

A MEETING of the 400 women at Laird Portch textile factory at East Kilbride voted last Friday, 13th May, to stay out until their demand for equal pay is met. The women, who are skilled workers, are being paid £10 less than unskilled men at the factory.

The Equal Pay Act offers them no help. The fact that they are skilled and the men unskilled means that their case does not qualify: the work is not 'broadly similar'.

As the strike goes into its fourth week, it is becoming increasingly clear that management are going all out to prevent this struggle winning, lest it provide an incentive to other textile workers to demand equal pay.

Last week the management offered their terms for a return to work.

They said that if the women went back they would negotiate at a national level — something they said they would do even before the strike began.

Even this paltry offer was toned down when the management said they would do nothing until Phase 2 of the Social Contract runs out on July 31st.

According to strike committee convenor Ellen Nicklin, this is not only derisory but shows that management are not treating this as a strike for equal pay.

They are talking of a wage increase for all workers in the factory at the end of Phase 2. But the women want an increase as well as equal pay with the men.

Support has come from the men in the factory. Two other Laird Portch factories, at Lawsons Rd, Kilmarnock, and Weston Road, Kilmarnock, are out in support.

Financial support has come from the local Sunbeam factory and from Ladybirds at Coatbridge. Five warehouse workers in Alloa, who are paid by the East Kilbride plant, have also walked out.

But reaction from the women's union, the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers, has been disgraceful.

Glasgow officials have declared that there is no way the strike will be made official. Before these bureaucrats will give any support, the women must go

**17 MONTHS  
AFTER EQUAL  
PAY ACT**

# WE STILL HAVE TO STRIKE FOR EQUAL PAY

## AND UNION OFFICIALS ARE STILL SELLING US OUT

back to work, hold a ballot and gain a two-thirds majority in favour of strike action. In other words, they will only give support if the strike is called off.

This strike is a test case, not only for women textile workers but for all women fighting for equal pay. The bosses have realised this and it is vital the labour movement realises it as well.

To avoid demoralisation, the strike cannot be allowed to drag on as long as the marathon Trico strike last year. The most urgent need now is solidarity action. All work normally done by the factories on strike must be blacked.

Laird Portch is part of the Jaeger firm, which in turn is owned by Coates Paton. The firm includes Posolds, B. Byford, Herbert L. Driver, J.P. Coates, Jaeger Holdings, Laird Portch Fashions, and Dal-

keith Knitwear.

Workers in these factories must not touch work normally done at the factories on strike.

Plans are also under way to picket the retail outlets, Jaeger shops and Country Casuals.

The strikers are getting NO STRIKE PAY, and they need financial support. Send donations c/o Ellen Nicklin, 153 Leeward Circle, Westwood, East Kilbride. Or contact the strike by phone c/o Johnny Miller, 041-221-3426.

GORDON  
BREWER

# workers' ACTION

No.57 May 19th to 26th 1977 10p

Colquhoun  
says 'I'll take  
Labour activists  
to court'

"...as a believer and supporter of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy; a member of the Tribune Group of Labour MPs and a socialist, I have always believed that you must get on with your Labour Party activists. That those Members of Parliament who came to grief with their constituency parties had something intrinsically wrong with them, and really had no choice but to go. That the job was not a lifetime sinecure, and that those who advocated reselection at every General Election had a point of view which was proper."

Thus Maureen Colquhoun, Member for Northampton North, whose continued tenure of the seat is being questioned in her CLP. Yet [writing to The Guardian on Thursday May 12th], with many dark hints about "infiltration", "a bent rule book", "a handful of people manipulating a constituency", she ends up threatening to "take that handful of people to the High Court and be heard properly with a bit of British justice on my side", "when I know what the charges are against me."

Maureen Colquhoun knows perfectly well what the charges are against her. The moves to get rid of her began immediately after she chose to throw the weight of her "30 years in the Party" and her Tribune credentials behind the racist ravings of Enoch Powell.

The fact that she prefaced her endorsement of Powell with the well-worn 'I'm not a racist, but...' seems to her to be cast-iron proof of innocence, and therefore of the malice of

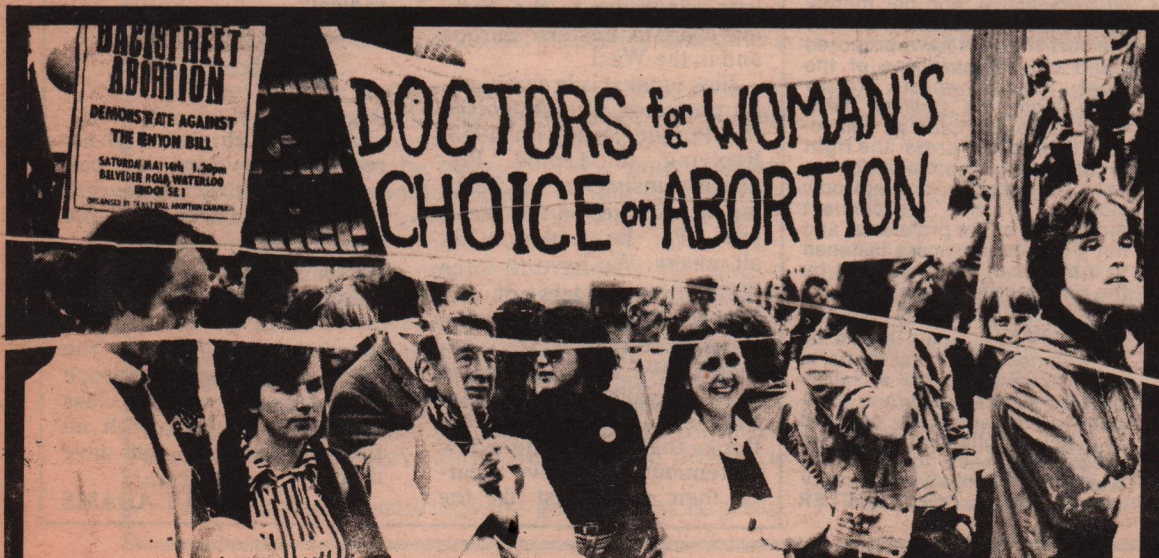
her opponents. But to the members of her CLP her very protestations, combined with a refusal to retract or concede that she may be wrong, add up to one simple conclusion [increasingly more in anger than in sorrow] — "Maureen will have to go."

Whatever the grounds for local rumblings against her before this affair, and some of them were either dubious ["a bad constituency MP"] or disgracefully reactionary [and we at Workers' Action condemned them at the time] they have been quite eclipsed by the Powell business, and now by her threats of bourgeois Court action against a Labour movement body.

Apart from dark hints at "shabbiness" and malpractice [none of which she is able to substantiate, and all of it bearing more relation to the gutter press's fictional and witchhunting view of Labour Party life than to the real thing], Maureen Colquhoun gives no reason for changing her long-held views about reselection and the accountability of MPs to their local party. But throughout her long letter there is an unmistakable hint of self-pity as she complains about an "MP's career" being "destroyed".

Is it not simply that the boot is now on the other foot?

If Ms. Colquhoun were not extremely confused and utterly self-deceiving she would recognise in herself the "intrinsically wrong" MP who is ripe for replacement. And if she's too overwrought to listen to her



Doctors on the 10,000-strong demonstration called by the National Abortion Campaign last Saturday to oppose restrictive legislation. The demonstration was joined by political groups, trade unionists and contingents from the women's movement and Working Women's Charter Campaign.

Cont'd. on  
back page

# Repression steps up as Belgrade Conference draws nearer

A CONFERENCE next month in Belgrade is scheduled to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki agreements of 1975. At Helsinki, the major capitalist countries, the USSR, and the East European states promised:

"To respect the rights of man and all fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thinking, conscience, religion, and conviction... to favour and encourage the actual exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and other rights and liberties which all derive from the inherent dignity of the human being and which are an essential condition of its free and integral development".

This declaration has been

used by dissidents in the USSR and Poland, and particularly by "Charter 77" in Czechoslovakia, to call their governments to account.

Yet the Helsinki declaration remains as hypocritical on all sides as it was in 1975.

In Rumania the police are persecuting the movement of solidarity with Charter 77 led by the writer Paul Goma.

## Charges

The Czech authorities have arrested more leading supporters of Charter 77, including Venek Silhan, Milan Hübl and Petr Uhl. Uhl is the author of a number of recently published open letters in which he describes the present repressions in

Czechoslovakia, defends other oppositionists against the charges of "Zionism" and "Trotskyism", and affirms courageously that he, Uhl, is a Trotskyist.

Another leading figure of Charter 77, Professor Jan Patočka, died of a cerebral haemorrhage on March 13th, a few days after being held for questioning by the political police. House arrests were made at that time, it seems, to prevent important oppositional figures from attending the funeral of Professor Patočka.

The Czech authorities have tried to spread the idea that Charter 77 is anti-socialist. In the words of Vasil Bilak, the old-line Stalinist who provided the Soviet Union with its "invitation" to in-



Vaclav Havel, Czech playwright and Charter 77 leader

vade in 1968, Charter 77 is "a shameful, anti-state, anti-socialist, anti-people pamphlet". Its supporters are attacked as "Zionists" (meaning, generally, simply Jews), "reactionaries", "Trotskyists", "sexual deviants", "CIA agents", and so on. But one of the most common accusations is that they are intellectuals who do not care about the working class, indeed who despise them.

Charter 77's latest publication shows how untrue this charge is. The document, according to the French newspaper *Le Monde*, "drew attention to the abuses in economic and social life... It denounced the discrimination against women, and noted widespread discontent on the part of wage-earners in the workplaces".

Charter 77 is not a proletarian movement or a proletarian programme. It simply calls on the bureaucracy to implement its own democratic promises. But it is the working class which stands to gain, and the bureaucracy which stands to lose, from the democratic reforms which Charter 77 advocates.

## Force

While the "reformists" within the East European opposition movements bank on appeals to the Western Communist Parties or, worse, to the leaders of the "Western democracies", others are moving towards a more radical and more realistic orientation to the working class in Eastern Europe and in the West.

Ilios Ianakakis is a university professor who supported the Prague Spring in 1968. Replying to Leonid Plyushch's insistence on keeping up pressure on the Western CPs, he added: "By all means. We have to force them [the leaders of the French CP] to do something more than make statements. We have to turn to the Socialist Party [of France] as well. The SP thinks that by making a few statements they have cleared their name, just like the

CP...

"We have to get rid of this feeling that Billancourt [a large and well-known car factory near Paris] is a lost cause, if we want to avoid another Munich for all the opposition forces in Eastern Europe. Belgrade should not be left a matter for governments alone, but be taken up by the left as a fundamental question".



Petr Uhl

Any faith in Carter, Callaghan, Schmidt, or Fukuda as fighters for democracy would be ridiculous. Within a week of announcing their concern for civil liberties in Eastern Europe, at the Downing Street summit, Carter and Schmidt had both concluded accords with the Shah of Iran, Schmidt had signed an agreement with police-state Brazil, and Carter had given a warm welcome to President Assad of Syria, the butcher of the Palestinian people and of the Lebanese democrats and radicals.

## Deals

As Plyushch stated in his reply, "One thing we can be sure of is that the governments will make deals at the oppositionists' expense. Carter's stance is strictly a diplomatic manoeuvre".

The task of fighting for democratic rights in the USSR and Eastern Europe rests with the working class of those countries, with all the support we can give them.

PAUL ADAMS

# EAGER EYES ON THE 'SPANISH MODEL'

THE most likely formula for the Spanish government after the elections of 15th June is something like the model currently being tried out in Italy. The main party of the capitalists will hold power while the main party of the workers — the Communist Party — supports them in the name of 'democracy'.

The experience is also being watched closely in France. A satisfactory report from Spain and Italy would ease the way for a Left government in France, with CP participation and with Giscard d'Estaing continuing as president.

In Spain and France in the 1930s, the CP supported Popular Front governments which diverted the class struggle from a revolutionary outcome. In Italy and France at the end of World War 2, the CPs participated in governments of 'national reconstruction'. Now a "third round" of coalition or de facto coalition governments of class collaboration is being prepared.

Opinion poll figures from Spain (if they can be trusted) show a large percentage undecided how to vote. But the indications are of a majority for the 'Democratic Centre', followed by the Socialist Party (PSOE), whom they might bring into the government; with the right wing Popular Alliance third and then the Communist Party.

International capital is demonstrating its confidence in these prospects by stopping, or even reversing, the flight of capital which affected Spain during last year's stormy strike waves.

Yet the "third round" of class-collaboration governments may not be as successful as extinguisher of revolution as the first two. Already hundreds of thousands of workers are bitterly aware that it is a scandalously rigged capitalist democracy which is being constructed.

They continue to fight, like the trade unionist who explained his defiance of the Suarez government's ban on May Day demonstrations: "We always tried to celebrate May Day even under Francoism. We can-

not stop now because the government tells us we have democracy".

200,000 workers came out on general strike in the Basque country on 12th May, demanding the release of the 40 or so remaining Basque political prisoners. (About 60 political prisoners from other parts of Spain are also being held.)

The organisations to the left of the Communist Party are still illegal. Press censorship forbids attacks on the monarchy, the unity of Spain, and the "unity and honour of the armed



Spanish CP leader Carillo

forces". Parliamentary constituencies are so arranged that it rakes 3 or 4 times as many votes to elect a Deputy in the urban areas than in the more right wing rural areas.

The fact that Prime Minister Suarez, who is and will continue to be appointed by the King, is using his position to campaign for one party — the Democratic Centre — is in itself a flouting of formal democracy.

What of the revolutionaries in this situation? The Workers'

Socialist League, in Britain, has advanced the ridiculous notion that Spain is still fascist (as if murderous police attacks can't possibly take place in a capitalist democracy!). They condemn the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League — Spanish sister-group of the IMG) for applying for legalisation.

But all the revolutionary organisations in Spain have, quite rightly, applied for legalisation. As it is still denied them, they are, either separately or in alliances, putting forward illegal states of candidates.

The LCR is wrong, however, in calling for "united candidatures" of all the workers' parties, including the CP and the PSOE, on the basis of four democratic demands. (See *Red Weekly* 24th March and *Rouge*, 12th May.) Already, in Britain, the IMG has stretched the concept of the "class struggle left wing" to an alliance with left reformists on left reformist demands; in Spain, apparently, it becomes an alliance with all wings of reformism, on purely democratic demands!

Certainly Trotskyists have a duty to make common cause with the CP in every possible action for democratic rights. But an election is an occasion for revolutionary propaganda which advances a working class socialist perspective, and not merely democratic demands. A bloc of the sort the LCR have proposed could only obscure one of the chief lessons which Trotsky drew from the Spanish Civil War: "the formulas of democracy (freedom of press, the right to unionise, etc) mean for us only incidental or episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat and not a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents".

If the bourgeoisie's hopes of stabilisation in Spain are to be confounded, the first essential is that the revolutionary socialists present to the workers a perspective fundamentally opposed to the class collaborationists and those who seek to limit the workers to bourgeois democracy

COLIN FOSTER



# NOTHING MUCH TO CELEBRATE AFTER PAISLEY'S STRIKE FAILS

IT WOULD have been a black outcome if the 11-day Protestant sectarian strike in Northern Ireland had been victorious. The outcome of its defeat is scarcely less black.

Ian Paisley and the United Unionist Action Council wanted restoration of Protestant majority government in the Six Counties and a British army offensive against the IRA. Since the IRA exists and operates only on the basis of its support in the Catholic community, that would mean an attack on the whole Catholic population.

Paisley and Baird's *minimum* aim was to establish themselves as the foremost leaders of the Orange reaction. For the same purpose, Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party had stood far more candidates for this Wednesday's (May 18th) district

council elections than it did last time round, in 1973. Their results will be an index of just how much the strike failed.

Even if Paisley has a political setback — and he retains a considerable reservoir of bitter, militant support — the paramilitary Orange gangs remain. The fresh SAS under-cover British Army operations ordered by Mason remain. The British Army's steady harassment of the Catholic community remains. The Ulster Defence Regiment — reported by MP Frank Maguire to have joined UUAC roadblocks in the Dunganon area — and the RUC — widely and repeatedly reported to have fraternised with 'strike' roadblocks — remain.

And the other Unionist politicians remain. If they are less bold, less willing to clash with Britain, or more calculating, still they have the same basic programme as Paisley and

Baird: Orange Ascendancy, continuation of the sectarian Six County state, repression of the Catholics.

James Molyneux, leader of the now dissolved Ulster Unionist bloc at Westminster, declared stridently, on the 9th day of the strike: "I couldn't enter into an alliance with anybody who deliberately set out to destroy the democratic processes, and that includes the SDLP [Social Democratic & Labour Party, a middle-class, pro-imperialist Catholic party] and the actionist council who are on the same level".



It was Molyneux and his allies and co-thinkers — and others like O'Neill, Faulkner, and Craig, who now almost have a reputation as liberals — who presided over the Six County state prior to the abolition of Stormont in 1972. They ran a gerrymandered and sectarian system that was a police state for the Catholics, they violently suppressed the peaceful civil rights agitation, and they introduced internment.

Those were their democratic processes. Molyneux accuses the SDLP of being out to destroy democratic processes because of its expressions of support for civil rights. From the Orange sectarian point of view, that civil rights agitation threatened to destroy majority rule in the Six Counties, that is, the Protestant Ascendancy and the relative privileges which cement together all classes of the Protestant population.

In 1974 Molyneux's Official Unionist Party was represented on the Coordinating Committee of the Ulster Workers' Council, which organised the 'general strike' that brought down the power-sharing Executive. Their spines are supple enough to turn the other way and make an arrangement with the SDLP if

that seems to be the way to reach the feeding trough of power and patronage.

The *Financial Times* explained how the ever-servile SDLP has made a new contribution to the possibility of such an arrangement — which would simply be an institutionalised and controlled form of sectarianism:

"Mr Fitt's public recognition yesterday of the conduct of the Royal Ulster Constabulary during the strike, which he said had done much to engender a new trust between the police and the Catholic community, is of vital importance.

"In the past the SDLP's refusal wholeheartedly to commit itself to supporting the police has been a major stumbling block at inter-party negotiations".

Roy Mason said on Friday 13th May that "the Provisionals must be laughing up their sleeves at the wreckers who have been doing their work for them". During the rest of the strike what he said was more accurate: in effect, that the British Army and the police were doing the Paisleyite thugs' work for them, beating down the IRA.



The Provisionals themselves, from an entirely different angle, but equally inaccurately, arrived at the view that "the Republican movement and the cause it serves — the complete freedom of all Ireland — can only gain from the Loyalist strike". They argued that the strike showed a further break-up of Loyalist unity. But when most of the Loyalist politicians talk to the British government to get it to step up attacks on the Republicans, and a section of the Loyalist population chooses instead to use direct action and terror to push the British government the same way, that is not yet progress!

Why did the strike fail? The Orange state was brought into existence by Britain, and the Orangemen have always relied on Britain to prop up their privileges. But Paisley's policy ran counter to current British strategy.

The British Army is not so much keeping the peace as 'keeping' a murderous sectarian conflict until such time — they hope — as they beat down the Catholics sufficiently to install a remodelled sectarianism.

In May 1974 the Orange general strike was able to topple a power-sharing executive which was already discredited by the victory of hard-line Orange supremacists (today's "moderates") in 11 out of 12 Northern Ireland seats at the February 1974 Westminster general election. This time there was no such vulnerable point where the Paisleyites could force a tactical shift on Britain.



Mason's bluster against the "wreckers" cannot hide the fact, however, that his basic answer to them was a promise to step up the violence of the British military occupation. Despite the wishful schemes of the Bill of Rights campaigners and of the Peace Movement (which organised one demonstration, 250 strong, on Saturday 7th May, and then dispersed blaming the bad weather) — that will always be the answer, within the framework of the Six County state.

Ireland will not be at peace until Partition is ended. Socialists in Britain must redouble our efforts to force the withdrawal of British troops and to give support to the Republican and Socialist forces fighting to drive the troops out and create a united Ireland.

Colin Foster

## HOW TO 'CREATE MORE JOBS'



"Our most urgent task" said the joint communiqué of the seven-nation summit "is to create more jobs while continuing [?] to reduce inflation".

Beyond the walls of Downing Street there were plenty to feel this priority more urgently. Some 1,400 Burtons workers at Leeds, Warrington, Bolton and Walkden, mainly women, were told they would be made redundant. The workers at C.A. Parsons had been told the previous week that 1,400 would be made redundant if the Drax turbine was not ordered by the government, and that even if the order goes through — which it probably will — there will be sackings.

And in its new report on the state of the railways, the Select Committee on nationalised industries called for a cut-back in staff.

Meanwhile the Northampton boot and shoe industry was busy lobbying Callaghan to get tough with Carter so that the US would absorb more footwear imports.

In every situation the reaction of the union leaders was the same: they would not lead a fight for the right to work. They would lobby MPs for more government investment in "their" industry or "their" area, they would join with the employers' chorus for import controls to be brought in here and abolished elsewhere, or they would slink away and make themselves scarce.

The unions have long demanded an "integrated transport policy", which would expand public rail and bus services and hit the profits of the car manufacturers and the private hauliers. But the government continues to run down the railways and buses. And the Unions do nothing.

In turbine manufacturing, the government is press-

ing for a deal in which the National Enterprise Board buys Parsons' turbine business and GEC — the other giant in the industry — then buys control of the new company. GEC would then 'rationalise' the business, in the same way as it 'rationalised' away 40,000 jobs in three years after the 1967-8 merger of GEC, AEI and English Electric.

Instead of handing Parsons to GEC, the government should nationalise both of them. It should not compensate the owners with a single penny.

But the workers threatened by job loss cannot wait for this Government to act against the bosses, or for it to institute expansion programmes in the nationalised industries, let alone in the public services which are simply being cut to ribbons. Instead of accepting redundancies after a suitable time of pleading and lobbying, a fight can be mounted.

The objective of this fight is simple: if there is less work, for whatever reason, people should work less. Share the work out between those wanting to work.

Shopfloor workers should compute the number of hours' work and divide that by the number willing to work. They should organise work according to such a work-sharing scheme themselves, using the force of their own direct action and organisation to enforce the maintenance of wage levels and acceptance of the new system. The bosses' resistance should be answered by strikes or factory occupations. Above all the workforce must be kept together and must link up with other workers in the company, in the industry and the area.

Such an action is worth ten thousand lobbies and enough summit communiquéés to sink the QE2.

# END LABOUR MPs' 'CONSCIENCE VOTE' ON ABORTION

Delegates to the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign conference last weekend voted to lobby the Labour Party conference and mobilise support in the constituencies for abortion to be a specific item on the Party Conference agenda.

Over 90 people attended this first national conference of LARC: 53 CLPs were represented. Only 6 months after the Campaign was started, it has some 100 individual members, and 35 organisations are affiliated to it.

The local reports demonstrated that the campaign is well on the way to becoming a real force within the Labour Party. LARC activists from Hull, Bristol West, Selly Oak and Manchester Moss Side spoke about how they have used local Labour Party support as a basis for militant campaigning within the community. In Hull, LARC supporters initiated a joint ward campaign with the National Abortion Campaign. They leafleted the whole ward and mobilised against their MP, Kevin McNamara, who had been an leading supporter of the James White anti-abortion Bill.

Vital questions on the aims, objectives and structure of LARC were debated in full.

Mandy Young from the Working Group — the organising body for the Conference — spelt out the need for LARC to become a national campaign. To get positive abortion legislation passed it must become a fighting organisation, and not just be content with resolutions passed at meetings.



She argued for LARC to fight against the existing free vote on abortion in Parliament: MPs should be subject to the whip and vote for the Party's policy, and not according to their whims.

Though this policy was finally carried, there was a good deal of opposition to it. Tribunites and members of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) lined up behind Peter Jackson (one-time Liberal Whip) who argued that the campaign had to be "realistic", and this meant avoiding antagonising MPs.

Their conception of building

the campaign as a largely Parliamentary pressure group would rule out taking a sharp line on the whip for fear of alienating possible support.

Gerry Byrne, a Workers Action supporter from Leicester, spelt out instead the need for a campaign which concentrated on the local parties to build bases in the localities, and do joint work with NAC.

She went on "We must fight against the free vote in favour of MPs' accountability. After all, MPs do not have a free vote when it comes to the government's anti-working class policies."

In a debate on the social spending cuts, Workers Action supporters argued for the fight against the cuts to be seen as part and parcel of the fight for extended abortion facilities.

Attempts were made to tighten up the structure of the Campaign as conceived by the Working Group, who had proposed an open structure based mainly on ad-hoc bodies. Amendments were put forward to replace the ad-hoc bodies with delegate bodies in order to give the organisation consistency and accountability. Ironic-



THIS weekend the Working Women's Charter Campaign will be holding its second conference. For the Campaign, it will be its most important since its inception, and probably decisive on whether it becomes a living, fighting movement or merely a passive, sterile document unable to relate to the struggles of women that are taking place.

In 1974 when the Charter of demands was first drawn up, many women joined the campaign seeing it as a way to take "feminist" issues into the labour movement.

It was a campaign that recognised women's particular needs and problems and related them directly to the oppressed situation of women within the family structure.

The Charter not only dealt with the issues of equal pay and opportunities and the legal disadvantages of women, but also with the need for practical measures to free women from enforced motherhood and child-minding: the right to abortion, the social care of children in adequate nurseries.



It recognised the inter-connection of woman's oppression within the home and her super-exploitation at work. It understood that the stifling, all-embracing hold of the family over women had to be weakened and broken if women were ever to gain equality economically, socially and politically.

In overcoming the class economism of those socialist organisations (such as the SWP and WSL) who see women as merely the same as low-paid men, it was a step forward.

However, what was left open was the vital questions of what should be the main focus and orientation of the campaign.

Would it be a reformist document, or a revolutionary campaign?

**WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER**  
 FREE contraception, abortion and nursery facilities  
 EQUAL pay and conditions with opportunity, education, equality before the law  
 NO DISCRIMINATION on grounds of sex, marital status, or pregnancy

There were other, related questions. Should the campaign turn largely towards women within the community, who after all are probably the most oppressed? Or should the Charter aim mainly to build up women's caucuses and fractions within the bedrock organisations of the working class, the local and national organisations of the labour movement, and orient almost entirely towards women in the workplace.

In many ways the fate of the geographically based Charter groups has answered that question. Though they have done important and necessary work, their lack of roots within the trade unions has left many of these Charter groups floundering and unable to find a consistent focus for their activity.

The Charter Campaign has found it difficult to attract isolated women in the community.

The trade unions and the Labour Party do, on the other hand, provide a focus. Women at work escape the stifling isolation of the home and in their attempts to organise as women workers offer to the Charter Campaign an opportunity to intervene and fight with these women for the demands of the Charter. And to the extent that it grows, members and supporters will initiate such struggles too.

But the need to relate to women at work does not stem just from the fact that it is a convenient place to organise.

It is only at the workplace that women have the power to effect their demands.

This came out clearly in the Trico equal pay struggle. That strike had a tremendous effect not only on the women immediately involved but on thousands of other women: not only did it show up the inadequacy of the Equal Pay Act and expose the bias of the machinery set up to enforce it, but at the same time it demonstrated the ability of women to fight and gain their demands for themselves.

The Trico strike also showed how important it is to have a critical assessment of the present role of the trade union leadership. This is especially relevant for the Charter, which has been officially adopted by a number of trade unions.

The AUEW supported the Trico women in boycotting the Industrial Tribunal. And it made the strike official. But it also had a stifling influence on the political development of the women, and in the main neglected to involve them in the day to day running of the strike. And the AUEW's role in policing the Social Contract (which, after the Tribunal had found against them, they were up against) affected their willingness to spread the strike and involve other sections of workers in solidarity action.

"Joint responsibility" and participation prevented effective blacking and industrial pressure in the car industry

to which Trico supplies wind-screen wipers.

Any fight against women's oppression and exploitation now takes place at a time of cuts, unemployment and wage curbs. That fight is part of the struggle of workers against the social contract, and against the battering of the working class standard of living — if for no other reason, because women are being hit the hardest.

All this makes it particularly important for the Charter Campaign to be absolutely clear about what it is fighting for and how it is to fight.



It just isn't enough to expose the inadequacies of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts and to recognise the inter-connection between work and family. A Charter which is vague and unrelated to the tremendous attacks and struggles that women are facing will become at best a nonentity and at worst a let-out and a cover for leading section of the trade union movement who will co-opt it and pay lip-service to it while doing absolutely nothing.

In those circumstances it will become a typical reformist document.

And this is a very real risk. The Charter has been passed and adopted by many trade

unions and labour movement organisations. But to date the Campaign around it has failed to build up groups of supporters within these organisations.

Such fractions will only be built if the Charter is seen within these organisations as a living campaign which is able to connect with militant struggles and make its presence felt.

Among other problems is the fact that the 1974 document is in itself inadequate for this task.

It fails to mention the right of women to work, or the fight against racialism; it ignores the question of the right of women to define their own sexuality. It is vague concerning opposition to all forms of wage control and the need to fight around demands which will have a unifying effect on the, such as demands for a national minimum wage and for a sliding scale of wages to rise with the cost of living.

Neither is it adequate to have such demands adopted as policy of the campaign but not actually part of the Charter. This course gives organisations the option to disregard these questions completely. It allows them to support the Charter and thus to be seen to support women's rights, while dodging the most important issues.

The Charter must be amended and the amendments must become the policy of the Campaign.

We must start not from what will be accepted but from what

ally  
ma  
for  
In  
the  
and  
be:  
I  
eve  
alt  
L  
gie  
enc  
hes  
wit  
  
Eve  
ber  
sets  
of f  
  
LU  
IN?  
SO  
  
is  
of  
of  
m  
dt  
Ba  
de  
su  
ini  
m  
of  
wh  
sh  
to  
pt  
  
de  
It  
an  
we  
me  
de  
re  
tal  
  
C  
h  
g  
A  
C  
  
p  
m  
w  
e  
a  
e  
a  
e  
e  
c  
a  
e  
t

these were opposed by people who had argued the accountability of MPs. In relation to the Campaign, it was argued that a non-delegate totally open structure would be the most democratic! The open structure was initially accepted with some reservations. The ARC has made a good beginning, and this lively conference should give a boost to some of the work on abortion rights in the Labour Party.

ROS MAKIN



After Benyon, there'll be more attacks to fight off, says Phyllis Bowman (above).



needed to make the fight effective to meet the real needs of women workers. Of course, this may mean that any labour organisations may affiliate from the Campaign. What is more important: a document which receives the support of the TUC but which states no struggles and remains locked away in the vaults of Congress House, or a Charter which is seen as a real campaigning organiser, able to relate the struggles that are taking place? The TUC has recently updated its own Women's Charter. It is a reflection of the Charter of other organisations' work within the trade union movement that this has been done. It now includes the demand for abortion, and no longer accepts that women should bear the brunt of family responsibilities.

In form there are no great differences between the two charters. The big question, however, is: what is the TUC going to do with its Charter? Is the same question can be asked of the Working Women's Charter.

Tremendous possibilities presently exist to build a movement focusing on the struggles and needs of working class women. The increasing militancy and political consciousness of women has been demonstrated in dozens of struggles — at a time when the labour movement generally was biding its time. The Charter must not miss the opportunity to make a real contribution to the fight for women's rights and to the class struggle of which it is an integral and inseparable part.

PAT DAVIES

# THE BATTLE AGAINST PHASE 3 STARTS NOW

**THE Labour government has not denounced the Port Talbot strikers, as it usually denounces workers whose struggles may harm the "national interest". Nor did it denounce the month-long Heathrow strike.**

It hasn't needed to. The union bureaucrats of the AUEW and EEUPTU have done, and are doing, the job for it.

Yet the same AUEW whose 'left wing' officials, like Reg Birch, have attacked the Heathrow strikers and before them the Leyland toolmakers, has now decided against Phase 3.

A few days after this decision, the *Guardian* blandly reported that there would be no Phase 3.

As we said in *Workers Action No.55*, "The Labour Government ... needs Phase 3 very much. And the trade union bureaucracy understands that need." Unless rank and file mobilisation continues and escalates, the TUC and the Labour Government will arrange a Phase 3.

In 1976 the conference of the building workers' union, UCATT, voted against Phase 2; and the UCATT leadership flatly refused to obey the conference decision. They could do that because the rank and file industrial strength of the union has been severely weakened over recent years by the very high unemployment in the building industry. But other tricks for the same purpose can be tried in other unions.

The resolution passed at the National Committee of the AUEW Engineering Section provides for a reconsideration of the union's position after the TUC has decided on Phase 3. That provision can be used, for example, if a very 'flexible' Phase 3 is constructed, to be policed mostly by the trade union bureaucracy. We may even see it argued that a flexible Phase 3 is not really a Phase 3 at all, in the same way that union leaders wriggling out of conference commitments claimed, in 1975, that Phase 1 was not a compulsory incomes policy.

Finally, the Labour government has the possibility of forcing the bureaucrats' hands by threatening to resign if there is no agreement on Phase 3.

Over the last three years, a whole network of participation schemes, tribunals, and arbitration structures has tied the trade union bureaucracy even more closely to the government and the state than they were before. Only a militant rank and file opposition prepared to confront the bureaucrats and face up to blackmail from the Labour Government can stop the wage curbs and the erosion of living standards.

What is the situation in the unions as Phase 2 approaches its end? At the 1975

TUC nine unions officially opposed Phase 1 (the £6 limit): the AUEW, UCATT, NUPE, ASLEF, CPSA, NUB, ASTMS, SCS, and the Firemen's Union. Four others had opposed it at the General Council meeting where Phase 1 was first discussed: USDAW, NUT, ACTT, NALGO, and NUM.

The biggest, and most decisive, of the shifts in position was the NUM's. The Executive voted 14-10 to flout a conference decision against any incomes policy under capitalism, and then managed to get a 60-40 majority for its position in a membership ballot. In 1976,

ility is one repeated by Hugh Scanlon of the AUEW and by Nalگو. The purpose is clearly to avoid explosive tensions such as at Leyland, Heathrow and Port Talbot.

The big battalions of the right wing, like the GMWU and the EEUPTU, will almost certainly be voting for Phase 3. Moss Evans' victory in the TGWU elections for General Secretary indicates the same will be true of the T&G, though the fact that all his major opponents felt it necessary to criticise wage controls points to more militant opposition at this year's conference than previously.

The four big white collar public sector unions —

tremendous one-day strike and demonstration on November 17th last year?

All these unions had a big increase in membership, and in militancy, in the late '60s and early '70s. Part of what is happening now is that the right wing is organising more tightly — for example in the CPSA — so as to regain lost ground.

## Dampen

However, the cuts, rather than pushing these unions to the left, have clearly pushed them generally to the right. With rising unemployment



the majority for Phase 2 was much slimmer: 53-47.

This year already Joe Gormley has said the NUM is unlikely to agree to Phase 3. And the fact that most major mining areas have gone for a £100 wage claim confirms him.

ASTMS has continued to oppose wage restraint in 1976, and will probably do so again this year, while tying its position very closely to the question of differentials. ASLEF changed its position in 1976, but might come out against pay curbs again this year.

USDAW's change in position in 1975 surprised no one, since Lord Allen, the leader of the shopworkers' union, is a pillar of the TUC right wing. This year USDAW has already had its conference (see *Workers' Action No.55*) and voted 63-37 to continue pay restraint.

## 7% limit

Tom Jackson of the UPW, and APEX, have also declared for Phase 3. APEX talks of a 7% limit for Phase 3; the UPW wants more tax concessions, consolidation into basic pay of increases paid under Phases 1 and 2, and rectification of anomalies created over the last two years.

The UPW's call for flexib-

Nalگو, NUPE, NUT and CPSA — all opposed Phase 1 in the first General Council vote. This year NALGO and NUT are already for Phase 3; NUPE's general secretary, Alan Fisher, declares that a "free for all" would harm his members; and, though CPSA conference came out against Phase 3, it also elected a firmly right wing and pro-wage curb majority onto its National Executive.

The shift to the right is particularly clear in the NUT, where the union leadership have been actively pursuing or assisting the victimisation of militants at Little Ilford and William Tyndale schools.

Other unions have moved to the right, for example the AUEW. But the limited nature of the right wing advance in the AUEW is shown by the vote over Phase 3; and a large part of that advance is accounted for by the particular circumstances of the collapse of the Broad Left's previous strong domination in the Manchester area after the defeat of the 1972 sit-ins for higher wages.

It is the big white-collar, public sector unions where the right wing has gained most. It seems to be a paradox: are not these the unions which are hit hardest by the cuts and thus suffer most from the Social Contract? Did they not organise the

and insecurity, and victimisation more of a danger, militancy has been dampened. It has been further dampened by the lack of fight by the major industrial unions.

The white-collar, public-sector unions are always weak industrially, since their industrial action does not cut into profits. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, they were willing to go into struggle through the breaches forced by the heavy battalions of the working class. Now they are naturally more cautious.

In hindsight, November 17th was more a substitute for effective action against the cuts than a rallying-point for such action.

Thus when Alan Fisher says his members must avoid a "free for all", it is exactly the opposite of the truth. The strongest boost that can be given to the battle against the cuts — and the struggled of the lower-paid to improve their conditions — is a fight by the militant sections of union like the AUEW and the NUM to break through the Social Contract. Without that fight the bureaucrats will organise another round of social misery.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

# THE POLITICS OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

## JOINING IN THE CHORUS FOR WAR

The suffragette movement can teach us a lot about militant protest action. But can its basic methods — exclusive focus on one issue, 'sisterhood' of women of all classes — serve as a model for a fighting women's movement today?

**FRAN BRODIE**

continues her series on the politics of the suffragette movement, and its relation to the battles of women workers.

The Women's Social and Political Union was built on a "non-class" basis, and in the face of a social and economic crisis and World War 1 these foundations crumbled.

Sylvia Pankhurst, who had never been able to agree wholeheartedly with her mother and sister and the policy of the WSPU [the policy was her mother and sister; everything was administered autocratically by the two of them and the members had no vote!], took the struggle to the East End and formed the East London Federation. She appeared on the same platform as George Lansbury and James Connolly, demanding the release of James Larkin. From this meeting the split was evident. Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst informed Sylvia that they "did not want to be mixed up with Lansbury who was campaigning to extend suffrage not only to female 'householders' as the WSPU was, but to all men and women!

At the outbreak of World War 1 the WSPU postponed their demand for women's rights and joined in the chorus for the "final victory" in the war against Germany.

The WSPU as an organisation now showed its true colours and took up the disgusting position of national

chauvinism. They suspended all activities and called upon their members to serve their country! They changed the name of their newspaper, "Suffragette" to "Britannia". At the same time the ELF changed the name of its paper "The Women's Dreadnought" to "Workers' Dreadnought". The implications of the disagreements between the ELF and the WSPU became clear.

In 1915 the WSPU called a huge "Women's Right to Serve" demonstration in London. The purpose of this was to draw masses of working class women into industry at wages lower than those of men. They wanted cheap labour for the bosses.



This was a smack in the face for the women at Bryant and Mays, the mill girls, and the cotton weavers; all their struggles were being thrown back into their faces. All the gains which they had fought hard and long battles for, were to result in cheap labour and cannon fodder for the bosses' war!

Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and their ilk were quite willing to recruit women to exploitation, they were quite willing to force

inequality and the crippling burden of the bosses' war onto the shoulders of working class women — women who Christabel had earlier stated were too tired and weak to struggle for women's liberation, women who were of no value; were now quite strong enough to work in terrible conditions at lower rates than men for the class interests which Emmeline Pankhurst served!

Emmeline Pankhurst said at a meeting at the London Pavilion, "We hear of strikes and riots amongst men. Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, what if women lost patience and began to riot — not for money, not in order to have easier conditions, but because they were not allowed to work at the time of their country's need".

The struggle which the WSPU whipped up was now directed with a vengeance against Germany. At WSPU meetings national airs were played. In their newspaper "Britannia" — which was now dedicated "For King, For Country, For Freedom" — they carried out often racist propaganda, whipping up hatred against Germany. WSPU members took to the streets again — this time to bestow "white feathers of cowardice" on men not in uniform!

The WSPU toured South Wales where there was industrial unrest, denouncing the miners and the "Bolshevik" shop stewards as traitors to "their" country! They even tried to get the miners wives to withdraw their support for their husbands in struggle and told them to watch that their husbands were not led astray by Bolshevik ideas.

After the Russian revolution of February 1917, the imperialist nations were concerned that Russia would withdraw its troops from the debacle of the war. On June 1st Emmeline Pankhurst requested that she be allowed to visit Russia "to explain to the Russian people the opinions as to the war and the conditions of peace held by us patriotic British women." The request was granted.

But the Provisional Government under the leadership of Kerensky were not willing to risk offending the revolutionary spirit of the Russian working class by foisting Emmeline Pankhurst upon them. She did of course have some support from many Government officials and a very frightened ruling class [confined

to the drawing rooms of upper class ladies].

In an interview in "New Times" she groaned "From the very beginning of my public life I was in the ranks of Socialists, together with my husband. But I soon found how narrow were the interests with which I was concerned. I thus devoted myself to the cause of women. I considered that as a revolutionist who had been 16 times in prison, I deserve the sympathy of these people who had been at the head of the revolution in Russia".

All Emmeline Pankhurst's efforts failed to save the Kerensky Government from the rubbish bin of history. While she was in Moscow the working class seized power an event she could not tolerate. Realising that there was no further hope of the Russian working class allowing itself to be used as cannon fodder for the bosses war she left Russia immediately.

She arrived back in England demanding armed intervention into Russia on the side of the counter



[My emphasis]

She reviewed the Womens Battalion of Death, and thought it the greatest thing in history since Joan of Arc". The Death Battalion were formed in the summer of 1917 by Kerensky for the purpose of strengthening the discipline and combative fire of the army be heroic example. These battalions, made up of sons and daughters of the propertied classes, were a counter revolutionary force. Emmeline Pankhurst said that "these women [of the Death Battalion] were inspired by her speech: That in Britain — "Women of all classes are working for the war effort and that on Sundays, ladies of the highest classes replaced the working women"! A Russian right wing journalist thought that Emmeline Pankhurst was an "essentially feminine woman", her patriotism inspired the same and "raised it to the highest summits of morality, she is a new woman". Emmeline Pankhurst also said that whenever a Bolshevik spoke an educated woman should stand up and oppose them!

revolutionary elements.

She then went on a tour of Canada — whipping up anti-communist activity. She argued that Bolshevism was akin to venereal disease, "both being the result of a mistaken and promiscuous flaunting of traditional decencies".

Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst then founded the "Women's Party", with a platform that combined demands for women's rights with extreme chauvinism. It did not last long. Emmeline Pankhurst had a successful career as a well-paid anti-communist agitator and ended up standing as a Tory candidate. It was a fitting end for her. She had come home.

Campaigning only for the formal rights of women of all classes, the suffrage movement had from the start neglected the specific, more radical demands of working class women. In the fire of the world war it took its stand firmly with the bourgeoisie.

Next week: Sylvia Pankhurst and the working class women's movement.

## 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

THE CIVIL and Public Services Association conference, at Southport in the week 2-6 May, voted to "reject any suggested deal between the TUC and the Government on a stage III incomes policy". It reaffirmed policy of overtime bans and no cover for unfilled vacancies, and went for a "series of selective and national days of action [against the cuts] in conjunction with other public sector trade unions".

A weak version of a post-entry closed shop was supported, against a big press campaign.

But there is a question mark over the practical meaning of these decisions after the right-wing victory in elections for the National Executive Committee. The right-wing slate headed by Kate Losinska, an acknowledged supporter of the employer-financed 'Trade Union Movement for Industrial Democracy' (TRUMID) won 16 places, as against 11 for the Broad Left and one for the militant left caucus 'Redder Tape'.

The Broad Left's own policies laid the ground for them losing the NEC majority they have held for three years. Their unanimous agreement to call off the Department of Employment statistics ban in face of press red-baiting ripped the guts out of the CPSA anti-cuts campaign.

Over pay, it was the Broad Left-dominated NEC (against some rank and file BL members) which persuaded conference to go for the reinstatement of the pre-1975 system according to which civil service wages are determined by 'fiar comparison' with wages elsewhere; a system which both subjects civil service workers to a form of incomes policy and makes them parasitic on other workers' wage battles.

In Gibraltar 300 civil service workers have been locked out for six months after they imposed an overtime ban in pursuit of a wage demand. The NEC did nothing for three months; Conference only called for a one-day strike; and now the right wing are manoeuvring to get the Gibraltar members back to work on the employers' terms.

The Broad Left was further discredited by its manoeuvring. It backed Len Lever, an open right

## CPSA CONFERENCE

# RIGHT WING VICTORY MAY THREATEN ANTI PHASE 3 POLICY

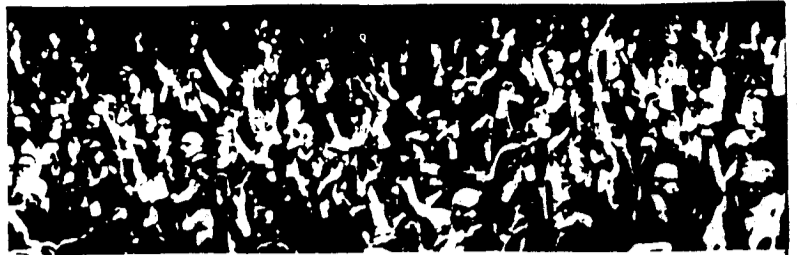


Locked-out Gibraltar CPSA members' demo

wing careerist, for President, and retained Pat Womersley on its NEC slate after she had already stood on a right-wing slate in the Department of Health and Social Security section. A day aft-

er the NEC results appeared Womersley openly declared her support for the right wing.

Apart from its NEC gains, the TRUMID block won a victory on the question of arms spending.



## THE UNIONS



The motion passed by 117,000 to 82,000 notes with grave concern the continuing cuts in the defence forces of our country. It calls upon the Government to bring to an immediate halt this suicidal policy".

The conference has opened a debate within the left wing of the CPSA on the way forward. There is a serious possibility of an anti-red campaign by the Civil Service bosses, through the updating of the 1962 Radcliffe report which tightened the security vetting system.

What is needed is a rank and file movement, based on a comprehensive policy, but willing to seek united action on particular issues.

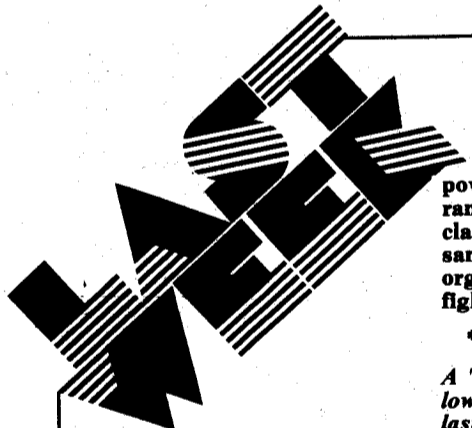
The Rules Revision Conference coming up at the end of the year will open a wide-ranging debate on union democracy, despite the fact that proposals prepared by a sub-committee of the old NEC have already been overturned by the new one. Some of the Communist Party supporters in the CPSA have been willing to take a militant stand for election of officials, and there is a possibility for joint campaigning here.

Joint action by 'Redder Tape' and sections of the 'Broad Left' coalition (Comprising CPers, Trib-

unites, and Militant supporters) may also be possible on implementation of the overtime ban and 'no cover' policies decided on by Conference against the cuts.

Another key issue will be pay. 'Redder Tape' is advocating an interim claim of £15 per week from 1st August 1977. Militants must also insist on solidarity with all workers in struggle against pay curbs, and on all future agreements including guaranteed escalator clauses so that wages keep pace with the cost of living.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY



power, the multi-millioned ranks of the German working class movement crumbled like sand, for they had not been organised and mobilised to fight.

\*\*\*  
A "free-for-all" would harm the low paid? Evidence published last week by the Low Pay Unit shows that the lower paid have suffered most from pay curbs.

Increases in average earnings for lower paid manual workers were between 12% and 19% in the two year period, while the earnings of better paid non-manual workers went up by between 19% and 26%.

Meanwhile, official government figures in reply to a parliamentary question revealed that the real value of take-home pay for the average worker had fallen by about 14% between December 1974 and February 1977.

Since about one-third of the value of any wage increase is taken away by taxes, that means that pay rises of 21% are needed to restore living standards. That is, about £17 on an average industrial wage of £80 a week.

\*\*\*  
Three members of the National Union of Mineworkers executive returned last week from a clandestine visit to Bolivia. They found that the army had been supervising the mines since the miners went on strike last June.

The Bolivian government, which took power in 1972 through a right wing military coup, has banned trade unions since 1974.

The NUM visitors were "amazed" that people survived in the present conditions in Bolivia's mines.

The NUM Executive has called on the government to stop £19m in British aid to the Bolivian mining industry.

\*\*\*  
The giant International Publishing Corporation declared itself to favour discrimination against homosexuals. A current National Union of Journalists claim includes a call for equal opportunities regardless of sexual orientation. IPC refused to agree to this. Did this mean they were anti-homosexual? "Yes".

\*\*\*  
On Tuesday 24th May, the right wing French trade union federation, Force Ouvriere, will join together with the Communist Party-led CGT, the Socialist-oriented CFDT, and the independent teachers' federation FEN, in a one-day general strike against the Barre government's austerity plan.

Only twice in its history, since it originated in a cold-war split in 1947, has FO called a national strike, let alone a joint action with the CGT and CFDT.

However, FO general secretary André Bergeron stressed that there would be no common demonstrations with the "supporters of the Gulag" — that is, the CGT. FO will organise its own separate meetings on the 24th.

## NUT Executive attacks Tyndale support plans

"THIS motion calling for support for the William Tyndale teachers has now been moved. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against?"

Silence greeted this question at a packed Special General Meeting of Newham NUT last Tuesday, 10th May. The motion was then passed by 66 to 17 with four abstentions.

Those opposed to supporting the Tyndale teachers had nothing to say after members of Newham Socialist Teachers had condemned the sacking-for-striking move by the Inner London Education Authority, and scotched in advance any possible argument against the Tyndale teachers on educational grounds.

Nonetheless the right wing officers of the NUT branch were not content. Maureen Seear,

president, scuttled off to union headquarters in an attempt to undermine the decision of the meeting. She got the motion ruled out of order on the grounds that the NUT Executive had refused support.

On Friday 13th Newham schools were faced with a circular from the secretary, Val Seabright, forbidding ordinary members to attend the branch Action Sub-committee, which the original motion had opened up specifically for the purpose of organising local support for Tyndale.

Democracy in the NUT is fast disappearing, both locally and nationally. Newham members will resist the dictates of officers who ride rough shod over the decisions of general meetings and will attend the Action Sub-committee regardless. I.H.

# THE POLITICS OF Militant

A WORKERS' ACTION PAMPHLET  
20p plus postage from 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

# WORKERS IN ACTION

IN AN ATTEMPT to break the press wall of silence on a 6½-month lock-out of civil service clerical workers in Gibraltar, the civil service union CPSA has called a national one-day strike for May 26th.

At CPSA Conference on 2nd-6th May, where the call for the one-day strike was decided, delegates expressed disgust at the vicious police harassment of CPSA members on picket duty, the no-expense-spared scabbing force organised by the Labour Government and Civil Service heads, and the serious challenge to trade unionism in the civil service. Scabs have received Inner London weighting and foreign service allowance on top of their basic money, as inducements.

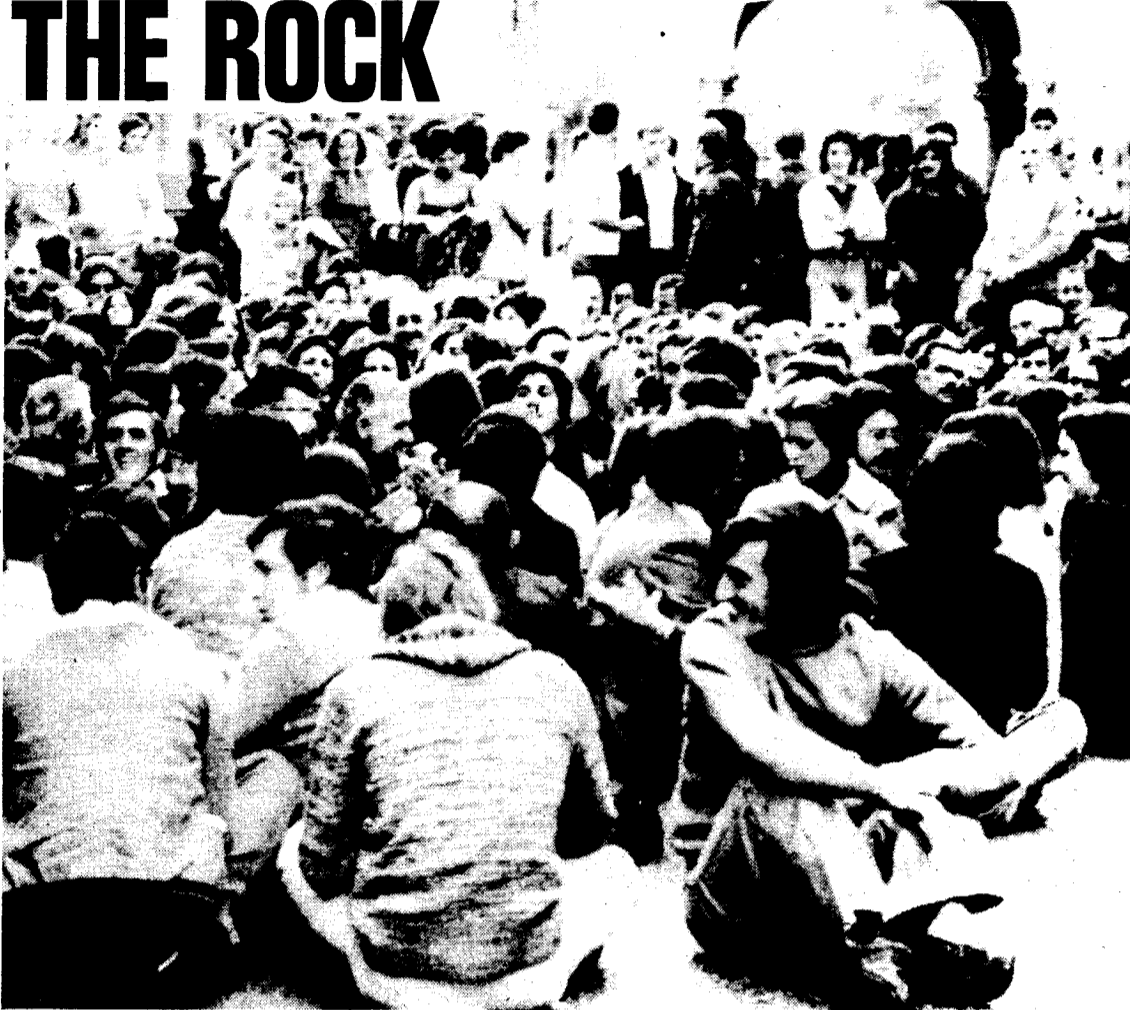
The lockout started in October 1976. Ministry of Defence Property Services Agency CPSA members had demanded an increase of £400 per year for parity with local Gibraltar civil servants. After management refused to meet their claim, they started an overtime ban and a work to rule. The bosses locked out the 300 members.

The dispute received official backing from CPSA, but little was done by the National Executive Committee to organise effective publicity, blacking, and trade union solidarity. Recently the National Union of Seamen and TGWU members have begun to take support action. But the one-day strike may be too little, too late.

Over the Gibraltar dispute and the proposed one-day stoppage there now hangs the stench of sell-out. The hard-line right-wingers now in control of the CPSA National Executive Committee are expected to try a behind the scenes deal with the Labour Government.

On the strike day itself,

## 6 MONTH LOCK OUT ON THE ROCK



Sit-down demo of locked-out Gibraltar civil service workers

they have called a lobby of Parliament, thus diverting forces away from the picket lines. 'Briefing' meetings to explain the issues behind the strike are not to be organised until the day before!

Militants in the CPSA are organising to make sure the one-day strike is 100% solid. At stake is civil service trade unionism, and the right of civil service workers to fight for better wages.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY  
[See page 7 for full report of CPSA conference.]

## FREE ANDY STROUTHOUS

ON WEDNESDAY 11th May Andy Strouthos, president of North East London Polytechnic students' union, was jailed indefinitely by a High Court judge for carrying out the policies of his students' union.

His jailing is part of a wave of court actions against students. Injunctions had previously been granted against student occupations at LSE, City University, Manchester, Teesside, Middlesex, North London Polytechnic and the School of Oriental and African Studies — occupations which were part of a student campaign against racist fee increases.

The struggles at North East London Poly have a long history, involving the defence of student union autonomy there against the machinations of the Director of NELP, George Brosan. Strouthos had previously been expelled from NELP. He resigned his union post and was overwhelmingly voted back into office by the NELP students.

The jailing was not just a way of breaking the present student struggle at NELP, but was a "pre-emptive strike" against any future occupations. In fact, Strouthos was jailed for "occupying" the NELP students' union office!

If Strouthos had backed down in face of an injunction, not only would he have broken the mandate given by the NELP students, but the way would have been further cleared for more court and police breaking of student militancy and organisation.

Also recently four students from Middlesex Poly have been bound over to the High Court on charges of obstructing the Sheriff of London during an occupation at the poly. This charge carries a possible two year sentence.

Since Strouthos was jailed there has been a nightly picket of Pentonville Prison from 6pm. On Friday 13th seven pickets were arrested on charges of obstruction, but the students say that the nightly picketing will continue until Strouthos is freed.

If Strouthos is not released, the way will be wide open for further jailings and intimidation to prevent further direct action by students on such issues as the fee increases.

NEIL COBBETT

## COLQUHOUN [FROM PAGE ONE]

CLP, perhaps she should look at who is supporting her.

Writing in the National Front publication Spearhead, Nazi gauleiter Martin Webster has this to say: "Praise is certainly due to Ms. Colquhoun. She had the moral courage to do her duty as a politician and speak her mind." In Webster's view, her endorsement of Enoch Powell

as "not a racist" was "even more important and valuable" than the Powell speech which it followed.

Whether or not Maureen Colquhoun can see what's wrong with being "important and valuable" for racists and fascists, the Tribune Group can't be so blind. If it doesn't wish to be completely discredited, it must stop harbouring this darling of racists as its Treasurer, and support the moves of ordinary members of her Labour Party to throw her out.

## 'POSTAL WORKERS MUST HAVE RIGHT TO STRIKE'—FOOT

Michael Foot has promised the Union of Post Office Workers that legislation will be introduced to ensure the right to strike for postal workers. The announcement was made at a meeting just before the opening of the UPW's conference in Bournemouth.

He admitted that the courts' rulings in two recent cases where it had been claimed that a strike by postal workers would be in breach of the Post Office Acts of 1953 and the Telegraph Act of 1963, in effect "filched the right to strike from the UPW".

The rulings were made in response to the National Association for Freedom's successful attempt to stop the UPW blacking mail and calls to and from South Africa, and to prevent the union from blacking deliveries to the North-West London firm of Grunwicks, where workers are striking for union recognition.

Why has Foot taken so long to make public this promise? Clearly because he is using to sweeten the tempers of UPW workers to get them to support another year of wage curbs.

But the tempers of Tory MPs were inflamed by the promise. As in his Ashfield by-election speech where he advocated a "socialist republic", Labour's favourite demagogue had to have one of his parliamentary colleagues apologise for him.

On this occasion Foot laid into the judiciary saying "If the freedom of trade unionists had been left solely to the judges, there would now be very few freedoms left".

The next day Labour's Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn-Jones, repudiated Foot's attack on the judiciary and claimed that he had been referring to the Tolpuddle martyrs and not to anything of the present day. The Shrewsbury pickets and the Right to Work marchers, as well as the UPW membership, will find that hard to swallow.



RECENTLY in Northampton controversy has mounted over the threatened closure of three hospitals and one ward of the Princess Marina hospital for mentally handicapped children. These cuts are being implemented by the Area Health Authority, which is chaired by the leader of the Labour group on Northamptonshire County Council.

Workers at the Princess Marina have organised occupations, demonstrations, an overtime ban, and 'no cover' action.

But now Union officials seem to have accepted the Authority's offer to employ more nurses while cutting down on the training of new student nurses. Dissatisfaction has already been voiced by the rank and file at their leaders' shilly-shallying, and supporters of the Northampton YS & Trades Council Action Committee against the cuts will now have to argue that this move is no solution, but just a palliative to diffuse present opposition.



Marie Murray was sentenced to life imprisonment last week for the murder of an off-duty Dublin policeman in the course of a bank raid.

At her first trial she and her husband Noel were sentenced to death by a special no-jury court of three judges. A big campaign won her a re-trial in the Supreme Court.

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word; block ads, 25 per column inch. All payments to be made in advance. Send copy to Events, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

THURSDAY 19 MAY. Meeting for schools organising strike action in support of the sacked William Tyndale teachers. 7pm, 'Prince Albert', Wharfedale Rd, Kings Cross.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 21-22 MAY. National conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign — "Which Way Forward for the Charter Campaign?" City University, St John St, London EC1.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 21-22 MAY. Ruskin History Workshop on the history of rank and file movements. Further details, phone G. Williams, 0865 53718.

WEDNESDAY 25 MAY. Mass picket of County Hall in support of William Tyndale teachers. From 4.30pm. Nearest tube: Waterloo.

SATURDAY 28 MAY. Left Action conference. 11am to 4pm at Essex Road Library, London N1.

SATURDAY 28 MAY. Northampton Women's Rights conference, organised by Northampton Labour Party and Trades Council. 2pm to 5pm at Spring Lane school, behind the Barclaycard Centre.

TUESDAY 31 MAY. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting on "A Woman's Right to Work". 7.30pm at the Rhydney Hotel, Adam Street.

## ADS

"THE SPARK", journal of the Revolutionary Communist Group (Australia). Number 1, May 1977. 20p.

SPARTACUS, monthly paper of the German Trotskyist organisation Spartacusbund. 35p.

PERMANENTE REVOLUTION, organ of the Internationale Kommunistische Liga of Austria. 25p.

LA CLASSE, monthly paper of the Lega Comunista (Italy). 15p.

LUTTE DE CLASSE/CLASS STRUGGLE, bilingual Trotskyist magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière (France). 40p.

"ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAN PARTY", articles from Workers' Action reproduced by the Revolutionary Labour Group (Australia). 20p.

All available from Phoenix Pamphlets, 98 Gifford St, London N1 ODF. Ad. 15% per order p&p, minimum 6½p.

SATURDAY  
MAY 28th  
LEFT ACTION  
Conference  
11am to 4pm  
Essex Road Library,  
London N.1

Published by Workers Action, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27. Printed by Azad (TU) 21 York Way, London N1  
Registered as a newspaper at the GPO