

workers' ACTION

No.62

July 1st to 8th 1977

10p

DEFEND RICHARD MAULL

RICHARD MAULL is a young West Indian computer operator who works at Smiths Industries. A member of ASTMS, he has been down to the Grunwick picket line with his mates.

Richard Maull is being held in Brixton Police Station on remand, charged with having thrown the bottle which was supposed to have injured Special Patrol Constable Wilson.

His union branch has set up a Defence Campaign — he is the one arrested picket that APEX has refused to defend, acting as judge and jury before the case is even tried.

It is shameful that APEX is setting Richard Maull up to be isolated and witchhunted.

The branch, ASTMS 628, has called on Barnet Trades Council and ASTMS to support his defence; they gave £40 themselves, and say they are anxious that the "emotive response to the injury of the policeman" doesn't interfere with a fair and unbiased trial.

ANYONE WHO WITNESSED OR PHOTOGRAPHED the incident or can assist in other ways should contact The Secretary, ASTMS 628 Branch, 65 Ashworth Mansions, Elgin Ave. London W9

ALL OUT JULY 11th

FIGHT TO THE FINISH



THE mass pickets at Grunwicks are all set to go on for as long as it takes to win.

Delegations of print-workers, building workers, dockers and electricians have followed the Yorkshire, Scottish and South Wales miners to the Willesden picket line.

Still to come in any numbers are the engineers from Grunwicks own surrounding area.

The call by miners' leader Arthur Scargill for a day of action on July 11th should be taken up with the most seriousness in the form of strikes and marches to the picket from neighbouring factories.

After all, it was the Birmingham engineers who closed the famous Saltley gates in 1972.

Desperate at the sight of masses of workers flouting

the capitalist state, the Government's trade union troubleshooter. Albert Booth has played his last card — and it isn't even an ace.

For two weeks police violence and mass arrests only served to swell the picket. Then mediation was tried, to no avail: the mass picket went on.

Now it's to be a Court of Inquiry.

The trade union movement needs no inquiry (other than into why it took ten months to mobilise its forces). The facts are known. And it doesn't need mediation: **it needs to win.** It's fighting this one now not just against Ward but, in a sense, against the next Tory government — in advance.

Booth's Court of Inquiry is designed for no other

purpose than to divert the movement from winning. The idea is that the wigs and fancy dress will go over big with the official trade union movement and influence it to get up and lead a retreat.

Immediately, the Court will demand a return to the "status quo" before the mass picketing started: the Post Office sorters will be told, yet again, to handle Grunwicks' work, and the continued mass picket will be told to disband.

Leaving the strikers right back where they were.

The High Court charade, opening at the same time as the Scarman pantomime, is Ward's own diversion. Even if he loses there, no-one is going to make him end the lockout. All it would mean is the right of the scabs to join APEX!

Nothing but force — massed pickets on a Saltley scale and harder blacking — will win re-instatement for the strikers.

The blacking has grown in leaps and bounds since the mass picketing started. And the picketing can close the gates.

That's why it has to go and get bigger for as long as it takes to win.

THE BLACKING STAYS! That is the firm decision of the Post Office sorters at Cricklewood who have refused to touch Grunwicks mail since the middle of June.

For two weeks they were subjected to threats and entreaties. Finally last Wednesday, June 29th, they were notified in writing that unless they "work normally" they'd be sent home with no pay as from 11.30 the next day.

The branch met — to discuss tactics. The continued blacking was never in question. They announced they'd stage a sit-in if suspended. And the whole of London stood by for a threatened indefinite postal strike in response.

The deadline came. The deadline went. Nothing happened. Instructions from higher up to set the suspensions in motion didn't come.

The Tories had pushed for action to "uphold the law" and

SORTERS WON'T BUDGE

show the sorters — and the rest of the working class — that the ruling class can still wield the big stick. But the Labour leaders come off better using strings,

delays and manipulation. That is the method of bureaucracy. And they decided to have one more go.

So now the sorters are expect-

ed to lift their blacking out of their deep respect for Lord Justice Scarman and his Court of Inquiry.

What a hope!

Blacking net drawn tighter

In one of the more idiotic reflections on the Grunwick strike, the Industrial Correspondent of the Daily Express contrasted the effects of the postal blacking with the 'few achievements' of all the 'noisy and violent' mass picketing.

But the ever-tightening extension of the blacking is all the product of the last three weeks' mass picketing!

In this third week, blacking has gathered momentum.

The number of chemist shops now dealing with Grunwicks has dropped from 400 to

just 69.

The London Area Council of the National Union of Bank Employees has called on the Midland Bank to freeze Grunwicks' bank account. If it refused, then big trade unions like Nalco would be asked to stop banking with the Midland.

NATSOPA members in the packaging section of the printing group Dickinson & Robinson in Bristol blacked a million postal packets that had been printed for Grunwicks under the names of its subsidiaries Bonus-pool, Trucolour and Cooper and Pearson.

NGA members at both the Sunday Telegraph [June 19] and Observer [June 26th] stopped work, the former to demand a reply to an article which invited readers to send their snaps to Grunwicks, the latter in outrage against the insertion of a NAFF advert soliciting support and money for Grunwick. Both groups of workers won the right to reply.

The strike committee has called on trade unionists in the Fire Brigade to cut off Grunwicks' water supply and on Post Office Engineers to cut off its phone.

Bolivia — 'just like a concentration camp'

say NUM officials

The National Union of Mineworkers recently sent three members of its National Executive to Chile and Bolivia to examine the conditions faced by workers under the military regimes in those two countries. The team were unable to work openly and had to carry out their investigations while travelling under the guise of tourists. On returning to Britain they gave their report to the June NEC of the National Union of Miners and excerpts were published in the June/July issue of *The Miner*.

The labour movement in Bolivia, in particular among the tin miners, has a long tradition of struggle; for the past 25 years it has been a very powerful force in Bolivian politics. So when in 1971 a military coup overthrew the government of Juan Torres — a government which has relied on mass popular support and the open backing of the trade unions — it could only carry through its policies by first attacking the organised labour movement.



A wave of repression swept the country; trade unionists who tried to reorganise the Bolivian Central Union (the equivalent of the TUC) were arrested and exiled, peasants who blocked roads in protest at food price increases in October 1973 and January 1974 were gunned down by

the army and finally in November 1974, using the pretext of an attempted coup, the military regime banned all political and trade union activity and suspended all elections. When the trade unions responded by calling a 48-hour strike the government hit back by locking up their leaders, destroying the miners radio stations and freezing wages.

But since 1974, the labour movement has made heroic attempts to reorganize; the military regime was unable to completely eliminate the Miners Federation which, on May 1st last year, was able to hold a Congress in the town of Corocoro and force the government to recognize it.

The main outcome of the Congress was a country-wide demand for and increase in the basic daily minimum wage from US \$1.50 to US \$4.00. This sum was calculated by the Miners' Union on the basis of an economic survey taking into account prices in the company stores and the prices of food, clothing and education.

The government was given a period of 30 days in which to start discussions and a date for negotiations was agreed.

Meanwhile, the miners called a 24-hour strike in protest at the regime's refusal to allow the body of the former President Torres (who had been assassinated in Argentina) to be brought back into Bolivia. Fearing that this could be the beginning of a general strike, the government moved the army in to occupy the mines on the day before the pay negotiations were due



Faced with this, the miners did actually call a general strike — the government responded by declaring a state of siege, imposing a curfew and turning the mining centres of Oruro and Polosi into 'military zones'.

The miners' radio stations were taken over and the company stores closed down, hundreds of workers were dismissed, their homes raided and their families intimidated.

The miners were forced back to work at gunpoint and their leaders imprisoned or exiled to Chile — presumably to face the charms of the military regime there.

Despite the strong organisation of the miners, the government was able to isolate their struggle. Given the geographical remoteness of the mining areas — for example, the mining region of Siglo and Catavi is 100 KM from the next town with only two access roads — the army was able to block off roads and cut food and water supplies and outside telephone communication. When on top of this, a strict press blackout was imposed the miners found themselves cut off from any effective solidarity by other workers and the strike ended after 28 days.



Since the end of the strike, the military has continued to occupy the major mining areas and to impose a strict control on all activity. Now, nearly a year after the strike, the appearance of 'calm and order' is maintained only by the governments' repressive machinery of imprisonment, torture and exile.

There is continued harassment in the mining areas, homes are raided and miners' families intimidated while in the mines themselves any protests are met by threats from shift super-

visors that dissatisfied workers will be denounced to the authorities as 'extremists' — whereupon they can be sacked without right of appeal, or arrested and held indefinitely.

The miners are faced with these repressive measures without any legal trade union representation. With all trade union activity banned, more than half of the Bolivian Miners Federation's elected representatives are in exile, while those remaining in Bolivia carry out their activities clandestinely in extremely difficult circumstances, with all freedom of association and the right to strike banned.

The BMF representatives have been "replaced" by "co-ordinators" — quite often not even miners — imposed by the government. They are completely tools of the military regime and do not in the least defend the interests of the miners or the BMF which of course has refused to recognise them.

During those working hours, the miners are faced with terrible physical conditions. Safety regulations are practically non-existent, there is a lack of proper clothing and the masks the mines are supplied with were designed for use at sea-level — not the 12,000 feet altitude of the Bolivian mines, with the result that it is so difficult to breathe the rarefied air.



It is estimated that an underground worker will contract first degree silicosis within five years, second degree silicosis by the age of thirty — and by the time he's 35 the disease will have progressed to such a point that he cannot be saved.

There is also a high rate of accidents in the mines (although the government refuses to release statistics) and although miners have a legal right to retire after a disabling accident,



Miners forced to work at gunpoint



TORRES

On top of the organised repression by the state, the Bolivian miners face working conditions even worse than those of most miners. Officially, Bolivian miners work an eight-hour day, six days a week, but the pay is so bad most miners end up working twelve hours a day for all seven days of the week.

the pensions are so low that they are forced back to work.

Similarly, although there is a miserable paid holiday entitlement to 15 days after five years work, 20 days after six years and thirty days after ten years, most miners take the holiday pay and carry on working as they desperately need the extra money.

The situation in the mines is so bad that the average life expectancy of an underground driller is only 30 years, and the only reason that some live longer is that they've spent so long out of the mines — in jail or in exile!

The military regime has of course made no attempts to alleviate these terrible living conditions, in fact in the mining area as described by the NUM team, "in appearance and with the physical presence of the army, it looked like a concentration camp."

PETER HOLDEN

France - SP left-wing shuts up shop

AT THEIR CONGRESS on the weekend of 18-19 June, the leaders of the French Socialist Party were preparing their party for a victory in the 1978 elections.

"We must build up the Party against the complexes which socialist militants have in relation to the CP and the leftists, against the fear of I don't know what betrayal... We must struggle against the danger within us of allowing ourselves to go in for the politics of out-bidding. You have read Arlette Laguiller's speech trying to rally the workers against our 'betrayals'. We will have to be firm against these pressures when we are in power" declared Jean Poperen.

The Socialist Party left-wing minority, CERES, were willing to show they were immune to the pressure of Trotskyists like Arlette Laguiller. "I understand that François Mitterand needs a tactical margin of manoeuvre. We trust him" declared CERES leader Jean-Pierre Chevènement. CERES pledged to dissolve itself as an organised faction, without receiving any concessions in return.

And so François Mitterand can rely on a thoroughly docile party behind him in his bid to become Prime Minister.

Today the SP is, electorally, the strongest party in France. Yet in 1969 it got only 4% of the votes in the presidential elections.

Ever since the late 1930s, it had declined more and more into a mere consortium of mayors, town councillors and parliamentarians. François Mitterand, an establishment politician of long standing, saw his chance to benefit from the shift to the left in France after 1968, and set about constructing

a new party.

In 1972, the Union of the Left alliance was established between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. The CP has been willing to assist the SP for the sake of gaining a few positions in a future Mitterand government.

To build up its strength, the Socialist Party has had to use unaccustomed left-wing language. It speaks of the "class front", contrasting its "working class" strategy to the CP's line of the "union of the French people". It explains that it seeks to avoid becoming "an instrument of the petty bourgeoisie". It tries to build factory branches. It talks of workers' self-management.

But now, having assembled a probable election majority behind the Union of the Left, Mitterand is already stressing that no-one should expect a Left government to do very much very quickly, that unemployment and inflation will continue, and that any "impatience" will be disastrous.

The CP takes its stand a little to the left of the SP. After the SP Congress the Political Bureau of the CP declared that it had found Mitterand's speeches "worrying". But fundamentally the CP, too, preaches patience to the workers.

There is, after all, something to be learnt from this for the working class. When Mitterand declares that the Union of the Left can do very little for the working class, it is the truth. But the limits are set by Mitterand's ties to the bosses, not by the economic crisis.

Only by its direct action and its own struggles can the working class refuse to pay the costs of the capitalist crisis.

COLIN FOSTER

A failure for the racists



NINE years ago, London dockers marched, in support of Enoch Powell, to protest at the Grunwick strikers being allowed into Britain. Last week their banner was among those at the Grunwick picket line.

That Mrs. Jayaben Desai, Mahmoud Ahmed and their comrades are seen as heroes of the British working class movement is a blow against racism worth all the leaflets put together. (Let's have more leaflets, all the same!)

'But this isn't about anti-racism, it's a trade union matter', people are saying, in between sick and mindless (and stale) 'okes' about chappatis, Kit-e-Kat and blokes who look "a bit browned off", nudge nudge.

Right. But so were the strikes of Asian workers at Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters and countless other places trade union matters, and they were heartily stabbed in the back by the labour movement. The President of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers said after the Mansfield Hosiery strike: "We helped the Asians" (his members) "Far more than we helped our own people" (i.e. the white scabs).



The white scabs at the Leicester works of Imperial Typewriters had the nerve to parade around, organised by

the National Front, carrying Union Jacks.

Such things haven't happened at Grunwicks. They seem unthinkable there in the light of the mass solidarity with the strike. But they could have happened, and the issues in dispute aren't so different from others that Asian workers have been involved in without getting support, let alone on such a scale.

Racism is designed to get in the way of "trade union matters" and thwart and destroy the instincts for collective action and solidarity that have been established in 200 years of struggle.

Grunwicks is the first major failure of racism. Let there be many more!

must be a prosecution. "There is a wide public interest factor here. Opposition MPs would be saying quite a different thing if, as a result of action taken hastily by myself or anyone else, the whole of the mail of this country was brought to a standstill."

One law for the weak, another law for the strong?

Ward's Grunwick set-up has been called Dickensian, feudal and even "stone-age". But its character of colonial paternalism came out very clearly when BBC2's "Money Programme" brought into its studio four scabs, four strikers and George Ward.

Apart from one quite hysterical woman who clearly would have found Communists in the Pentagon, the scabs seemed an average enough collection of backward workers — the sort who often enough judge a job by the opportunity it gives them to rub shoulders with and suck up to the boss. And for the right sort of worker, George Ward would be the right sort of boss.

On the strikers' side there were no spectacular horror stories — just experiences of being messed around, not knowing when they could leave at night or what the next person was earning.

The sort of straight dealing, by negotiation and arrangement, which the strikers are fighting for is anathema to the paternalistic boss who likes to control everything himself, to have his favourites, to harass those who won't play ball, to divide and to rule.

That there were still some inside who could be moved was shown over the weekend, when Jorge Jimenez walked out, saying he'd been wrestling with his conscience and couldn't bear the shame of it any more.

He also revealed how the scabs benefited from the union and the strikers they hated so much: they'd had two pay rises, of 10% and then 12%, in the last 10 months.

PICKET LINES

THE OBNOXIOUS one-time Police Federation crows James Callaghan proudly admitted that the idea of armbands to identify 'respectable' pickets, leaving the others as a sort of "free-fire" zone for the police had been his idea.

Martin Flannery had a better idea: armbands to identify the police since so many of them were passing themselves off as the more violent sort of picket, the sort that allowed the press to talk of milk bottles being "the standard weapon".

Down at Chapter Road the morning that the armbands made their debut, many pickets obediently put them on. Suddenly through a loud-hailer came the voice of Mrs. Desai: "Attention please. The strike committee is NOT WEARING ARMBANDS".

And that was the end of Jim's bright idea.

THURSDAY was an eventful day. It began with the arrest of Arthur Scargill — twice! It seems that Arthur is a handy size for arresting, and coppers just made a bee-line for him. The first one was told at once by a superior officer to let Scargill go, but just as he did so, another green young copper pounced and had Arthur in the police bus before he could be stopped.

Word got round quickly. Before long somebody nudged him — "Have you heard, they've arrested Arthur Scargill..."

About an hour later, the Press got their first lucky break: an injured policeman. [Injured pickets, like Mary Davis whose leg was broken, are not the stuff of sob-stories.]

Accounts varied as to how SPG man Wilson got his head cut by a bottle. At first he was said to have been hit by a flying bottle; but as that is rather implausible [it would more likely have fractured his skull that cut him open] the story was changed, and now a man had run out of the crowd of pickets, stabbed him with a broken bottle and run away without being caught or seen.

A more likely version which we have heard is that PC Wilson lost his footing and fell onto a broken bottle.

THE worst lies of the week came from seemingly neutral television presenters, who would start off their little introductions with a run-down on the dispute: on the one side we have the strikers, fighting for union recognition; and on the other side, another set of workers, fighting for the right not to join a union.

And Ward? He's just the referee, of course.

Another favourite, this one preferred by the police and the politicians, is the need to protect the right to work. They have to be careful where to use that one: it wouldn't do at all for a redundancy dispute. And the Brent police, who savagely fell upon the Right to Work March last year not two miles from Grunwick gates, may find it a bit embarrassing.

Attorney General Sam Silkin got into trouble for telling the House of Commons that he had passed the buck to the Post Office over the law-defying postal boycott of Grunwicks. Why wasn't he enforced to know.

So Silkin told them exactly what Edward Heath might have told them in July 1972, after the Solicitor General had been got to release the five dockers from Pentonville. Simply because an offence had been committed it didn't follow that there



Scargill — mistaken identity...

What use are Labour's laws



GEORGE WARD was within his legal rights to sack workers for striking. He is within his legal rights to challenge ACAS in the High Court. He was within his legal rights to invoke the 1953 Post Office Act against the UPW to force postal workers to handle his goods.

Apart from the law, he has "The Law" on his side: hundreds of them every day, with licence to use any amount of violence on George Ward's behalf.

Little wonder that George Ward insists on conducting the union recognition dispute at Grunwicks "according to the law". That way he has a fighting chance of winning. He knows that the law, the state, is an instrument of the capitalist system. The law is on his side, whereas in an open trade union conflict he hasn't a hope.

This has put the Labour Government on the spot. In return for wage curbs and unfaltering loyalty, Labour is supposed to have given the trade union movement a battery of laws for its use. That was its side of the Social Contract. And now George Ward has come along and shown them up as worthless.

Five years ago this month there was almost a general strike when five dockers were jailed for defying the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. This week, thousands of workers may be on strike in support of postmen suspended for refusing to handle Grunwicks mail. Next Monday, July 11th, there is to be a mass picket-demonstration modelled on Saltley Gates, February 1972.

Caught up in a class confrontation that is nearly of the proportions of Saltley Gates and Pentonville Week, the Government is shying away, trying desperately to cool and de-fuse the situation. That's why Employment Secretary Albert Booth tried to make a deal with Ward.

And the trade union leaders, who weren't happy to see such things happen when Heath was in the hot seat, are scared to death that Callaghan — and with him the Social Contract — may be in the firing line.

So they're backing off as fast as they can, using the violence of the picket line (which they now have the nerve to blame more and more on the pickets themselves) to say that the magnificent solidarity is "defeating its own ends". Instead of calling for an escalation of the picketing and blacking to finish off Ward, they have run around looking for a sell-out to get them off the hook.

The Tories — with the more reckless right making the running — are goading the government to go over the top. They have seen every anti-working class action of this government lose it ever more seats and votes. What better than to have Callaghan cap it with direct government action against the Grunwick strike! And of course they want to see the strike defeated: for it is now a society-wide test of strength, and a great deal will hang on its outcome for months, perhaps years, to come.

A MASS PICKET IS NOT A LEGAL PICKET

THE law on picketing says that it must be for the purpose of "peacefully persuading" by "communicating information". Despite all the protestations, everyone knows that's not what the Grunwick mass picket is about. Even area APEX organiser Len Gristey, who has collaborated with the police in making the picket less effective, said it was planned to have its effect "by sheer force of numbers". And that's not the same as "communicating information".

For 10 months scabs and suppliers crossing the Grunwick picket line have heard the case. They certainly know there's a strike on!

That "communication of information" didn't succeed in tightening the blacking to cut off Grunwick, as has happened in the last three weeks. It didn't succeed in getting any scabs to join the strike; a dozen have walked out in the last three weeks.

The law defines picketing very narrowly. Very often, such picketing is effective. But where it isn't, trade unionists have to look for other methods. In that case, it's no use trying to squeeze a mass picket into the limit of the legal definition of an ordinary picket. And let's not forget that that is only legal because workers fought for it and made it legal by insisting on doing it. In the same way, we must now insist on the mass picket.

The law and the state are on the side of George Ward. The balance of forces, the weight of numbers, are on the side of the strikers. But this force will be weakened if it tries to fit in with the legality that was tailored to suit George Ward and his like.

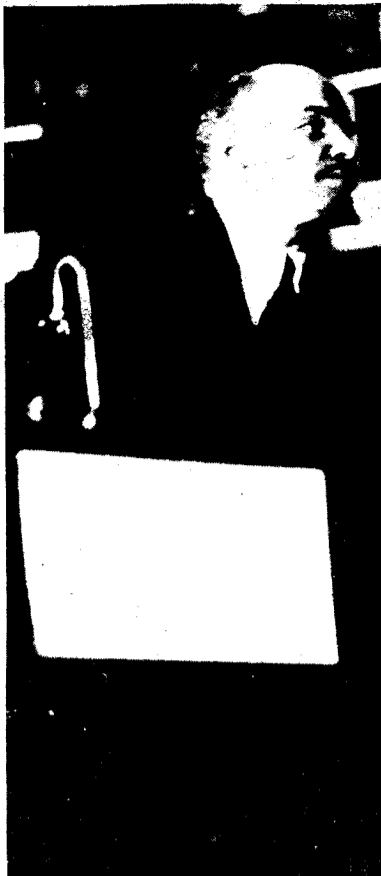
The first draft of the **British Road to Socialism**, the programme of the Communist Party, appeared in 1951. The draft now published for discussion is the fifth draft.

There is hardly a line in it that is correct. Its assessment of the world forces, its analysis of the trade unions, its characterisation of the Soviet Union, its implicit theory of the state, of revolution and, indeed, of the class struggle and socialism itself are all wrong.

But the **British Road to Socialism** is not a haphazard compendium of errors. It is a coherent strategy setting as its goal the erection of a thoroughly bureaucratised workers' state. What provides the programme with its coherence is the implicit rejection in it that socialism is both the society ensuring the liberation of the working class and itself the creation of the working class in the course of its emancipation.

In this two-part article (**Part 2 next week**) paul adams shows how the **British Road to Socialism** is the product of a bureaucratic ideology hostile to the lessons of the class struggle and serving only to mislead workers in their fight for socialism.

In later articles, **Workers' Action** will deal in more detail with some of the many questions raised in the **British Road**. We shall also look at some of the weightier criticisms made of the draft from within the Communist Party itself.



Lenin — "Smash the state"

The present, latest draft (for discussion) of the **British Road to Socialism**, the programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain, is reformist through and through. Its general theoretical conclusions do not base themselves on the lessons of the class struggle; neither do its proposals provide the organising focus for the development of a working class political practice which can start as an assault on capitalism and end with the consolidation of workers' power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The "argument" of the **British Road** can be summarised as follows: the tendency to monopoly drives the smaller and middle capitalists increasingly into the camp of democratic opposition, which is spearheaded by the working class movement. The alliance created by the coming together of the working class, the non-monopolist capitalists and the intermediate layers of professionals and others is so massive that it cannot but embrace large sections of the

state apparatus (all but the topmost) and isolate the monopolists as a tiny section of society.

The alliance — the anti-monopoly alliance — provides, in this scenario, the social support for a 'Left Government', consisting of Labour Party and Communist Party members. Because of the democratic/constitutional traditions of Britain, and because of this isolation of the monopolists and their closest supporters, the Left Government is able to legislate acts which progressively remove the sources of the capitalists' economic supremacy without the ruling class being able to resist effectively.

At the same time the Left Government begins a transformation of the state apparatus into one which is loyal to it by democratising that apparatus. In this way the Government progressively removes the source of the capitalists' political supremacy.

The capitalists who have been isolated and paralysed nationally are unable to

REJECTING THE LESSONS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Commenting on the programmes of the early nineteenth century socialists, Marx 'excused' their utopianism because in their day "the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement."

From that time onwards, however, failure to base a programme for socialism on the "historical initiative" of the working class could not be excused in this way. Because from that time onwards such a failure could only occur where a programme actually rejected that working class "historical initiative" which is the principle feature of the last 150 years of history.

STRIKES

The social democratic parties of the Second International [1889-1914] degenerated into reformism not only because their idea of the daily struggle lost sight of its goal of socialist revolution, but because they ceased to base their conception of the daily struggle on the lessons of the class struggle, in particular, its high points.

German Social Democracy, for instance, the biggest and most authoritative section of the Second International, continued to repeat the idea that a general strike was an anarchist idiosyncrasy doomed to failure — long after general strikes, both of protest and of the insurrectionary type, had taken place and within limits been successful.

It is no accident that the division between the minority revolutionary wing of the German Social Democracy and the majority reformist wing [a division which became a more or less open breach with the outbreak of the first imperialist war in 1914] had grown up not around the question of war but around the question of who was prepared to learn from the lessons of that great eruption of proletarian creativity, the mass strike

movement in the Russian Empire in 1905.

Needless to say the reformists were not prepared to. The revolutionaries on the other hand embraced this great experience and, despite certain weaknesses of analysis, made it their own — reworking, rethinking and re-elaborating the conception of the tactics of the socialist class struggle according to the new lessons.

The reasons for the degeneration of the parties of the Second International into reformism were not the same as the reasons for the degeneration of the parties of the Third International [1919-1933]. The degeneration of the parties of the Third International, the Communist Parties, was a product of the degeneration of Marxism which accompanied the victory of the Soviet bureaucracy over party and working class democracy.

Thus the trend represented by the mass Labour and Socialist Parties and based on the labour bureaucracy in the capitalist countries finds itself competing in those same countries with a not very different trend basing itself on the state bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

Both trends, having their material base in a privileged and bureaucratic stratum, naturally reject both the lessons of working class struggle [which only serve to indict them] and the idea of a programme that stimulates and organises that struggle from below.

A programme cut off from the working class experience in this way can only be a neutered abstraction designed to confirm the controlling influence of its drafters. It is bound to reject one of the central ideas of the Communist Manifesto, that "The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on principles that have been invented ... they merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from an historical movement going on under our very eyes."

Communist Party dra British Ro to Nowhe



In Germany 1918, armed workers took control of the streets of Berlin.

resort to foreign intervention because the balance of world forces does not favour this. With the increasing democratisation of property forms and of the state apparatus we thus eventually arrive at socialism ... by means of peaceful transition.

In this grand plan we find rejected the Marxist conceptions of the state, of revolution, of class alliances and of socialism. This is not a matter of textual orthodoxy: what is being rejected is not books, but the lessons of the class struggle which certain texts, theories and slogans sum up.

STATE

The mistakes embodied in the British Road's scenario are too many to analyse in any detail. Let us, however, look at the errors concerning a number of closely related ideas — the state, peaceful transition, organs of workers' power. For it is these errors, these revisions of the lessons Marxism has formulated on the basis of

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Part one THE STATE AND SOVIET POWER

the experience of the class struggle, that lie at the very heart of the CPGB's bureaucratic-reformist strategy.

"The state" says Lenin bluntly in his polemic against Kautsky "is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another." That being the case, a ruling class that loses control of the state to another class has in theory ceased to be a ruling class.

Marx understood this insufficiently clearly when he wrote the **Communist Manifesto** in 1847. After the class struggles in France between 1848 and 1851, Marx realised that in France the mistake had been that "all revolutions perfected this (state) machine instead of smashing it." This was a big step forward, and one which separated the Marxists from the different trends of reformism which denied the need to smash the state.

After the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 Marx and Engels were able to reiterate this idea ("One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'...") and concretise it further — something that was not possible on the basis only of the experiences up to 1847 or 1851.

After the Russian revolution of 1917, it was possible to go even further. "The proletariat" Lenin reminds his readers "cannot 'lay hold of' the 'state apparatus' and 'set it in motion'. But it can **smash** everything that is oppressive, routine, incorrigibly bourgeois in the old state apparatus and substitute its **own**, new apparatus. The Soviets of Workers' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are exactly this apparatus."

This new, Soviet type of state, Lenin said elsewhere, "gives the working and oppressed people the chance to take an active part in the independent building up of a new society."

But the Soviets which after the October revolution became the apparatus of the new state had originated as something else. They had originated as the most all-embracing organisations of the workers and other oppressed classes in the struggle to overthrow the domination of the capitalists and landlords.

A revolutionary programme today is one which would insist on the need to smash the capitalist state (which the British Road to Socialism does not) and replace it with a new state apparatus of workers' councils (soviets) which would ensure the closest possible link with the masses, the cheapest and least bureaucratic form of administration, the right of recall of all elect-

ed officials and the involvement of the mass of the population in the creation of their own society.

All this is rejected in the scenario of the British Road. Naturally, as the bureaucratic mentality of which it is a product must reject such an anti-bureaucratic, militant and creative idea.

SOVIET

The Soviets — which under the Stalinist bureaucracy, of course, ceased to be organs of workers' democracy — are said to be all right for Russia. But, the CP says, the idea is "strictly not for export".

Yet as long ago as 1919, Lenin at the First Congress of the Communist International could point to "the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, ie Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries..."

That was the only possible verdict on the basis of the class struggle of that time, and experience of the class

working class should resort to force. The message is to be passive, while the CPGB relies on the state forces of the bourgeois state to be the spearhead of attack against the bourgeois resistance.

The "logic" of such a line is simply baffling. But the tragic consequences are easy to see. The experience of the terrible defeat of the Chilean working class at the hands of the Pinochet junta should be enough to expose the dangers of this line.

This is what Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, said in a speech in July 1973, "Always we have maintained — and we repeat it today on the weight of recent successes — that in the conditions existing in Chile there is a real possibility to complete the anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical revolution, and march forward to Socialism without civil war, although, naturally, maintaining an intense class struggle."

The speech was published in the CPGB's monthly magazine **marxism today** in the September of that year. Before the copies had been bought off the bookstalls the writer was in hiding, the government smashed, a regime of torture and terror in power and thousands of Chileans dead.

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On the Paris Commune barricades

struggle has confirmed this judgment scores of times since then in places as far

In short: the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is inconceivable without the working class throwing up the potential organs of its undivided power in the period of the struggle against capitalist domination and carrying these over, enlarging and perfecting them, as the form of the new workers' state.

VIOLENCE

The question of revolutionary violence or peaceful transition is closely bound up with this idea. According to the British Road, socialist revolution "can be carried through in Britain in conditions in which world war can be prevented, and without civil war, by a combination of mass struggles outside Parl-

liament, and the election of a parliamentary majority and government determined to implement a socialist programme."

This is not, for them, just a statement of a theoretical possibility. As such it would simply be uninteresting. No doubt in rather exceptional circumstances the working class could come to power without civil war. It is very unlikely, but cannot be excluded in theory. But once again, a programme of socialist revolution rests on the experience of class struggle and there is no example of a peaceful transition to workers' power.

The CPGB in any case goes further than merely stating the theoretical possibility of a peaceful transition. It has devoted scores of texts to proving the correctness of its commitment to this road.

Of course, if all that was merely intended to emphasise that it will be the bourgeoisie who will oblige the working class to resort to violence, there might be little harm in this. Or if the CPGB's programme were to conclude that the chances of

working class should resort to force. The message is to be passive, while the CPGB relies on the state forces of the bourgeois state to be the spearhead of attack against the bourgeois resistance.

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CHILE

The coup that overthrew the Popular Unity government of Allende was the work of the armed forces. There had been divisions within the army, between the rank and file (many of them conscripts) and the officers. But the CPC did nothing to promote the struggle of the rank and file, instead it supported the unity of the army, criticising all those who are "pledged to create an abyss between the armed forces and the people." And Corvalan even rounds on those who are "maintaining little less than that we are intending to replace the professional army" with a clear denial of this intention:

"No sirs! We continue to support the absolutely professional character of the armed institutions." And they did...improving the forces' weaponry,...until those same improved weapons in the hands of those "absolutely professional" soldiers overthrew the government and replaced it with the organs of military terror.

In the light of this experience it is not the slightest bit reassuring to read that "In the event of such a right wing coup being launched, the left government would have no hesitation in using force to defeat it." We need to know not whether the government hesitate to use force, but whether it will **have the force to use.**

THE LAST few weeks have seen a major revival of the so-called "Great Debate" over British membership of the Common Market. The Cabinet is split over the question of direct elections to the European Parliament; Wedgwood Benn's description of British membership as an "unmitigated disaster" has been widely supported in the Labour Party; while the Labour Common Market Safeguards Committee has produced a new pamphlet "The Common Market: The Cost of Membership."

The view of Workers' Action has been that the working class has no interest in supporting the Common Market — or in opposing it.

The options we were given were a capitalist Europe or a separate capitalist Britain, and we don't want either. A United Socialist Europe, which we do favour, was not on offer.

We argued that it was a defeat for the working class to have become involved in what was basically a dispute among the capitalists about which was the most effective way to exploit workers. The fact that by 1975 only the Left (plus Enoch Powell and sections of the far right) supported the anti-Market option made the situation slightly absurd but did not change its basic nature.

Defeat

Because the Left, including most of the supposedly revolutionary groups, put all its emphasis on getting Britain out, the "Yes" vote in the 1975 referendum was seen as a big defeat. But, we have argued, the real defeat was to get into the argument at all.

Have the events of the past two years given us reason to change our position? Let us look at the arguments put forward by the Common Market Safeguards Committee.

One of their main targets is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The case is that the EEC price of all basic foods is higher than the world price, and is kept high by food taxes which mean that people buy less food, and this leads to overproduction and the growth of the notorious food "mountains" and "lakes". Having to import food from Europe at high prices cost "our" balance of payments some £600 million last year, according to the Safeguards Committee.

No socialist can support a policy which raises the price of food and subsidises waste while millions starve in the 'Third World' and even in Europe old people, the unemployed and the low paid go short.

But putting all the blame on CAP distorts the whole picture. CAP has raised food prices by 3% or less in each year since Britain joined. (Economist, 11.6.77). This compares with a total increase in food prices of 120% since 1973.

The balance of payments argument is based on the assumption that the working class should worry about the profitability of the British capitalist economy and take responsibility for the existing capitalist system in the world market-place.

Farmers

But workers do not control it, nor does it work in our interests, so why should we take responsibility for its problems? Would working class families see any of that £600 million if Britain left the Common Market? As against that, British farm subsidies cost an average of £300 million a year in 1971-73, and today they have nearly disappeared.

From the working class viewpoint the solution to CAP-induced price rises is the linking of wages to a cost of living index which

EEC: Tribune raise this 'red herring' again

by Simon Temple

really reflects our living costs. That would deal not just with EEC farm prices but with all aspects of inflation, whether or not Britain was in the EEC.

In passing, it is worth noting that the Safeguards Committee is so exclusively concerned with supposed British interests that it completely misses one of the worst features of CAP: its failure to protect the livelihood of small farmers (as it was supposed to do). Lacking economic power, they are unable to get more than the basic support price for their products, while they are charged high interest on loans for investment.

This has forced a steady flow of farmers off the land and onto the dole queues. But in most of Britain small farmers were eliminated decades ago and it isn't an issue: so it is of no concern to the Tribune group.

The anti-market solution to the fishing industry's problems is to end the Common Fisheries Policy and erect a guaranteed 50-mile exclusive British fishing zone. But this is even less of a sol-

What will the left groups do this time

As the debate over Britain's entry into the Common Market warmed up between 1970 and 1975, a number of organisations calling themselves revolutionary — groups like the IMG and IS (now SWP) — ditched their previous abstentionist positions on the issue and went along with the "Keep Britain Out" campaign.

IS gave the simplest reason for reversing a position it had held for fifteen years: we're voting "NO" because the majority of workers are doing that, and particularly the majority of the Left.

The IMG could not be content with as simple an admission of ideological bankruptcy as IS. It added to IS's bald statement a number of deep theoretical considerations about the balance of forces on a world scale and the emerging strong state of the EEC. It thereby converted its support for the "Keep Britain Out" campaign from a tactic into a question of far greater consequence.

What now? Will these organisations now have the courage of consistency, and support the Tribune campaign as they did before? Or will they have the good sense to desert the idiocies they cobbled together to justify the unjustifiable, and attack the Tribunes for raising this thoroughly reactionary and diversionary campaign?

ution to the problem of over-fishing than the EEC's scheme. It is a recipe for continued cod wars and a barrier to fish conservation.

The anti-Market line inevitably puts the blame for the decline of the fishing industry on "foreign fishermen", not on the trawler owners whose determination to make a fast buck is destroying the industry — not to mention the lives of trawler workers.

The real answer is a united struggle by EEC trawler workers for guaranteed job security, shorter hours and safer conditions

Profit

The Safeguards Committee assert that the trade deficit in manufactured goods between Britain and the rest of the EEC was a major factor in pushing up unemployment from 806,000 in January 1973 to 866,000 in June 1975 and to 1,383,000 in March 1977. If this were true we could expect unemployment rates to be lower on the Continent as workers were employed to make all those exports to Britain.

In fact, British unemployment was lower than the EEC average and it has increased at the very point when the trade gap (allowing for inflation, which the Safeguards Committee does not) began to narrow. (Exports to the EEC were 86% of imports in the first three months of 1977 compared with 72% in 1975.)

The real reason for unemployment is the anarchy of a system based on production for profit rather than need, both inside and outside the Common Market. The way to combat it is by imposing a shorter working week without loss of pay, not by agitating against the EEC.

Underlying the Labour Left's opposition to the Common Market is their recognition of the fact that it conflicts with their Alternative Economic Strategy, which is supposed to lead to ... socialism. In fact, that strategy is nothing but an attempt to revive the British capitalist economy by a combination of state directed investment and import controls.

This would lead to much greater state control of industry but on a capitalist basis; while financing it would involve at least as great an attack on working class living standards as present government policy does. And import controls would mean higher prices (if cheap goods are kept out) and unemployment for workers elsewhere.

Un-British

The whole policy operates on the assumption that British workers' interests lie with British bosses rather than with foreign workers. This comes out very clearly in the Safeguards Committee pamphlet with its constant references to "our balance of payments", "British interests" and so on, without ever considering the interests of the British, and still less the European, working class.

It is only in the light of this nationalism that the Tribunes' opposition to direct elections makes

any sense. One would have thought that any democrat, let alone socialist, would support an elected European parliament rather than an appointed Commission. And the Tribunes are the most avid parliamentarians when parliament means Westminster.

What the anti-Marketters dislike about the proposed set-up, despite their complaints about the "Brussels bureaucracy", is not that it is undemocratic, but that it is un-British.

The question of British membership of the EEC always was a massive diversion for the working class. In or out of the Common Market, the capitalist system will require continual attacks on the working class. An anti-EEC campaign would inevitably divide us from fellow workers on the Continent. It would weaken the real struggle that is beginning to develop against the Social Contract.

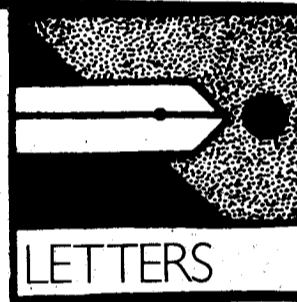
And this is a major reason be-

hind the Tribune group's attempt to re-raise the issue today. If they can blame the Common Market for high prices, unemployment and virtually everything else that hits British workers, they can avoid the fact that most of them have done nothing to oppose the government's capitalist policies.

Militants

Unfortunately, some militants within the Labour Party are already being carried away with the idea of rolling out the anti-Market bandwagon again. This should be strongly opposed. Instead, socialist should fight for demands that can really answer the needs of the working class: for wage rises linked to the cost of living, for shorter working hours, against the cuts; and for working class unity to achieve these demands.

Socialist Challenge: is it too soon to judge?



Comrades,

It is a common error on the British revolutionary left to seek to justify its fractured nature with reference to the Bolshevik/Menshevik split of 1903. Your editorial on the appearance of *Socialist Challenge* (WA No.60) is a case in point.

You attack the idea that "revolutionaries should place the question of socialist unity at the centre of our political tasks today" by claiming that this can only lead to diffuse discussion circles or unity on the most vague and general idea of politics. And you assert that "a revolutionary organisation can only be unified on the basis of clear agreement on a defined programme and a well understood tactical line". Worse still, you say that "a revolutionary party can only unify on the basis of agreement on ... the actual answers it gives to the problems posed by the class struggle".

This confused nonsense, which would lead any revolutionary party you somehow managed to cobble together to fly apart again the moment there was the slightest difference (or even lack of clarity!) on programme, tactics or even day-to-day agitation, has nothing in common with the Bolshevik/Menshevik split.

The Bolsheviks in 1903 were not unified on the basis of clear agreement on even a defined programme. In fact, to use your phrase, their unity was "based on the most vague and general idea of (revolutionary) politics" — much more vague than the basic ideas held in common by all of the Trotskyist and would-be Trotskyist groups in Britain today. The issue that divided the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks was the apparently insignificant (but in fact incom-

parably more important) question of what kind of Party do you need to be able to carry out the (vague and general) programme of socialist revolution.

Carried away by the nonsense of your argument, you slander the IMG's struggle to unify the revolutionary left by identifying it with Menshevism and by claiming that "the IMG have undertaken in effect to sacrifice the possibility of having a means of intervening week by week in the class struggle with their own line." Really? And upon what tiny shred of "evidence" do you base this literally incredible assertion?!

It is tempting to conclude that your main objection to revolutionary unity is that in a united organisation such wild assertions would rapidly discredit your tendency and lead to its total disappearance.

In fact, the only merit I can find in your whole editorial is what I take as a warning against the danger of substituting towards revolutionary unity taken around *Socialist Challenge* for the development and politicisation of class struggle forces demanding precise answers to the problem of how to take the struggle forward.

But to claim (after just one issue of *Socialist Challenge* no less!) that it is already an accomplished fact is, to say the least, a little premature.

PAUL HUNTER
Birmingham

The reply to this letter has had to be held over this next week for lack of space. ED.

Anti-Apartheid turns to the Unions

THE National Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, meeting last Saturday, took an important step forward in the development of effective solidarity work in Britain.

The meeting passed a resolution that came from the Midlands Regional Workshop of Anti-Apartheid local groups. It called on the Anti-Apartheid National Executive to "organise a campaign in the trade union and labour movement at all levels on the issue of solidarity with the authentic organisations of the South African working class to culminate in a week of local trade union action on 17-22 January 1978".

The resolution went on to say that "the campaign should pay particular attention to

- the employment of non-union labour by British multinationals in South Africa;
- the effective recognition by the British TUC of the South African Congress of Trade

Unions as the only authentic representative of the South African trade union movement;

□ recognition by employers and the state of the unconditional right of workers to take industrial action including strike action."

The resolution also outlined an 8-point plan for the campaign to include broadening of AAM's trade union committee, inviting unions to circulate their branches and shop stewards committees with AAM speakers' lists, and to encourage local branches to affiliate to AAM. For the Week of Action, national unions will be asked to endorse industrial action in solidarity with South African workers.

The adoption of this resolution marks a very serious step for the AAM, away from its traditional main line of courting respectable figures and towards a serious orientation to the labour movement.

MAC CLARKE

CAN RANK & FILE TEACHER RECOVER WITH SWP IN CHARGE?

THE annual conference of Rank & File Teacher took place last weekend in London. The conference decided to mobilise for this week's Open Conference of NUT members in Birmingham, which will represent broader sections of the Left in the teachers' union.

Rank & File Teacher has always been the largest of a group of rank and file bodies under the control of the SWP (Socialist Workers Party, previously IS), and has been in continuous existence since 1968. But during the past three years its membership has declined from 1500 to about 300. This was partly due to difficult conditions imposed by a right wing Union Executive and an economic downturn. But the ultra left politics of the SWP, seeing unofficial action as a cure-all for any situation, played their part too.

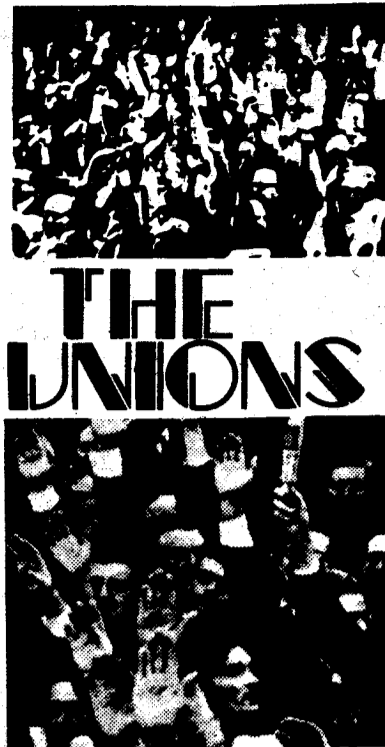
This year's conference was a low key affair compared to last year's eruptions (not reported in *Socialist Worker*) when a third of the delegates walked out in protest against the bureaucratic control and block-voting of IS and its supporters. (Many of those militants have regrouped to form the Socialist Teachers' Alliance).

The exclusion of nearly every other point of view by the SWP has had a numbing

effect over the past year on the organisation, especially on its intervention at this Easter's NUT conference. Last weekend the national organiser spoke of problems in even just establishing contact and gaining an up-to-date national picture. All the resolutions came from six London groups, indicating that apart from traditionally militant London other areas have suffered serious setbacks.

One important resolution was for a campaign for a £15 interim claim this Autumn. Only one delegate pointed out the need to fight for this together with a sliding scale of wages to keep up with inflation. But on the credit side, the resolution was amended to be a joint campaign "...together with all other forces in the Union opposed to Phase 3 of the Social Contract." This proposal will now be put to the Open Conference in Birmingham.

Rank & File has been forced by the pressure of events to take a more balanced view of the question of official and unofficial action. Apart from a few hardliners, most delegates seemed to recognise that, while workplace organisation is of prime importance in any struggle, many teachers still need to go through the experience of Executive-led official action



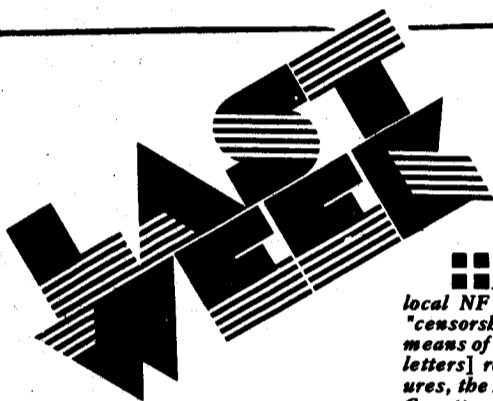
before they can be won over to a militant position.

The basic question of democracy within Rank & File is still to be resolved. This year's EC was elected unopposed without presenting any political platform. A resolution calling for the reconstitution of quarterly National Committees (abolished last year by IS to stifle debate) was heavily defeated, though it was moved by the East London group which supported the NC's abolition last year.

This means that supporters have no way of debating the way forward and of making the EC accountable during the whole of next year.

If the slow beginnings of a re-growth in Rank & File is to be consolidated, then supporters must fight to make Rank & File itself more democratic and open to full debate.

CHEUNG SIU MING
[Lambeth R & F Delegate]



■ ■ ■ Replying to a letter from local NF candidate complaining of "censorship" against the Front [by means of exclusion of pro-NF letters] resulting from NUT pressures, the Editor of the *Islington Gazette* states this week: "What Mr. Chauey [the NF candidate] doesn't know about are the numerous letters attacking the National Front which we have received and not published in recent months." Now we know...

■ ■ ■ The automatic dismissal from the Army of the Coldstream Guardsman freed by the Appeal Court from a three year sentence for a sadistic sex attack provoked a lot of interest. There were numerous post mortems to find out how the Appeal Court had been "misled" into releasing him to pursue his army career when in fact army rules meant that he would be sacked anyway.

Yet in a way, it was a good thing the court was "misled": clearly the judges were looking for an excuse to let off the young soldier who they saw as simply having expressed his masculinity a bit too roughly. If it hadn't been for the outrageous reason given for his release, the case might not have had so much notice.

It was the judges' comments, as much as their leniency, that provoked so much anger. Their attitudes revealed yet again the ignorance common among judges about rape, and their very common bias in favour of the accused man.

Rape is not an act committed by a sex starved maniac provoked by the sight of a pretty girl. Most rapes are planned, many are committed in a victim's home by a "friend" or acquaintance. Most rapes involve a degree of violence such as beating, choking or knifing. Often the victim is deliberately humiliated sexually, or verbally. An attack can involve forced oral sex, multiple rape, injury to genitals deliberately inflicted. Some rapists urinate, defecate or spit on their victims.

All this indicates that rape is about a great deal more than the "enthusiasm for sex" referred to by Justice Wien.

In the wake of the Coldstream Guard case, MP Jack Ashley called for mandatory minimum sentences of 5 years for sex attackers as "the only way of ending this (judicial) discrimination. And the Organisation Women Against Rape called for the dismissal of the three Appeal Court judges who let off Guardsman Tom Holdsworth, for financial compensation from the State to rape victims, and for a judicial acknowledgement of the fact that rape takes place within marriage.

■ ■ ■ Working class women in America suffered a setback last week. The House of Representatives voted to ban the use of Federal Medicaid funds for abortions. [Of the USA's 1.1 million known [i.e. legal] abortions in 1976, 300,000 were paid for by Medicaid, which funds medical treatment for the poor]. And the Supreme Court ruled that neither the constitution nor federal law requires states to use Medicaid for abortions that are not medically motivated.

■ ■ ■ The National Conference of Labour Women overwhelmingly carried a resolution calling for a 3-line whip on Labour MPs to vote against the anti-abortion Benyon Bill.

■ ■ ■ 104,000 school leavers joined the dole queues in May/June. And young people are staying on the dole longer than ever. In 1974, it took until October for three quarters of the summer's school leavers to find their first job; last year it took until December.

In the five years to January '77, unemployment among 16 and 17-year olds went up by 120 per cent, compared with a rise of 45% in unemployment among the whole working population over those years. And the trend is the same throughout western Europe, where under-25s account for 22% of the workforce but 40% of the unemployed.

The growing proportion of the unemployed who are very young is partly due to the fact that bosses can't kick them around quite so much as they used to or pay them as little, and so they reckon they may as well have a more experienced worker for their money.

But a major factor is undoubtedly the very common use of "natural wastage" to cut the workforce. This means that for every worker who retires no new entrant is taken on; the vacancy is left unfilled, and the extra work (if there is any) is shared out among a shrinking workforce for no extra pay.

If kids are not to be left on the dole, "natural wastage" must be fought by a policy of not covering for jobs left unfilled. Instead of working harder and longer, hours should be cut and the work shared out to bring young people into work.

Greenwich occupation calls Day of Action

Steelworkers in occupation at GREENWICH REINFORCEMENT have called for a DAY OF ACTION on July 5th. They are calling on other trade unionists to meet them at Speakers Corner at 1.30 for a demonstration and march to

British Steel Corporation headquarters at Grosvenor Place, SW1. They will hold a mass picket there from 2.30.

We print below their message to the labour movement for support in this Day of Action.

☞ We are calling this day of action in order to build support for the reinstatement of all those presently in occupation at Greenwich Reinforcement.

This is a fight to preserve Trade Unionists Rights and to oppose victimisation in any form.

On 22nd June all those occupying Greenwich Reinforcement received notice of dismissal and have since been told that as from July 8th Greenwich Reinforcement will be closed. The occupation began on May 12th to defend the six workers sacked and seven suspended for taking part with the complete workforce on the May 11th day of action called by NUPE against public expenditure cuts.

Since being in occupation certain documents have

come into our possession. They clearly show that management have been building up files on employees with the help of both the Economic League (an anti Trade Unionists organisation) and the Special Branch, and are still doing so by secretly photographing anybody entering or leaving the premises.

Our own union the ISTC have played a negative and harmful role towards the workforce since this plant was opened three years ago, and has a history of supporting scabs.

This has come to light in documents which we have found, with our full time official clearly stating to our Management that in a dispute the Management should "stick by your guns" and "let them sweat it out by the gate". The same

officials now say that they will not intervene on our behalf, although they are prepared to negotiate severance pay for those few not taking part in the occupation.

For all these reasons we are asking for every Trade Unionist to support us on the day of action. If you can't get to Speakers Corner consider other action you can take in support of our case.

1. Picket of BSC Headquarters Grosvenor Place SW1.
2. Token stoppages on 5th July.
3. Mass works meetings on 5th July.
4. Resolutions and letters of support through Union organisations local MPs and councillors, Press and any other Labour movement organisation.
5. Donations of any sort.

[Send donations to Ron Michell, ISTC Branch Sec. 24 Kentmere Rd. London SE18]

WORKERS IN ACTION

FORD STRIKE ENDS

Workers at the Paint, Trim and Assembly [PTA] plant at Ford, Dagenham, have called off their strike and accepted the plan the union officials are pushing. This was after twice previously rejecting the plan.

According to Brian Elliott, the PTA convenor, the reason for the turn-about was that the PTA meeting today was attended by about 1,000 workers from other plants who were not entitled to vote.

The mass meeting was held at 11am in the East Works car park. But voting didn't take place until after 12.00, enabling other workers (from the Foundry, Engine Plant and Body Plant — which have already decided to work normally) to get there for the vote.

This decision now means that action to support the claim for 80% payment for periods of pay-off has been stopped just when it was beginning to hurt the company. And, as the shop stewards committee say in a leaflet to the meeting "If this meeting votes to ... continue the strike then the officials will have no choice but to recommend the strike be made official."

The PTA decision follows the decision by all other plants to accept the 13-point plan worked out between management and the Dagenham Panel — which is made up of District full-time offic-

ials, and convenors and deputy convenors from the Dagenham estate.

That plan offers in reply to the demand for 80% lay-off pay but a short cooling off period (24 hours for suspensions and 48 hours for sackings) during which work will be guaranteed. Put like this, it anyway has the purpose of breaking shop floor organisation and the strength of the shop stewards.

Not surprisingly, it was signed without being shown to the stewards, let alone the shop floor.

The first time the plan had been put to the PTA men at a mass meeting they rejected it, supporting their own convenor (who had not signed it) and stewards.

But a Body Plant meeting on the following Monday did back the plan which was being pushed by their convenor and deputy convenor, Connors and Harraway (both leading Communist Party

members). And they only got this backing after the platform had lied to the meeting, saying that 1400 PTA men were still working, whereas the number was 400. A call for solidarity with the PTA was suppressed, while the platform dragged the meeting out for 4 hours.

On the next day (Tuesday June 28) local officials, hoping the PTA men would be demoralised, called another mass meeting over the heads of the PTA stewards. They said the previous one had been unofficial (though they had called it themselves!) and called the shifts together with the help of the mass media and Fords Industrial Relations Department.

At this meeting men had to occupy the platform to force the officials to let their convenor speak. When he did, attacking the sell-out 13-point plan, the officials walked out.

Again the mass meeting

rejected the plan.

Thursday's meeting saw the officials being booed just as before, though this time they 'allowed' Brian Elliott to speak ... but just once. Finally, with the help of those not entitled to vote, they got their rotten deal accepted.

It would be wrong to think that this is the end of the struggle — though of course it is a big setback. As one worker said afterwards, "When we get laid off again, we'll know what to do. We'll not just go home. We'll picket, because now we know how to take action."

Now they also know, if they didn't before, that the local officials and most of the convenors are out to create new procedural agreements which will rob the shop floor of its strength; and they are using the lay-off issue to do it.

JOHN BLOXAM
JUNE 30th

What the stewards said

"In no way is the shop stewards committee prepared to accept that after two and a half weeks of struggle we should crawl back to work on the basis of the company's latest offer", say the Fords PTA plant stewards in a leaflet rushed out for last Thursday's mass meeting. "They are offering us a 'buffer' of only 24 hours delay before they lay us off. This is just not good enough.

The mass meeting this morning, just as on Monday, has been called by the union officials, not by the shop stewards committee.

"Contrary to the lies peddled by the company the PTA joint works committee (Senior Shop Stewards) did NOT agree to a joint formula to be put to this meeting.

"...Workers right across the whole Dagenham estate —

16,000 of them — have been paid 100% of their wages this week for doing absolutely nothing. If the company can pay other plants in this way" (in order to break the strike) "then they can pay us too.

"Brothers, we call on you to continue the fight. We've got the company in a stranglehold and we can win!

"Brothers, we are fighting for justice, we cannot give up now"

Desoutter workers' strike for union rights enters eighth week

While Grunwicks takes the headlines, the workers at the nearby factory of Desoutter have been on strike for over 7 weeks, also for union recognition. 250 AUEW members are pitted against the boss, a leading light of the Engineering Employers Federation and the CBI.

The struggle was sparked off by management's attempt to transfer a woman worker to another machine in the Machine Shop.

Solid

There has been quite a lot of scabbing — nearly 100 are still working — but despite this and a lot of intimidation from the police the picket line has stayed solid.

After an unsuccessful attempt to occupy the works, Fred Hopper, the Convenor, was sacked and a picket arrested. With official support from the AUEW EC, the strikers are looking for more effective and more meaningful support. The action of Heathrow engineers in blocking the use of Desoutter power tools has only partly been followed at London Transport's Acton Works. Spares and new tools are blocked, but the present ones are being worked.

The major strength of the dispute lies in the potential for building a campaign to block the compressed air power tools in those sections of industry like car, truck and bus assembly, as well as heavy metal assembly like shipyards.

Clinch

But with the EEF behind this dispute, engineers will have to recognise that the questions are going to go wider than union recognition in one north London factory.

That is why the Desoutter strikers also look to mobilisations from their local leadership of the North London District Committee to clinch a victory.

For most of the workers, men and women, Irish, Asian and West Indian, this is their first taste of industrial action. But for the bosses this is their fourth fight against unionisation, and union recognition.

Messages of support and money should be sent to: Bro. D. Neville, Treasurer, 24 Cotmans Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex.

EVENTS

JULY 2nd/3rd: TROOPS OUT Open Conference, to discuss organisation and action by all those supporting immediate withdrawal of British troops from the north of Ireland. 10.30am to 6.30pm at White Horse Hotel, 176 Church Road, London NW10.

SATURDAY 2nd July: Open Conference of NUT members. 10.30pm/5pm at Birmingham University Students' Union. The conference is to discuss implementation of NUT Conference motion No.73 on fighting the cuts, class size etc. More information from the conference convenor at 23 Kenilworth Gardens London SE18.

WEDNESDAY 6th July: Merseyside Workers' Action readers' meeting on the "Lewisham 24 and the danger of Racism". Speakers: Bob Sugden (Lewisham Nalgo and Labour Party); and Neal Smith (Manchester WA supporters group). 7.45pm Pier Hotel, Woodside, Birkenhead. (Near Hamilton Square Station and Woodside Ferry Terminal).

TUESDAY 19th July: a meeting to be chaired by Pat Arrowsmith, in which three Belfast women will speak to demand open inquiries into the deaths of their sons. The women are Mrs. Norney, mother of Leo Norney; Mrs. McCooey, mother of Danny McCooey; and Mrs. Steward, mother of Brian Steward.

The meeting is sponsored by a committee set up to expose British Army terror in Ireland.

It will be at Nufto Hall, Jockey's Fields (off Theobalds Road), starting at 7.30pm.

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Powell attacked after Hounslow meeting

Enoch Powell sneaked into the back entrance of the Red Lion in Hounslow last week to address the local Chamber of Commerce.

At the front, 100 or so demonstrators stood ready to greet him. They included the Hounslow Trades Council and the local YWC, the local All Youth Movement, Women Against Fascism, the Labour Party, the CP, IMG and the SWP, and while they waited they held a meeting in the main street outside the pub.

Powell didn't manage to avoid the demonstrators with his back-door entry, and comrades from the Southall Youth Movement who were ready for him there managed to grab his arm and give him a well-deserved earful — much to the annoyance of attendant policemen who weren't quick enough to stop the incident.

PHOTOS: MINDA

