitler and Stalin, whose method was: 'if you tell a lie, make it a big one'.

Meanwhile it is reported by usually well informed sources in the North that the Peace Movement is in trouble with its accounts. These currently disclose a sum of £32,000 in the form of "expenses". Naturally this raises the question of whether the sum was incurred in the Movement leaders' globe-trotting ventures. If this is not the case, then somebody somewhere is making a fair bit of money out of "peace".

AT a time when the social contract and the inhibiting shadow of unemployment have the class struggle at a low ebb, the outstanding battles have been those of women workers. They have undertaken tough, long-running strikes, maintained all-night picketing, stood up to Industrial Tribunals and sluggish or hostile union officials.

Whether it is on equal pay, on cuts or simply on the day-to-day fights over safety, conditions and wages, working women are demonstrating, arguing, picketing as never before. And they are doing it here and there, in isolated pockets, and lacking their own movement in which to organise.

Proved

The women's movement that does exist is not suitable for such a purpose. It is predominantly concerned with individual experience and consciousness and places the unity of women as such — of all classes — above class struggle.

Yet the struggle of the working class is the only force that can bring about a fundamental change in society which would allow for the full liberation of women. And it has proved to be the

Women's unemployment higher than the figures

How many women are unemployed? The official figure is 392,335, but many aren't on the register. Many voluntarily leave work, then when they wish to get back they can't. The Woman's Own poll found that nearly three quarters of women who are looking for work are not on the register. That would put the total unemployed at 1,569,340 — more than the total of both sexes in the official figures. And that's if the WO readership is typical. The actual numbers are probably higher: the Counter Information Service reckons the total is nearer 2 million.

Stuck at home

Reckon it up another way. about 87% of working age women work at some time in their lives. That is, about 14 million women. Yet at the peak of women's employment there are no more than 9 million with a job at any one time. Which leaves, at any given time, at least 5 million women workers stuck at home [some voluntarily, others reluctantly] minding children or elderly relatives for lack of socially provided facilities, or just shopping and cleaning for lack of a job.

And then there are two million other women who never get to work at all — from varying degrees of choice.

Of those with jobs at any time about one third are part-timers, taking whatever jobs they can get to fit in with school and nursery hours and suffering very low pay, no security and a worse deal on fringe benefits than fellow workers.

BUILD A MASS WORKING CLASS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

by Rachel Lever

only force that can even win the reforms promised and enacted by parliament.

Nevertheless the main trade union movement is still too often part of the problem facing women, and not part of the solution except where women organise to make it so. It is ill-adapted for an all-out fight for working women's specific needs, and will oppose their struggles where they threaten any bureaucratic or male vested interests.

Lessons

Both the women's movement and the trade union movement have proved incapable of harnessing, organising, leading or even coordinating the working class women who have come into struggle.

So at present each separate struggle is spontaneous and isolated, and has painfully to make its own mistakes and learn the lessons as it goes along. A mass movement of working women would at the very least take the struggle forward by providing increased support, confidence and a generalised experience.

But it isn't just a matter of a rank and file 'network' for servicing struggles.

The struggle of working class women must span both economic exploitation and the social oppression which is older than capitalism but which capitalism has co-opted and adapted to its own uses. It raises many questions that get ignored for decades by the class struggle as a whole.

Response

A movement of working women, built in the midst of sharp struggles over cuts, equal pay etc and focussing on the interrelation of women's social oppression and their super-exploitation, could set out from a higher level than the general labour movement and find a ready response among working women, many of them newly drawn into collective struggle of any sort.

Such a movement, as well as raising the consciousness of working women and helping to draw new sections into struggle around advanced demands, could aim also to invigorate and lead the entire existing labour movement.

A mass working class based women's movement would not substitute itself for any part of the existing labour movement. It would be an addition to it, potentially a very dynamic and



valuable addition. It would, indeed, probably mean that women organised by such a movement would begin to play a more active and leading part in the trade union movement, to the benefit of working women and the working class as a whole.

On any level, then, a mass movement of working women would be a big advance for the working class, a major addition to its bedrock fighting organisations. Needless to say, as with every other organisation of the class, a clear socialist programme would make it immeasurably more effective and important.

But to come back to present reality, no such movement exists. If it is indeed necessary and desirable, how can it be built?

Enlist

It will not be built out of the existing Women's Sections of the Unions and Labour Party. They are safe backwaters, bureaucratically controlled pressure lobbies at best, which have steered very clear of rank and file women's struggles. Socialists can fight to enlist their involvement on the side of such struggles. But a real live women's movement needs to be autonomous, self-controlling and answerable to the women militants in

its ranks, rather than to Congress House.

Could the Working Women's Charter provide a springboard for the creation of such a movement?

Low pay

Its programme of demands, though incomplete and needing some amendment, does indeed concentrate on the areas of pressing relevance to working women: low pay, financial and legal discrimination, social facilities for child care and health, and a woman's right to control her own body and not "breed to order".

The Charter Campaign has, too, been eager to contact and assist women in struggles — both over equal pay as at Trico and in ongoing battles over nurseries and the cuts. And it is sponsored and supported (even if only, in many cases, formally), by substantial sections of the labour movement — including unions such as NUPE which organise large numbers of working women.

In the time between the Women's Rights Rally and the Charter Campaign Conference in May, Charter activists should be discussing such a perspective and relating it to their local experience.

BASEMENT

WOMEN'S RIGHTS WATCHDOG FAST ASLEEP

Tory MP William Benyon is worried about the declining 'Nordic' population, and thinks British women are not breeding fast enough. So he's collected together a few ways to force women who have accidentally become pregnant to go through with their pregnancy.

These ways of enforcing a complete pregnancy are contained in his Abortion [Amendment] Bill. This, like

James White's Bill before it, is threatening to bring suffering, misery and humiliation to thousands of women and set back the struggle for women's right to control our own bodies and lives.

If the Benyon Bill gets through Parliament it will mean an abortion is much harder for working class women to obtain. [The rich have always had the option of the discreet, high-class

private clinic.] More women will go through the trauma and disruption of an unwanted pregnancy; more women will return to the terror of the backstreet abortionist.

Benyon says his Bill will be just to stop "abuses" and "racketeering". In fact Benyon [a member of SPUC] is just plain against abortion. He'd prefer to take the 1967 Abortion Act apart completely. But the SPUC lobby know that Labour MPs can be got to vote in droves for a clamp-down on abortion facilities, just as long as it's under the cover of an attack on "racketeering" rather than openly an attack ON WOMEN.

What does Benyon's Bill say?

★ Abortions will only be allowed up to 20 weeks instead of the present 28 weeks

★ Two doctors authorising an abortion must not be connected with each other, and one must have been registered for five years.

★ Anyone at all could anonymously bring charges against a clinic or doctor.

★ Referral agencies and clinics would be separated — meaning the end for agencies like PAS.

★ Police would be able to look at patients' clinic records, and patients' GPs must be notified.

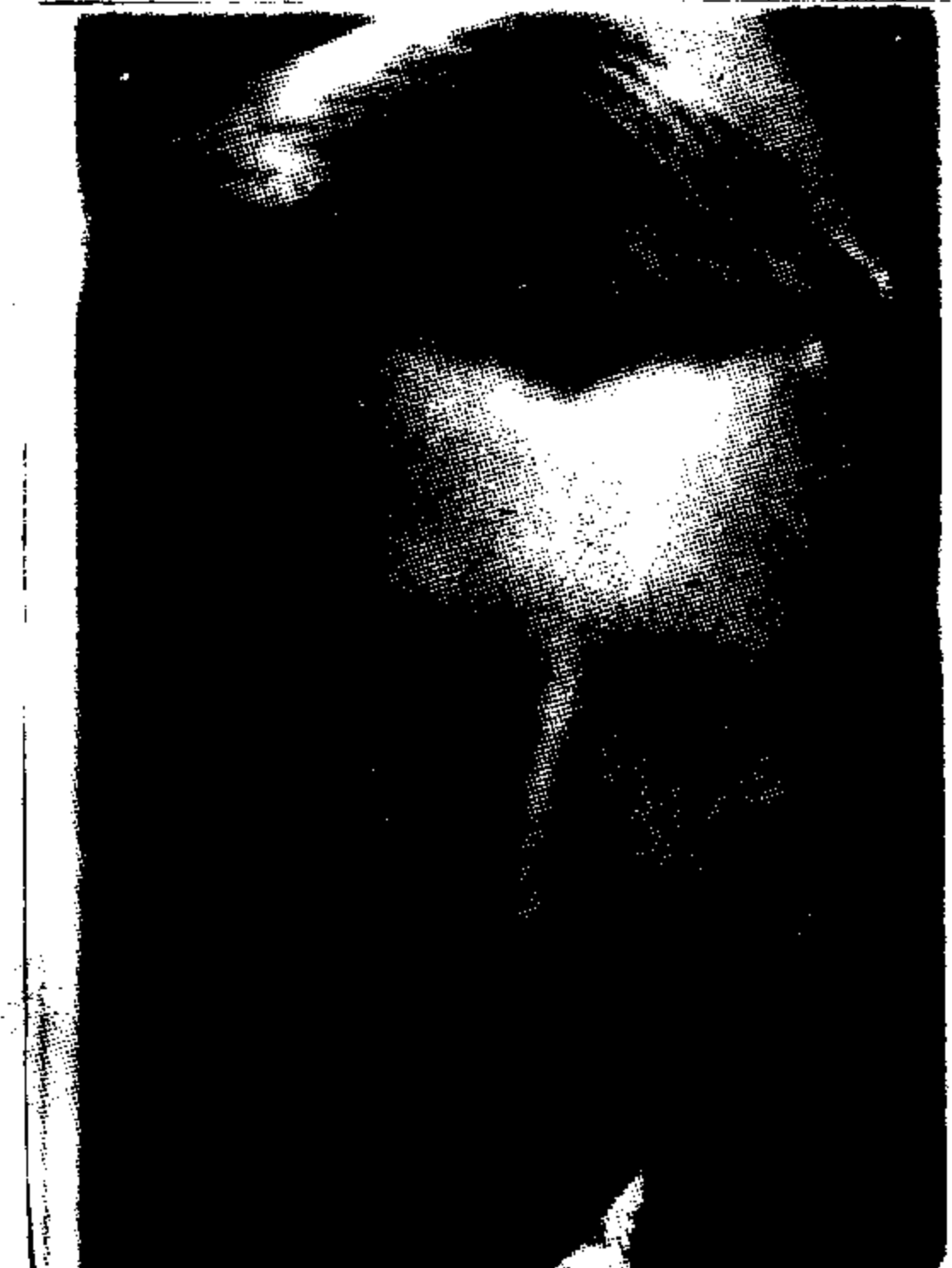
★ Pregnancy testing and abortion advice bureaux and clinics would have to be licensed and some would have to raise their prices.

★ It would be even easier for a doctor to plead conscientious objection to performing abortions; thus in whole areas [as at present at Cardiff] the NHS capacity could be virtually wiped out by a group of organised anti-abortion consultants.

The most alarming proposal is to reduce the existing time limit allowed for an abortion by two months to a mere 20 weeks, save for exceptional cases of severe foetal abnormality [when it is extended to 24 weeks] or danger to the life of the woman [in which case there is no time limit].

In addition, the Secretary of State would only have to present an Order to Parliament for the time limit to be further reduced.

This Bill would virtually



William Benyon

wipe out the confidentiality that now exists, extending police snooping powers into an area where privacy is especially crucial. And the police would have greater powers to prosecute a clinic or remove its licence in borderline cases.

The Bill would particularly hit the charitable sector, which now carries out over half of all abortions.

The crucial role of the charities is due entirely to the fact that the NHS is in such a mess. The Labour Government's cuts in social spending are running down the existing abortion facilities: for example, the threatened Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital in North London no longer does the 300 abortions a year it used to, and plans to open day care facilities there have been scrapped.

In many areas consultants just refuse to do abortions. It is these people who are "abusing" the 1967 Act.

William Benyon may have what moral, religious or other objections to abortion he likes — but he has no right to impose his views on the rest of us, returning women to the backstreet abortionist and surrounding what should be a simple, no-fuss procedure with a great wall of state repression.

A National Opinion Poll in 1976 found that 55% of those asked support abortion at a woman's request. The 1975 Labour and TUC Conferences supported abortion on request, free on the NHS. The 1976 Labour Women's Conference said the Labour Party must take up a campaign on abortion as a class issue.

Labour MPs who are now allowed to vote as they want in Parliament, according to their "conscience" on this "moral issue" must be pulled into line by the Party membership.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS WATCHDOG FAST ASLEEP

■ Ms. Bush got £3,000 a year as a training administrator but got £200 less than a man in the same job who only worked 3 days a week. The Tribunal, however, would not award Ms. Bush equal pay on the basis that the man had previously worked on the public schools appointments board and had 'very good contacts round the schools.'

The proud boast that the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act were the final blow in the struggle for women's rights has now worn so thin that even the Home Secretary Merlyn Rees has had to tell the Equal Opportunities Commission that he wants more action.

Over a year after the SDA came into law and after the EOC was established with a £1.2 million annual budget, there has been little sign of life from it.

□ In the last year it has started only one formal investigation — into the allocation of grammar school places in Tameside.

□ It has made no direct intervention in employment practices despite its statutory powers to enforce the new legislation.

□ It has underspent both its research and advertising budgets.

□ Most significantly it has refused at all times to pass comment on the decisions being handed down by the Industrial Tribunals [such as the one quoted above].

Compare this record of activity with the zealous way other Acts get enforced. There was no such pussyfooting when they brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act! We'll all know about it the next day if they enact a Criminal Trespass law. And they don't keep the Pay Code under wraps or underspend the budget for racist immigration officers or Social Security snoopers.

Clearly, discrimination against women is not as high on capitalism's priorities as repression and the machinery for dividing the working class.

After all, women are the chief pool of disposable labour which can be got to go down the road first.

The EOC itself, lead by Betty Lockwood [fresh from 20 years' service in the Labour Party machine] and Sir Geoffrey Howe's lady wife, is a mish-mash of Tory ladies, TUC nominees, CBI representatives and people drawn from the Civil Service Department "Public Appointments Central List". It contains no-one from the NCCL or any women's organisations, or anyone who has fought for women's rights. In fact the whole set-up seems isolated in a pleasant backwater far from the picket lines or the equal pay disputes and the class struggle in general.

Within the Commission, a TUC/CBI bloc dominates, along the lines of the Union equivocation in the Trico strike and the AUEW's negligence at Electrolux.

Militant struggles of rank and file women are anathema to the bureaucrats who are policing the social contract and standing by while thousands of men and women join the dole queue.

Its critics in the bourgeois press are relying on the EOC doing "better next year". Working class women cannot put any reliance on that, though an upsurge of militant struggles may drag some action out of it. In these circumstances its ability to act as a safety valve for militancy will be tested.

People serious about fighting for women's rights must begin to build a movement whose solidarity and aggressiveness leave the EOC far behind, and running to catch up.

MICK WOODS



EQUAL PAY SICK JOKE AT ELECTROLUX

THE Equal Pay Tribunals have allowed the most amazing muddle at the Electrolux factory in Luton. Over 200 women at the factory have now filed individual claims with management of the Tribunal for equal pay. (Groups of workers are not allowed to take their claims together to the tribunal. Each must claim as an individual.)

18 months ago the AUEW District Organiser negotiated a regrading deal for the 600 women workers, which — anticipating the final Equal Pay date — abolished the two separate hourly pay scales of "women" and "men" and brought in two new grades, 01 and 10.

Grade 10 was better paid, and it so happened that it covered all the factory's 1300 men. All the women were graded 01. The deal did bring the lowest paid women a £12 pay rise; but that still left them at the highest of the old women's rates, and still lower than the men.

Anne Hutchinson, one of the four women shop stewards among 60 men, thought a woman getting the same piece-work rates and assembling the same refrigerator components as the man sitting beside her should get the same wages as him. His ordinary rate was £12 more than hers, plus he got a separate night shift premium.

Anne Hutchinson and six other women, despite opposition from the AUEW and from the Works Convenor, took their case to the Industrial tribunal, which ruled in their favour.

One month later, with a barrister to represent them, management defeated the next claim from a woman worker. She had no union backing and

no legal aid, and had to argue her own case. Management then appealed to the Employment Appeals Tribunal against the decision on Anne Hutchinson.

Electrolux lost their appeal — which in any other legal proceeding would have set a precedent for all the other cases. But in equal pay and equal opportunity proceedings precedents don't count. And what counted for much more was that the AUEW still would not support its women members. Backward, anti-women sentiments in the local union were so strong that some of the men at Electrolux went around saying the successful women who got equal pay should work nights.

It took the intervention of the Equal Opportunities Commission (set up by the Government to enforce the sex discrimination law) to get equal pay for the women who had won their cases (seven of them at that time). And the company responded to this by moving these women to new jobs, and paying the women who replaced them the old Grade 01 rate. The women had won equal pay for themselves, but the job remained unequal.

Electrolux have made a mockery of the Equal Pay Act. What does it mean, if the tribunal rules a woman in a factory doing a particular job should get equal pay with the man who does the same job with her — but the firm can go on underpaying all the other women the same old stingy rate?

Paper equality must be a sick joke for the women at Electrolux. It's time they got the management laughing the other side of their faces.

"THE EQUALITY REPORT"
by Jean Coussins for the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) looks at how the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 worked in the first ten months of 1976.

By delaying final enforcement of the Equal Pay Act to 1975, the Government had already given the bosses five years in which to work out every possible way to dodge round it — above all, re-grading and sackings.

Between 1973 and 1975 female unemployment went up by 255,000, but this figure leaves out all those married women who do not bother to sign on because they aren't entitled to unemployment benefit. A typical case of re-grading was at Bergers, where 70 women were called "light paint-can fillers", putting them on a lower grade than the men who were called "heavy paint-can fillers" — even though they did the same work! For once, these women won equal pay under the Act.

The fact that most women work in low-paid jobs, with half of women workers in service sectors such as hairdressing, shops, and nursing, leaves many of them not covered by the Equal Pay Act because there is no man doing the same work for a woman to compare herself to.

The Act lays down equal pay for the "same or broadly similar work" as a man, or for a job to be rated as of equivalent value to a man's job under a job evaluation scheme.

Scared

Most equal pay cases that are taken up are referred to a tribunal, but if the case involves a wages agreement that discriminates against women the case can be taken to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) by a trade union or the Secretary of state. Most bosses are allowed to get round this by grouping workers by job category—supervisory/skilled/unskilled, or by a letter or number — grades A1, A2, A3, etc. Workers in the lowest grade could all be women, and those in the highest, men. Jean Coussins suggests the Act be amended to allow any pay structure which discriminates in this way to be referred to the CAC. Then the question of low pay for women as well as equal pay could be taken up. The New Earnings Survey showed that 73.4% of working women earn less than 80p an hour, compared with 24.6% of men.

From January to August 1976 there had been 2,053 applications for equal pay registered with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). But this figure is far higher than those cases actually heard by tribunals, which number 546. Sometimes there is a private settlement. But many women will face victimisation and harassment at work and

get scared to go through with a claim, and some women have told the NCCL they were "bullied" into withdrawing their case by an ACAS official who did not really understand the law himself.

The figures for successful equal pay cases — of those heard up to 17th November 1976 — was 74 (or 28% of cases heard) and those lost totalled 187 (or 72% of cases heard).

Claim

The NCCL outlines the main problem areas under the law as

- burden of proof (the woman has to prove she is doing 'like work');
- the definition of 'like work';
- the definition of 'material difference';
- the status of a job evaluation scheme.

A woman semi-skilled Paint Sprayer lost her case

which goes out to the customer, is therefore of a different nature from that of the applicant'.

Workers really have to watch out for job evaluation schemes — if a bad one is allowed through, women workers won't have a leg to stand on in front of a tribunal and would find it much more complicated to tackle such a scheme as well as claiming equal pay. In the case of Magnavox in Barking the equal pay claim was dismissed because a job evaluation scheme had gone through.

There is nothing wrong with amending the EPA, as the NCCL concludes it should be. But they seem to forget why the whole machinery of the tribunal system was set up by the Government — that is, to channel off women's growing militancy. It should be spelt out that where women are unionised and org-

their job altogether they never get as far as the tribunal. And if women do get there, how many, not in a union and without the money to pay for a lawyer, will have the confidence to represent themselves?

Indirect

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) applies to those areas of employment not covered by the EPA — that is, everything other than aspect covered by a contract of employment such as wages, holidays, bonus rates. The SDA applies also to education, goods, services and facilities. There have been far fewer cases under the SDA than the EPA. Of 55 cases heard at tribunals up to 17th November 1976, ten only were successful and 45 were lost. Even more so than with the EPA, the woman has a very difficult job proving



for equal pay with a male skilled sprayer because the man could do 'stove enamelling' as well. In what is a totally contradictory reading of the Act in another case, a woman press operator was awarded equal pay with her male counterpart even though the employer claimed it was a practical difference that 'once and sometimes twice a week a lorry would arrive at the factory with aluminium extrusions and these were nearly always unloaded by the men'.

A really hair-splitting case of a so-called 'material difference' was where women who put cellophane wrappers on boxes of Black Magic chocolates claiming equal pay with men who wrapped Kit Kats had their equal pay claim dismissed by the tribunal on the grounds the men's 'responsibility to their employers with regard to the product,

anised they should refuse to go to the tribunal because the tribunal system is not neutral, they should stick together and from that position of strength demand equal pay. Only when a woman is isolated or not in a union should she take her case to the tribunal. The 400 women workers at Trico who were on strike for 21 weeks boycotted the tribunal quite rightly, which then ruled against them. To have taken their case to the tribunal would have had a demoralising effect on the strikers, and possibly meant the collapse of the strike, when in fact they went on to win their claim.

Procedure

It is impossible to tell how many women are so put off by the complicated procedure under the EPA or scared of victimisation at work or losing

she has been discriminated against because of her sex.

One woman, a qualified heavy goods vehicle driver, proved that she had been discriminated against. When she telephoned the number in an advertisement she was told no more vacancies existed and was not even given an application form to fill in. But the tribunal decided her application was made as a matter of principle and awarded her 'nominal damages' of only £25. The real uselessness of the SDA is it can't get her the job.

The SDA also deals with 'indirect' discrimination. Such a case would be that of Linda Price, a 35-year old woman who was ineligible to apply for an Executive Officer grade in the Civil Service because of an age limit of 28. Statistics show that there is a dramatic dec-

by
Linda Collins

rease in women working between the ages of 24-29 when they take a break to bring up children. So, far fewer women than men will be able to apply for the job. The tribunal was not sympathetic.

Jean Coussins argues for positive discrimination, which is allowed under the SDA. For instance, a firm could advertise especially for women engineers where there had been none in the past. It's about time the trade unions did something about sex discrimination within their own ranks as well. In two equal pay cases, trade union officials from ASTMS and the Domestic Appliance and General Metal Workers Union gave evidence for the bosses against their own members. And while the ratio of men to women trade unionists is about three to one, there are 32 men full-time officials for every woman.

Slaves

There has been only two complaints concerning education, housing, goods, facilities and services. These go to the County Courts and their procedure is even more off-putting than the tribunals — it is expensive and time-consuming and proceedings are very intimidating.

The SDA leaves out many areas still — pensions; retiring age; equalisation of rights of Nationality so a British woman living abroad can pass on her nationality to her child; eligibility of women to claim unemployment and sickness benefit for an unemployed husband and children.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign makes it clear that the SDA and EPA will never bring women real equality. So long as society treats women as domestic slaves women will never be freed from the burdens of child-care and housework to take an equal and active part alongside men outside the home, nor will women escape the sexual division of labour which confines women to a secondary role in everything and to the unskilled, low-paid, part-time dead-end jobs.

The "Equality Report" is worth reading, while bearing in mind the limitations of any legislation.

ANTHONY Crosland, who died last Saturday, was a middle-rank capitalist politician. He was also, perhaps, the representative British social-reformist thinker of the last three decades.

Crosland was unusual in the British labour movement because he gauged and defined theoretically where others of the same political stripe lived by political rule of thumb and prejudice. The British labour movement has been accurately described as a 'bookless' movement — that is, a movement which has never reached the level of having precisely codified ideas. Crosland, however, believed in 'books'.

In "The Future of Socialism", published in 1956, he attempted to underpin the practice of the Labour Party by arguing that ownership of the means of production was unimportant.

The Labour Party began in 1900 as a non-socialist 'lobby' in Parliament for the trade union interest. In 1918, responding to the radical mood after the Russian Revolution and the competition of other working-class currents — especially the socialists who were soon to form the Communist Party — the Labour Party defined as its objective the nationalisation of the means of production.

In fact the Labour Party in power began in 1924 by non-

THE MAN WHO TRIED TO SQUARE LABOUR'S ACCOUNT BOOKS



descriptly administering capitalism; went on in 1929-31 to apply a self-destructive policy of ministering to a very sick capitalism at working class expense; and then after 1945 enlarged the welfare state, but simultaneously carried through state-capitalist reforms by nationalising floundering industries under direct capitalist control.

Sentimental socialists, and the bedrock labour movement itself, praised the 'socialist' nationalisations — but they were at a loss to explain either the Tory party return to government or why the working class gained nothing from the nationalisations.

Many socialists 'rebelled'. The Bevanite movement of the early 1950s was, in its grass-roots support, an expression of working class discontent. But at its political 'top' it was waterlogged with worship of the Parliamentary system as a means — and very befuddled as to what should be the ends of a socialist labour movement.

Crosland's alternative to Bevanism was this. The whole issue of ownership of the means of production had been falsely elevated so as to appear a fundamental question, a goal in itself. It wasn't. Socialism was a matter of objectives such as equality, opportunity, happiness. Ownership and control of the means of production was not central. Anyway ownership and control were separate in the companies of monopoly capitalism.

The modern state was so powerful and overweening that it could at will manipulate and control the economy so that it served socialist objectives. Post-war Keynesian economic management had made problems like slumps and mass unemployment questions of history, not of current politics. Permanent prosperity was assured. Therefore it was no longer an objective of socialism to nationalise the economy. Parliamentary power was at the disposal of whoever had won the last election or would win the next one, and it controlled the British political system and the economy.

In Crosland's squaring of Labour's political account books, there is little that is original. But, with a booming world capitalist economy and the horrible example of Stalinism, which could be ascribed to over-statisation, it was all quite plausible.

He made no new departure in seeing the state as neutral, capable of being turned to any social policy. That was the common coin of native British socialism from the Fabians of the 1880s onwards.

Indeed, in the 1950s, 'gradualist socialism' had an ambivalent new recruit — the Communist Party of Great Britain, which declared in 1951 that the British Fabians had been right against the Marxists on that question, and a peaceful socialist transformation

direct action of the working class as an essential force in achieving socialism — that was a closed book to Crosland.

Crosland, it seems, sincerely believed what he said, and believed that it was 'socialist' policy. Socialism meant improving the 'quality of life', through Parliamentary and Government action.

For that reason Crosland opposed the last round of social service cuts when they were discussed in the Cabinet. But, being both a British socialist and a British politician, Anthony Crosland just voiced his opinion and then reconciled himself to the 'inevitable'. Nothing 'extreme', like a resignation.

The 'Left' did not do much, either. They too acquiesce as a Labour Government savagely diminishes the 'quality of life' of the working class.

Crosland appeared different because he 'theorised'. But when it came to the decision he trimmed. In the end, he was a typical British reformist 'socialist'.

FRANK HIGGINS

A STATEMENT FROM BOOKSHOP THAT FASCIST VANDALS ATTACKED

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop in Ealing was vandalised between Saturday and Sunday 19-20 February 1977, by individuals with racist sentiments. Obscene racist signs were smeared on the glass windows and doors — Niggers Out — KKK — Enoch — and White Power. A leaflet dropped through the door contained a whole range of racist abuse and was signed by the National Party. They left their phone number — 486 3697. A member of the Bogle-L'Ouverture management discovered the act of vandalism at about 1.30pm on Sunday 20th February 1977. The Bookshop was closed on Saturday 19th February at 6.15pm.

We called the local police who have taken statements, we hope, with a view to prosecuting the offenders.

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop is one of the few Bookshops in the country where the Black community can find literature and writings from Africa, Afro-America, Asia and the Caribbean.

STRANGE SIGHTS AND DULL SOUNDS AT LPYS EASTERN REGION

In a bold demonstration that must have stirred the insurgents of Soweto or Zimbabwe, the LPYS Eastern Region Conference stood in two minutes' silence for ... Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland.

That wasn't the first strange sight at the Conference, however.

The Regional Report ticked off a number of branches for not organising campaigns — conveniently forgetting that the Militant dominated Regional Youth Committee hadn't initiated the slightest activity in the year.

The report was attacked by a 'Clause 4' speaker who pointed out Militant's lack of activity — ignoring his own support for the report at the youth committee!

A Left Action supporter made the point that the loss of 5 branches in the area was due to the dominance of Militant's passive, schoolmasterly propaganda in the YS.

The conference, smaller than last year's, accepted the report. But Left Action's point was demonstrated by the deadly dullness of the following debates, with Militant's 'bold socialist programme' and Tribune's 'alternative economic strategy' locked in a Tweedledum vs. Tweedledee battle where both sides maintained a gentlemanly agreement to ignore the fact that the Social Contract even exists — let alone saying how to fight it.

Total unanimity was reached on one point however: opposition to witchhunts ... except that Clause 4 members in the region have been starting them and had a motion at conference calling for action against "anti-democratic groups infiltrating the Labour Party" ... and that the Militant speaker was so anxious to take up the fight for labour movement democracy that he replied to Clause 4 "if you put the mockers on us, comrades,

we'll put the mockers on you for sure".

The real low point of the conference, though, came at the end, with a debate on Ireland where Militant and Clause 4 vied with each other to denounce the Republican movement as "terrorists" and "mad bombers", only disagreeing on whether to support the Peace Movement critically or uncritically and on whether a "trade union defence force" could "do the job the Army can't, beat the sectarian murderers".

Only one dissident voice was raised against this orgy of chauvinism by a supporter of Left Action who explained the need for unconditional support for the Republican forces in their struggle for Irish national liberation.

Hopefully next year's conference will see many more such dissident voices.

NIK BARSTOW

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.

WORKERS' ACTION

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

WORKERS IN ACTION

TOOLMAKERS GO FOR PARITY CLAIM

ON MONDAY 21st February a national toolmakers strike began in British Leyland. On the face of it their demand seemed a strange one to cause such a huge result: they wanted to negotiate in a different way. In fact they want to negotiate as toolmakers at the level of the whole company, rather than take part in and be bound by negotiations and agreements worked out at present in each plant.

Now this is an idea that man-

agement themselves support, i.e. 'corporate' as opposed to plant bargaining. But what lies behind the toolroom strike is currently terrifying the bosses and the government — the toolmakers want their wages structure altered to give parity with the highest-paid toolmakers in the company, for example those at Rover Solihull. This would mean rises of over £10 for many of them. The strike is aimed at winning the right to negotiate these rises, and, of course, any such rises would breach this or any subsequent social contract wage-limits. Hence the importance of this dispute.

Traditionally the toolmakers

in British car factories have been a strongly organised section of workers. They have repeatedly used their strength for wage rises over the years, and they are the only section of car workers to have a really functioning official national leadership, the toolmakers' committee.

After five years of going along with wage controls or inadequate rises negotiated for them in each plant, they have quite understandably turned to this body and to the idea of going it alone as toolmakers in order to defend their living standards. Fundamentally this is not arrogance or sectoralism on their

part, as many other workers are saying, but a simple reaction to the complete inability of the senior stewards, convenors, and full-timers involved in plants like Longbridge to lead a fight over wages. The toolmakers' tactics might have been better, but it is not they who are to be blamed for their separatism. In fact, they have to be supported, because they are fighting for a better wage and against the social contract.

Already before the strike has begun, members of the toolmakers committee were saying on the TV and in the Press that they did not want to destroy the Social Contract "if it could be

avoided", that the differentials problem should be tackled as part of phase 3, not now, and one of them even said that they might call the strike off if Scanlon would promise to open talks with the management and the Government about their problems. Also, toolmakers at the top end of the differentials scale, as at Solihull, have already decided not to take part in the strike, and in one case sacked the leading steward who favoured it.

The committee as such, then, seems to lack both a coherent line and full authority in the toolrooms, but the militancy of the strikers and their determination to stick it out as long as necessary are undeniable.

Militants must give full support to the toolroom strike, and argue for:

- Breaking the Social Contract wage limits now. Other sections of Leyland workers should strike in sympathy with the toolroom, and for wage increases for themselves: a flat-rate increase to include full compensation for the past year's inflation, and a rising scale of wages for the future.

- The LCDTU conference on February 26th to give full support to the toolroom strike, if still continuing, and to the rising scale demand.

- No reliance on vague promises of concessions under round 3 of the wage limits.

Dick Bradley

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.

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY. 'World Revolution' public forum: "Convulsions of Chinese Capital". 2.30pm, Club Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY. Nottingham Workers' Action readers' meeting: "Socialists and Nationalism". 8pm at 'The Peacock', Mansfield Rd.

TUESDAY 1 MARCH. LSE Critique Society seminar: Austen Morgan speaking on "The Marxism of James Connolly". 7.30pm, room S421, St Clements Building, LSE, Houghton St, Aldwych.

THURSDAY 3 MARCH. "Women and capital accumulation". Second in a series of 6 Revolutionary Communist Group forums on women's oppression under capitalism. Admission 20p. 7.30pm, 'The Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Road.

THURSDAY 3 MARCH. Cambridge Workers' Action meeting, "Struggle in Southern Africa". 8pm at the Chetwynd Room, Kings College.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 5-6 MARCH. Second Socialist Teachers' Alliance conference. Creche, pooled fare. Details from 01-986 0570.

SATURDAY 5 MARCH. Scottish anti-Apartheid demonstration. Assemble 10.30am at Blythwood Sq, Glasgow.

SUNDAY 6 MARCH. ANTI-APARTHEID DEMONSTRATION
 End military collaboration with South Africa!
 Halt British investment in apartheid!
 Support the African liberation struggle!
 Assemble 1.30pm at Speakers' Corner.

TUESDAY 8 MARCH. International Women's Day: a symposium on "Why Are Women Oppressed?" The speakers will be Irene Brennan, lecturer in Women's Studies, Hermione Harris, anthropologist, and Evelyn Reed, American feminist anthropologist and author. 7pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.

SUNDAY 12 MARCH (postponed from 5th March). Campaign against the Criminal Trespass Law day conference for Wales. 11am to 5pm, Miners Hall, Merthyr Tydfil. Details c/o AUEW-TASS, 18 St Anne's Close, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan.

SUNDAY 13 MARCH. Workshop on "What is a socialist feminist practice?" No.1: 'Is unemployment an area of feminist struggle?' Caxton House, St Johns Way, N19. More details: 13 Malford Rd, London SE5.

SATURDAY 19 MARCH. "Liberation" National Conference against Racism. 9.30am to 4.30pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, London. Delegates' credentials (£1) from Liberation, 313-315 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

Out now: "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST" No. 4, including the debate on the Workers' Government at the 4th Congress of the Communist International (first time in English for 50 years); 'The I-CI and women's liberation'; and the development of capitalism in Russia. 30p plus 6½p postage from G.Lee, 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF.

"WOMEN'S LIBERATION & WORKERS' REVOLUTION": a new pamphlet from the International Communist League. Just out. 20p plus 6½p postage from G.Lee, 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF.

WILDTS MANAGEMENT THREATEN INJUNCTION AGAINST OCCUPATION

WILDTS management in Leicester are threatening to take out an injunction against the workers occupying the factory in defence of their jobs. Once again, the bosses are going to go running to the courts of their class to throw workers out of an occupation.

The workers at Wildts, 800 altogether, are very well organised. The occupation works on a rota, and the workers have been going round getting support from the local labour movement. The Trades Council have donated £500, Leicester University Students' Union have given £500, and the women's support group is organising collections.

Leicester South Labour Party and the AUEW district committee are supporting the sit-in.

But the resistance from the workers will need to be very tough to hold out against the courts. Bridget Paton, district secretary of the union involved, the AUEW, has, unfortunately, said that the workers will have to get out in face of an injunction. That would be giving up when they've only just started.

Bridget Paton has also said the workers were forced to occupy, and that they hope to get away with not too many redundancies, hopefully volunteers. The point is that the bosses presented the workers with a fait accompli — 400 redundancies, mainly machinists.

Some of the workers may be feeling that they wouldn't

mind volunteering for redundancy or early retirement, but management have presented their own list of redundancy victims. And if workers do come forward to accept voluntary redundancy, in the long run they are cutting their own throats by allowing the number of jobs to go down, and hence the rate of unemployment to rise even more.

Management's thinking is concentrated on defeating the workers — they have employed Securicon in the other factories in the group, supposedly "to prevent occupation by outside agitators". The workers in occupation need to be as determined as the bosses, and to say clearly that they are opposed to all redundancies.

LINDA COLLINS

ESSEX WORKERS TO STRIKE AGAINST THE CUTS

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS in Essex are calling for a one-day strike and mass picket of County Hall against the cuts on March 1st, the date the Council meet to make their decision on what cuts are to take place.

Chelmsford bus workers may join the strike, protesting against County Council cuts and cuts and fare increases by Eastern National.

Overall, Essex County Council are attempting to take away 2,180 jobs, over half by redundancies, and the rest by 'natural wastage'.

In further education, for example, planned cuts include a 13% reduction of part-time hours. Fifty non-teaching jobs are to go by natural wastage. Fees for courses are to go up drastically. Ancillary workers are to be put on reduced hours or sacked.

Some union bureaucrats are arguing that the March 1st picket should call for rate increases to get the money to maintain the public services. The logic behind this is the same as the logic behind the Social Contract, i.e. the working class should pay, one way or another, for the crisis of profitability being 'suffered' by the capitalist class.

Against this, a rank-and-file anti-cuts committee is insisting that there be no cuts, that the working class should not pay for the crisis.

It is vital that after March 1st the committee continues and goes beyond the merely defensive "No Cuts" stance. The committee should call on trade unionists to fight for the following:

- Cancellation of interest payments to the City of London. Interest payments account for the bulk of County Council spending and we are therefore losing our services so that the parasites in the City can receive their unearned income.

- Opening of the local authority books so that an elected workers' committee can see exactly where the money goes.

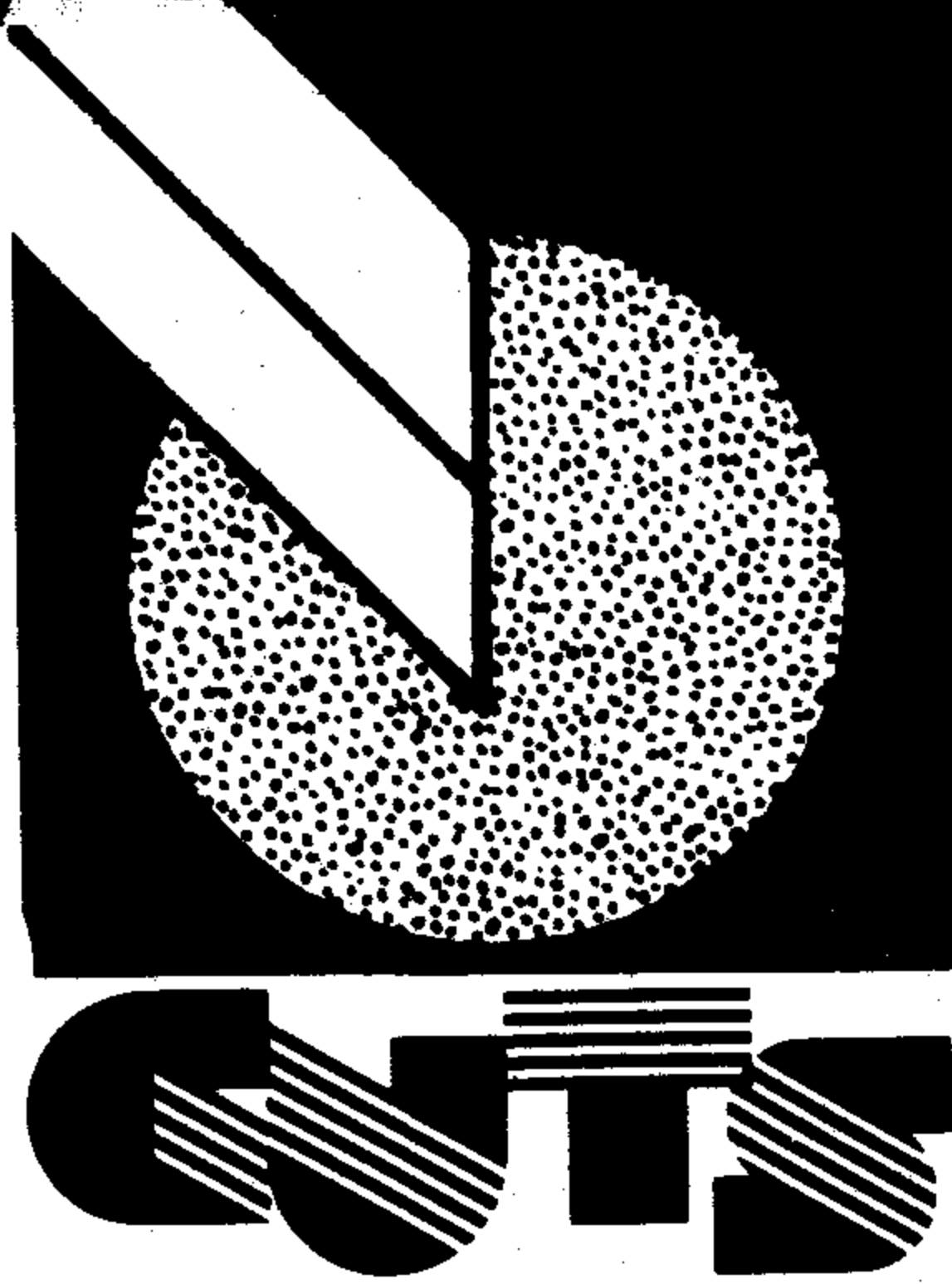
- An automatic rise in social expenditure every time there is a rise in the cost of living. In a period of inflation, it is not sufficient to demand 'no cuts'. In order just to maintain present levels, social expenditure must rise as inflation increases.

ROGER WELCH

300 on anti-cuts demo in Swansea

A demonstration in Swansea against the cuts attracted 300 people last Saturday, 19th February. The demonstration, called by the area cuts committee, was formally supported by the South Wales NUM and other local trade unions, but only health workers unions mobilised, with NUPE and NALGO prominent. Swansea NAC and Right to Work Committee also had large contingents on the march.

The demonstration was followed by a meeting with a speaker from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. A Workers' Action supporter spoke, raising lessons from the



recent Cardiff Royal Infirmary dispute on the dangers of arbitration and the need for direct action. The meeting went on to pass a resolution supporting:

- the day of action in Cardiff called by NUPE;
- British Leyland stewards' fight against the social contract;
- the bakers' equal pay strike;
- ASTMS anti-cuts action in Birmingham;
- the Swansea to Cardiff Right to Work march;
- local initiatives of the Youth Campaign against Unemployment;
- and all trade union action against the cuts.

Jeff Williams

NAF TRY TO STOP GRUNWICK PICKETS

The extreme right wing 'National Association for Freedom' is once again using the courts to attack the workers on strike for union recognition at Grunwicks Film Processing, North London.

The strikers have been picketing chemists' shops to try to stop film being sent for processing by blackleg labour at Grunwicks. NAF are trying to get a court injunction saying that this is illegal.

Meanwhile the Grunwicks bosses still have not conceded to the strikers' demand, now backed up by a recommendation from ACAS, the government arbitration service. The Union of Post Office Workers, which earlier blacked Grunwicks mail in solidarity with the strikers but then called off the action in face of NAF-backed court proceedings, still has not decided on reimposition of the backing.

The Grunwick strikers have had verbal backing from the whole official labour movement. It's a time they had some more support in action. A.C.

■ ■ ■
 The strike at Haskins (Shutters) in Basingstoke ended last Thursday, 17th February.

The dispute began on January 12th, after 55 workers were locked out because of conflict over interpretation of a bonus agreement. The settlement provides for the dropping of the bonus agreement 'as and when Government policy allows'.

Most of the strikers consider the settlement a victory, but a number reckon that the promises given are not enough.

Next week's Workers' Action will include a full analysis of the settlement.