

# workers' ACTION

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10p

## LEYLAND Vote NO to corporate bargaining

LEYLAND workers are to be balloted on the management's "corporate bargaining" proposals. Workers' Action says: VOTE NO!

The senior stewards' meeting on 18th October voted for the proposals. Some TGWU stewards voted against, but the reasons Moss Evans gave aren't enough to convince a single one of Leyland Cars' 130,000 workers that the TGWU has a serious alternative to the bosses' plans. "We voted against the package", said Evans, "because there wasn't sufficient detail and apparent agreement on the incentive schemes".

But there are very good reasons for voting against.

Management's offer will mean a cut in real wages. It includes straight wage increases within the 10% limit, the possibility of self-financing productivity increases, and possible parity increases

when Government pay policy allows. That isn't enough to keep up with price rises of 15% a year.

Management's plan will demolish whatever rank and file control over wage negotiations exists at present. Negotiations will be carried out by full time officials, convenors and senior stewards, tied up in the 'participation' scheme and free from any direct accountability to the shop floor.

The incentive scheme proposed by management will destroy 'mutuality' — the shop floor veto on manning — and open the way for major speed-up and reduction of manning levels.

The assault on mutual-ity and manning levels has begun already. Last week 800 sheet metal workers struck in Longbridge over the arbitrary closing of an Allegro track, but they were forced back to work

without gaining any concessions through the Works Committee's failure to support them. Further attempts to cut manning are now being made elsewhere in Longbridge.

There are good reasons for voting against. And there is an alternative that can be fought for, plant by plant if necessary:

- Straight wage increases of at least £30 to restore 1974 living standards.

- Cost-of-living protection for wages: £1 increase every month for every 1% rise in the cost of living.

- A minimum wage of £75.

- Defence of mutuality.

- A drive for democracy and accountability in the trade union structure in Leyland — and for withdrawal from the 'participation' committees.

The continuing press

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## Who killed Baader, Raspe, and Ensslin?

IMMEDIATELY following the rescue of the 86 passengers held by four hi-jackers on board a Lufthansa aircraft at Mogadishu airport in Somalia, where the aircraft's captain had been shot in cold blood, the West German government announced what Chancellor Helmut Schmidt himself has described publicly as "the incredible events in Stuttgart".

Three convicted members of the 'Red Army Fraction' ('Baader-Meinhof group') have died while held closely guarded in solitary confinement. The West German authorities say that Gudrun Ensslin hanged herself in her cell, and that Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe shot themselves. Irmgard Moeller, a fourth 'RAF' member, is said to be in hospital after trying unsuccessfully to stab herself through the heart — with a piece of glass.

Gudrun Ensslin's lawyer, Otto Schily, has said that he 'completely discounts' the possibility that she might in fact have killed herself. It is 'absolutely impossible', he also insists, that Baader and Raspe could have had guns in their cells. He has called for an immediate investigation into the deaths.



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Schily is not prepared to go as far as not leaning very heavily on the fact that Israel, as its terrorist base in Germany, in the charge of sympathy with terrorists has been thrown at former Social Democratic Chancellor Willy Brandt. It is more serious for many thousands who are hounded and debarred from teaching, civil service, railway, and other jobs because they have, or have had, 'leftist' sympathies.

The suicides eliminate three prominent prisoners after a number of attempts have been made — the Lufthansa hi-jacking being the latest — to force the Bonn government to release them. Their deaths get rid of the motive for any further attempt to free them — and in that lies the reason for suspicion of triple murder. It is a suspicion that can only be laid if an impartial and independent investigation establishes that they did commit suicide.

The claim of the Bonn government to be morally better than those who — indefensibly — shot the pilot of the Lufthansa is that they operate according to laws which recognise inalienable human rights, and according to due process of law. If they killed off their three prisoners, either in 'reprisal' or to be rid of the 'problem' of holding them captive, then they treated them as 'hostages' — exactly like the hi-jackers treated the Lufthansa captain — and hostages

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5,000 picket Grunwicks: see page 3





# PAKISTAN ARMY'S GAMBIT FAILS



Mrs Bhutto

On 5th July the army seized power in Pakistan in order to check growing working class unrest. Three and a half months later it is clear that the army's gambit has failed.

The army has had to postpone the elections it promised for October 18th, and mass protest is shaking the country despite the imposition of martial law and a ban on all political activity.

Meetings called by the Pakistan People's Party — the party of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was deposed as prime minister by the 5th July coup — have attracted massive audiences to hear Bhutto's wife call for revolution if the army blocks a PPP election victory, and Bhutto's daughter declare

that the rivers will flow with blood if the military regime hangs him.

Before 5th July, mass strike movements were threatening Bhutto's government. But now the people of Pakistan are turning equally against the new regime.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* gives two illustrations of how feeling is turning against the army — and thus, for lack of an alternative, towards Bhutto.

"The class struggle content in rallying for Bhutto was reinforced by some landlords and industrialists. After the arrest of Bhutto [in September — WA] 50,000 workers in Lahore alone were laid off. Peasants who tried to sell their surplus were

offered 'take it or leave it' prices with the sneer, 'Your uncle (Bhutto) is not here any more'."

"A man of property, waiting to buy his beef from a Lahore suburban butcher's shop, told a cluster of other customers who were discussing Bhutto, 'You are talking about a murderer'. The retort was swift: 'Choudry (gentleman), whom did Bhutto kill? He killed a few feudals. Let him kill more of them'."

The army rulers' actions show their lack of confidence. The army had Bhutto arrested in September. After the courts released him on bail, they had him re-arrested on 17th September, and followed that up by forc-

ing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court into retirement and replacing him by their own nominee.

On 3rd October the elections were postponed indefinitely, on the excuse that Bhutto's trial should be completed before the elections were held. Significantly, the Pakistan National Alliance, the PPP's main rival, which after 5th July had been expected to win the October elections, did not oppose the postponement, but merely asked that a new date be fixed. According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the PNA is in serious danger of splitting apart.

On 11th October Bhutto's trial began. He is charged with attempting to murder

a political opponent. He is also due to face other charges before military courts.

Bhutto's state capitalist reforming policy, which promised "bread, clothing and shelter" during his period in power from 1971 to 1977, now appears to many as a positive alternative to the military regime. But the discontent with Bhutto which lay behind the strike movements in the period before 5th July will not be entirely forgotten.

What the workers and peasants of Pakistan need is a revolutionary party with a strategy opposed to Bhutto, to the army, to the PNA and to all the other sections of the ruling class.

COLIN FOSTER



Vaclav Havel [right] and Jiri Lederer [far right] are among four supporters of Charter 77 newly brought to trial in Czechoslovakia.

Meanwhile the big powers of East and West solemnly sit in Belgrade 'discussing' the application of the Helsinki human rights accords.



## Charter 77 on trial again

IN AN appeal issued on 12th October, the Czechoslovak dissident movement Charter 77 has denounced the latest — sixth — set of trials of its supporters.

On 17th October at 8am ... the trial will begin of Jiri Lederer, journalist, and Ota Ornest, film producer, both of whom have been in jail since January. Also facing charges are Frantisek Pavlicek and Vaclav Havel, writers, who are currently at liberty.

Jiri Lederer is charged under paragraph 98 of the penal code, with subverting the republic, for having allegedly sent literary works and articles by Czech writers abroad for publication by Czech magazines and publishers in those countries; Ota Ornest is charged under the same paragraph for having aided Jiri Lederer in this; Frantisek Pavlicek is accused of conspiracy to subvert the

republic for having given Jiri Lederer an interview about the book he is in the course of writing; and Vaclav Havel is accused under paragraph 112 of the penal code of attempting to harm the interests of the republic by giving to Jiri Lederer the manuscript of the memoirs of Prokop Drtina, ex-minister of Justice, in order to get it sent abroad...

This trial is, as the Charter 77 appeal says, "iniquitous from the human, moral and cultural point of view." Charter 77 calls for support, and says also: "We must ensure that the public presence at the trial is not limited by having a small court room and a pre-selected audience. Czech and foreign journalists should have the possibility of informing our people, and the whole world, about the events of the trial."

When the trial opened on Monday, only the wives of the

accused were permitted entry. All journalists were excluded.

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□□ JOANNE LITTLE, who was at the centre of a major anti-racist solidarity campaign in the USA two years ago, escaped from prison last week.

In August 1974, while in prison awaiting trial for house-breaking, Joanne Little faced an attempt to rape her by jailor Clarence Allgood.

Resisting, she stabbed him with an ice-pick he had carried to intimidate her, and killed him.

She was charged with murder.

Facing a racist North Carolina jury, the odds were stacked against her. The prosecution case was that she had enticed Allgood into her cell in order to kill him and then escape. Nevertheless, a solidarity campaign by thousands across the USA won her acquittal.

Joanne Little returned to jail to serve her sentence on the housebreaking charge. Just before her escape she had suffered removal of her prison 'privileges'.

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A FRENCH court will decide on 24th October whether to extradite Klaus Croissant to Germany.

Croissant, a defence lawyer for members of the "Red Army Fraction" (Baader Meinhof group) fled Germany recently as a witch-hunt grew against anyone suspected of the slightest sympathy for the "Red Army Fraction" militants or for their civil rights. Moves have been made to ban three Maoist organisations, and the opposition Christian Democrat party has published a pamphlet which convicts such unlikely people as Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, and police chief Horst Herold of being 'soft' on terrorists.

Even *The Economist* has described the German climate as that of "a hysterical witch hunt".

Croissant was arrested on 30th September, but a strong campaign has been created against his extradition. An appeal has been signed by Jean Ellenstein (of the French Communist Party), Michel Mousel (of the Unified Socialist Party), Alain Krivine (of the Revolutionary Communist League), Simone de Beauvoir and Maurice Clavel.

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According to the International Labour Organisation there are 16 million unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries. Seven million of these are the young unemployed, and six million are women.

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BEFORE the recent elections in the south of Ireland, where Fianna Fail were returned with a large majority, they made electioneering use of the widespread complaints of police brutality, especially against militant Republican suspects.

Now they are in office, they have to administer the anti-Republican repression themselves. Fianna Fail have recently come up with their answer to the complaints of police brutality. A Special Committee has been set up, made up of a judge, a retired police chief, and a tame-trade unionist. It has no powers to investigate past complaints, but can only make recommendations for improvements in the future.

Amnesty International, in a detailed study of 28 cases, has indicted the southern government of torture.

## Now Tories with Labour's policies

THE DEBATES at the Tory conference can't be analysed because there were no real debates. Nevertheless the conference was politically significant.

The Tories were at great pains to be conciliatory over the closed shop issue and to the unions generally. They said they would work with the unions, not bash them.

Having had the Labour government imitating Tory policies, we now have the Tory party imitating Labour government policies.

It's a sad tribute to Labour. What it means is that the Labour government's policy of squeezing the working class in alliance with the trade union bureaucracy has served the capitalists so well that the Tories feel obliged to profess the same policy.

It doesn't mean that there are no extreme right-wing union bashers in the Tory party. On the contrary, the Tory Right is arguably gaining in strength. But if the Tories know nothing else, they know how to separate their "theory" and their "practice" when that is necessary for the efficient running of the system.

□ □

Sarcastic comments peppered Fleet Street's coverage of the Tory conference. With their stifling of their public split on the closed shop and on Grunwicks, the Tories had raised their normal lack of democracy into a masterpiece of oligarchy.

Even the 'Times' poked fun at the 'rows of Conservative ladies quivering expectantly' as Michael Heseltine went to the rostrum to denounce the evils of Socialism.

If the pressmen want a target for ridicule, they could scarcely have chosen better. But there is a more serious lesson, too.

Buffoons though the Tories are as political theorists, they are this country's main ruling party. Moreover, they are the party which claims to defend freedom and democracy against the ravages of 'bureaucratic', 'totalitarian' Socialism.

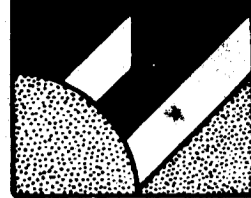
Yet if they deny democracy so blatantly to their own people — only a few chosen bland resolutions debated, all floor speakers pre-selected, and so on — who can seriously think that the Tories would hesitate one second in destroying all the democratic rights that working people have, if they found it necessary and possible.

The Westminster Parliamentary system allows more democracy on the face of it (though less in reality) than there is inside the Tory party. After all, the people have to be fooled, and the possibility of swapping ruling parties easily is one the capitalist class likes to keep open.

But that Parliamentary democracy is allowed only as long as it causes no trouble to the bourgeoisie. As soon as that changes — as it did in Chile — the Tories will have no more qualms about dispensing with 'democracy' than General Pinochet did in Chile.

# SETTLING THE MIDDLE EAST AT PALESTINIANS' EXPENSE

Editorial



THE CURRENT US-Israeli agreement on the terms for the convening of a Geneva conference on the Middle East only became possible when the Carter administration retreated from the position it took up a fortnight ago in a joint US-USSR statement.

The US-Russian statement, which drew an angry response from Jewish organisations in the US and a blunt rejection from the Israeli Cabinet, spoke of "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". The new agreement, which has drawn an angry response from the Soviet Union, not only omits any such phrase, but it pointedly excludes the PLO, which fights for 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people', from attending any Geneva Conference.

It is the second time Carter has retreated sharply from challenging Israel. The first time was after right winger Menachem Begin won the Israeli elections, and immediately made a public demonstration of support for Zionist colonisation of the occupied Arab territory on the West Bank of the Jordan. Carter, who had previously declared himself in favour of creating a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank, quickly bowed to the powerful pro-Israel lobby in the USA, and discovered what a unique 'personality' the racist Begin is.

## West Bank leaders

But the only 'concession' the Zionist regime has made on the question of the Palestinians is to agree that if a Conference takes place, it can open with a session at which the Arabs will present themselves as a joint delegation. Within this joint delegation, says Israel, there may be Palestinians — but only those having no connection with the PLO. No negotiations will take place at this opening session.

Israel, which still does not even recognise that there is such a thing as the Palestinian people, hopes in this way to

begin to split the West Bank leaders — the mayors and other notables — from the PLO. This is part of Israel's long-term plan to create areas under joint Israeli-Jordanian control where a mockery of a 'Palestinian homeland' will be realised.

This long term aim is revealed most clearly in a recent statement by Moshe Dayan. The Israeli Foreign Minister announced in an interview in the magazine *Newsweek*, "We want to make peace with all our neighbours — Egypt and Syria and Jordan. And when we say Jordan, that includes Palestinian Arabs who are living on the West Bank ... and in the Gaza Strip".

The Palestinians claim the right to be equal citizens with Jews and others in a secular (that is, neither Jewish nor Muslim) state. Israel refuses to recognise any "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people", because it would strike a blow at the very existence of the Zionist, racist state of Israel.

The state of Israel, which came into existence in 1948, arose precisely by robbing the Arabs of the area and driving them out of the land they had held for many hundreds of years. Zionism had prepared for this enterprise by constantly denying the very existence of a Palestinian people, by denying that the Palestinian Arabs could have any rights in the area, and by claiming that the Arabs who left Israel in 1947 and 1948 left of their own accord.

Today Israel denies the existence of a Palestinian problem. It only refers to the 'refugee problem' and proposes settlement of the refugees... outside Israel. At the same time the Israeli regime continues to steal the land of Palestinian Arabs by government actions within the borders of the state of Israel, and by encouraging Zionist settlement of the West Bank areas conquered after 1967. In these policies there is no meaningful line of difference between the present and past Israeli governments.

The Carter administration, it is reported, is trying to nudge the Israelis into conceding some sort of West Bank and Gaza Strip statelet. But Israel is not prepared to give up anything as yet. And the US will not lean very hard on Israel. The US still has great need of Israel, as its most reliable armed agent in this region of great economic and political importance to imperialism.

## Arab regime

Where can the Palestinians find support against the US-Israel alliance?

The Arab regimes surrounding Israel claim to be the champions of their cause. The opposite is the case. In 1970 King Hussein of Jordan led the genocidal attack on the Palestinian camps in Jordan. Last year President Assad of Syria threw his troops into battle on the side of the reactionary forces in Lebanon in an effort to crush the Palestinian movement there.

These states are now all willing to abandon the Palestinian cause, and accept the existence of a Zionist state. They are bourgeois and they now collaborate, more or less, with imperialism. Only working class revolution could reverse reconciliation of the once-radical Egyptian and Syrian regimes with imperialism and Israel.

The PLO — the only organisation that can truly claim to represent the Palestinian people — has since 1968 been the political expression of the Palestinians. But the leadership of the PLO is dedicated to a concept of Palestinian revolution which is, naturally enough, a bourgeois nationalist one. That is, it sees the Palestinian revolution as establishing a 'secular democratic (that is, bourgeois democratic) state' and occurring without disturbing the other regimes in the area. Thus limited, it has nothing, beyond an appeal for Arab solidarity, to say to the working masses in the independent Arab states whose rulers are working with imperialism.

Consequently, the PLO has always preached a 'hands off' policy with respect to the Arab regimes: you recognise our rights and we will pledge ourselves to non-interference in your affairs. This policy has led to crushing defeats for the Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon.

With Egypt now turned full face towards imperialism and the radical petty bourgeois Arab nationalist currents greatly reduced, the PLO cannot hope to achieve anything with its reliance on the Arab regimes.

The limitations of the PLO as a revolutionary organisation thus contribute to making the Palestinian people defenseless and relatively isolated against the attacks by the Arab regimes — and, ultimately, against Israel and its imperialist backers.

## Grunwick battle is under way again

**ALL OUT November 7th! That's the next stage in the fight to show that the rank and file can beat Grunwicks boss George Ward, even if the TUC is too weak-kneed.**

Despite lack of official backing for the mass picket called by the Grunwick strike committee, and open opposition from leaders of the strikers' union APEX, 5,000 turned up outside Grunwicks on October 17th. The struggle for union rights at Grunwicks is very much on again after the lull caused by the Scarman Inquiry and the TUC's promises, postponements, and evasions.

After the picket, the strike committee said that mass pickets would be called every Monday, with the next major mobilisation on November 7th.

The mood was quiet on October 17th, without the excitement and enthusiasm of earlier mass pickets. But those who were there — including many trade union contingents from outside London, especially miners — understood what the struggle was about, and what problems it faced.

Every speaker denounced the role of the trade union leaderships and the assistance the police had given to Ward.

A saturation presence of 2,000 police enabled Ward's scab bus to get into the works, but not until 9.40am.

On the evening of October 17th, additional proof of the justice of the Grunwick strikers' case was provided in the "Tonight" television programme.

Ward's "case" is that the strikers are just a few employees who were dismissed for being unruly, and that most Grunwick workers never wanted anything to do with the union. The "Tonight" people asked to interview those still working in Grunwicks. Ward refused, but they nevertheless managed to interview a number outside the works.

The majority said they were not against unionisation — and they declared that they had voted against the union in ballots held inside the works only out of fear of being sacked.

JAMES RYAN

London rally discusses revolutionary strategy

# THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER

Last Saturday, 15th October, the International Communist League held a rally launching its Manifesto, "The Fight for Workers' Power". BRUCE ROBINSON reports.

THE KEYNOTE was set by the first main speaker, an I-CL militant from British Leyland, Longbridge.

Round the issue of "corporate bargaining", where other leftists had capitulated to management's plans in the name of abstract workers' unity, or retreated into just defending plant bargaining, the I-CL had advanced a strategy related to the revolutionary task of *renovating the labour movement* — a central theme of the Manifesto.

The I-CL advances a policy for a fighting workers' unity in Leyland, for democracy and accountability in the trade unions in Leyland, and for a combine committee answerable to the rank and file. "For us, corporate bargaining, and the sell-outs of the trade union leadership, are not just trade union issues".

The comrade from Longbridge also showed the basic difference of approach between the Longbridge union leadership's wages claim, based on "buy-outs", bonuses, and incentives, and the I-CL's proposal for pay increases to make up the loss in real wages since 1974 plus a "Sliding scale" to protect against inflation. It is the difference between a "clever" wage claim for the negotiating tables and a claim to unify and mobilise the rank and file; and, at the same time, the difference between reformism and revolutionary militancy.

On many other questions (nationalisation, import controls, the Labour Government) the basic political issues are posed — and "these are the questions that come up literally every day on the shop floor". In this sense, the fight against the Social Contract is inseparable from the fight for workers' power.

The I-CL had expressly invited other tendencies of the revolutionary left to attend to put their point of view. And the I-CL's conception of the link between today's struggles and revolutionary tasks met criticism from two angles.

Comrades of the Revolutionary Communist Group, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, and the Spartacist tendency, considered the I-CL to be opportunist. Especially a target of their attacks was Pat Longman's speech on "Communism and women's liberation".

Longman gave a historical analysis of the relation between women's struggles and class struggle. A communist women's movement (she concluded) was needed, which would take up the fight against women's specific oppression within the framework of the revolutionary working class struggle.

But it isn't just a matter of proclaiming a slogan comprehensible only to ourselves. After decades of corruption, what does "communist" mean to most workers? The I-CL concretises its perspective by fighting alongside and against feminists and other tendencies in today's heterogeneous women's movement for a mass working class based women's movement.

This conclusion was criticised as not standing out against feminism clearly enough.

From an opposing standpoint, Bob Pennington, National Organiser of the International Marxist Group, declared that the I-CL was in danger of finding itself among the sectarian side-line commentators.

New waves of radicalisation give revolutionaries the opportunity of breaking out of decades-old isolation. But the existence of dozens of different organisations and newspapers on the far left militates against taking advantage of that opportunity. The I-CL should decide to orient towards the movement for revolutionary unity.

Martin Thomas replied for the I-CL to Pennington. "It's preferable that workers should not have to face a confusing variety of far left pap-

ers — but if there's only one, it had better be right! You can't just amalgamate 12 four-page papers into one 48-pager, you need a common political line".

Thomas referred to the example of the "Revolutionary United Front" in Portugal, whose botched, ill-defined "unity" had crippled revolutionaries' activity in a crucial period. The precondition for unity was clear programmatic definition. Thomas concluded by calling on the IMG to lift its ultimatum refusal to discuss seriously with the I-CL unless the I-CL first drops its critical assessment of the IMG (as "centrist") or agrees to joint election campaigns with the IMG.

The rally concerned itself with more than the British arena of class struggle. *Workers' Action* supporter Jane Ashworth, invited as a guest speaker, put the case for solidarity with Ireland's struggle for freedom. Anti-Apartheid activist Bob Fine spoke on South Africa.

The events of the last decades had "exposed the lie that capitalism is antagonistic to apartheid". Militants were becoming increasingly aware that they could not fight apartheid just by pressuring the British imperialist state to do something. They were recognising the need for working class solidarity — "and that is equally important for British workers and for South African workers".

I-CL National Secretary Sean Matgamna spoke on "Internationalism and the I-CL". Declaring that there could be no communism without internationalism, he recalled the I-CL's fight against the nationalist stream on the Common Market issue and its effort to bring the international experience of the general strike to bear when analysing developments in Britain.

Against the yardstick of internationalist politics, Matgamna examined the existing international organisation — and found them all lacking, even the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, which he characterised as the best of them. "In being just a national organisation, there are dangers of lapsing into national narrowness", he said, "and the I-CL is fully aware of them". The necessary work "in the arena which is open to us", in the British working class struggle, must, however, be done, though linked with the maximum of international dialogue.

Jack Price brought some of the threads together in a speech on "The Marxist tradition and revolutionary politics today". A successful revolutionary struggle requires what was achieved by the early Third International — a vigorous development of Marxist science fused with a vigorous development of Marxist politics. But scientific groundwork and development of political programme do not in general proceed exactly in parallel, harmoniously and evenly; we have to be able to take up the fight for Marxism in a militant fashion, not as academics or theoretically-blind activists.

Since the decay of the Third International, Stalinism "has put a hood over the head of the proletariat". The theoretical tradition of "Western Marxism" has developed in isolation from militant activity. Ambiguous in its attitude to Stalinism, pervaded with a spirit of defeat, its valuable elements that have been excavated only from outside that tradition.

Trotskyism is "the only tradition which has kept up a militant fight on all fronts. The I-CL belongs to that tradition". The I-CL also recognises the unevenness in that tradition, the tremendous arrears of scientific work which Trotskyism must make up.

But — declared Price — the revolutionary struggle does not wait. Revolutionary analyses, policies, and strategies have to be fought for. The I-CL Manifesto sets them down as a basis for further discussion and for militant work.

\* The I-CL Manifesto "The Fight for Workers' Power" can be obtained, price 35p plus 10p postage, from Phoenix Pamphlets, 98 Gifford Street, London N1 0DE.

LIKE EVERYTHING else in nature, Lenin was born, has developed, has grown. When Vladimir Ilyich once observed me glancing through a collection of his articles written in the year 1903, which had just been published, a shy smile crossed his face, and he remarked with a laugh: "It is very interesting to read what stupid fellows we were!"

But I do not here intend to compare the shape of Lenin's skull at the age of 10, 20 or 30, with the skull of that man who presided over the sessions of the Central Committee of the party or the Council of People's Commissars.

Here it is not a question of Lenin as leader, but as a living human being.

P.B. Axelrod, one of the fathers of Menshevism, who hates Lenin from the bottom of his soul, related, in one of the tirades with which he sought to convince me of the harmfulness of Bolshevism in general and of Lenin in particular, how Lenin went abroad for the first time, and how he went walking and bathing with him. "I felt at that time" said Axelrod, "that here was a man who would become the leader of the Russian Revolution. Not only was he an educated Marxist — there were many of these — but he knew what he wanted to do and how it was to be done. There was something of the smell of Russian earth about him."

Pavel Borisovich Axelrod is a bad politician; he does not smell of the earth. He is one who reasons at home in his own study, and the whole tragedy of his life consists of the fact that at a time when there was no labour movement in Russia, he thought out the lines upon which such a labour movement should develop, and when it developed on different lines he was frightfully offended, and today he continues to roar with rage at the disobedient child.

But people often observe in others that which is lacking in themselves, and Axelrod's words with regard to Lenin grasp with unsurpassable acuteness precisely those characteristics which make Lenin a leader.

## CLASS LEADER

It is impossible to be a leader of the working class without knowing the whole history of the class. The leaders of the labour movement must know the history of the labour movement; without this knowledge there can be no leader, just as nowadays there can be no great general who could be victorious with the least expenditure of force unless he knew the history of strategy.

The history of strategy is not a collection of recipes as to how to win a war, for a situation once described never repeats itself. But the mind of the general becomes practised in strategy by its express study; this study renders him elastic in war, permits him to observe the dangers and possibilities which the empirically trained general cannot see.

The history of the labour movement does not tell us what to do, but it makes it possible to compare our position with situations which have already been experienced by our class, so that in various decisive moments we are enabled to see our path clearly, and to recognise approaching danger.

But we cannot get to know the history of the labour movement properly without being thoroughly acquainted with the history of capitalism, with its mechanism in all its economic and political phenomena.

Lenin knows the history of capitalism as do but few of Marx's pupils. It is no mere knowledge of the written word — here comrade Riazanov could give him five points start — but he has thought out Marx's theory as no one else has done.

# OCTOBER 1917

...tinge of sycophancy in this 1923 tribute to Lenin reflects the beginnings of Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration. The author, Radek, was how ever to be in the vanguard of the Trotskyist struggle against Stalinism until he capitulated in 1929. The translation is from International Socialist Review, New York, November 1973.



Let us for instance take the small pamphlet which he wrote at the time of our conflict with the trade union movement; in it he calls Bukharin a syndicalist, an eclectic, and a great sinner in numerous other respects. This polemical pamphlet contains a few lines devoted to the differences between dialectics and eclectics, lines which are not cited in any collection of articles on historical materialism, but which say more about it than

whole chapters from much longer books.

Lenin has independently grasped and thought out the theory of historical materialism as no one else has been able to do, for the reason that he has studied it with the same object in view by which Marx was actuated when creating the theory.

Lenin entered the movement as the embodiment of the Will to Revolution; and he studied Marxism, the evolution of capit-



# The man who led the Revolution

FROM AN ARTICLE  
BY KARL RADEK



m, and the evolution of soc-  
ism, from the point of view of  
revolutionary significance.  
Khanov was a revolutionist  
but he was not possessed  
the Will to Revolution,  
despite his great import-  
ance as a teacher of the Russian  
Revolution, he could only teach  
algebra and not its arith-  
metical. Herein lies the point of  
distinction from Lenin the theorist  
and the politician.  
Lenin's way of knowing the

Russian actuality is another  
point in which he differs from  
all others who have stretched  
out their hands toward the  
scepter of leadership of the  
Russian proletariat. Not only  
does he know Russian reality,  
he sees and feels it as well.

At every turning point in the  
history of the party, and espe-  
cially at the moment when we  
seized power and the fate of  
150 million people hung on the  
decisions of the party, I have al-

ways been amazed at Lenin's  
store of what the English call  
"common sense". It may be re-  
marked that when we are speak-  
ing of a human being of whom  
we are convinced that his like  
will not recur for a century, it  
is but a poor compliment to  
praise his common sense. But  
it is just in this that his great-  
ness as a politician lies.

When Lenin has to decide on  
an important question, he does  
not think of abstract historical

categories, he does not think of  
ground rents, of surplus values,  
of absolutism or liberalism. He  
thinks of Sobakevitch, of  
Gessen, of Sydor from the Tver  
Province, of the Putilov worker,  
of the policeman on the street,  
and he thinks of the effect of  
the measure on the muzhik  
(peasant) Sydor and on the  
workman Onufria, as bearers of  
the revolution.

Marx, in the introduction to  
his *Critique of Political Econ-  
omy*, states that history only  
sets itself such tasks as it can  
fulfill. This means, in other  
words, that only he who grasps  
what tasks are historically cap-  
able of fulfillment at a given  
moment, and who does not fight  
for the desired, but for the possi-  
ble, can become the instrument  
of history. Lenin's greatness  
lies in the fact that he never  
permits himself to be blinded to  
a reality when it is in the  
process of transformation, by  
any preconceived formula,  
and that he has the courage to  
throw yesterday's formula over-  
board as soon as it disturbs his  
grasp of this reality.

Lenin's greatness lies in his  
aiming at goals arising out of  
realities. In this reality he sees a  
powerful steed which will carry  
him to his goal, and he trusts  
himself to it. But he never  
abandons himself to his  
dreams.

This is not all. His genius  
contains another trait: after he  
has set himself a certain goal,  
he seeks for the means leading  
to this goal through reality; he  
is not content with having  
fixed his aim, he thinks out  
concretely and completely  
everything necessary for the  
attainment of that aim. He does  
not merely work out a plan of  
campaign, but the whole organ-  
isation of the campaign at the  
same time.

How all this happened to be  
combined in him, God only  
knows. (Comrade Stefanov and  
the Commission for combating  
religion will kindly excuse).  
History has her own apparatus  
for distilling brandy....

## ON TOP OF REALITY

For fifteen years we looked on  
while this man was fighting  
over every comma in the resolu-  
tions, against every "ism" in-  
vented during the last twenty-  
five years... For Lenin every  
such "ism" has always been the  
embodiment of some real  
enemy, existing either in out-  
side classes or in the working  
class, but in any case in reality.  
These "isms" were the feelers  
of reality, and he absorbed the  
whole of this reality into him-  
self, studied it, thought it out,  
until the finished miracle  
appeared, and the underground  
man proved himself the most  
earthly man of Russian reality.

History offers no second ex-  
ample of such a transition from  
subterranean revolutionist to  
statesman. This combination of  
the characteristics of a leading  
theorist, politician and organ-  
iser has made Lenin the leader  
of the Russian Revolution. And  
that this leader should be the  
only one universally recognised  
as leader, the human touch was  
required, the quality which has  
made Lenin the beloved hero of  
the Russian Revolution.

He himself tries to convince  
us that man requires absolute  
truth. For many people the  
truth is deadly; it is deadly even  
for many classes. If the bour-  
geoisie were to grasp the truth  
about itself, and were permeat-  
ed with this truth, it would be  
defeated already, for who can  
go on fighting when the truth of  
history tells him that he is not  
only condemned to death, but  
that his corpse will be thrown  
into the sewer?

The bourgeoisie is blind and  
dumb to its fate. But a revolu-  
tionary class needs the truth, for  
truth is the knowledge of real-

ity. And it is not possible to  
dominate this reality without  
knowing it. We form one part of  
this reality: the working class,  
the Communist Party. And it is  
only if we are able to judge of  
our power and our weakness  
that we can judge of the meas-  
ures to be taken to ensure final  
victory.

Lenin tells the proletariat the  
truth, and the truth only, how-  
ever depressing it may be.  
When workers hear him speak-  
ing, they know that there is not  
a single glib expression in all  
his speech. He helps us to in-  
form ourselves on reality.

## NOTHING HIDDEN

At one time I was living at  
Davos with a Bolshevik work-  
man dying of consumption. At  
that time the right of self-  
determination of nationalities  
was being debated, and we  
Polish communists were oppo-  
sed to Lenin's views. The com-  
rade of whom I speak, after  
having read my theses against  
Lenin, said: "What you have  
written is perfectly convincing  
to me, but whenever I have  
been opposed to Ilyich, it has al-  
ways turned out afterwards that  
I was wrong."

This is how the leading party  
functionaries think, and this is  
the reason of Lenin's authority  
in the party; but the workers do  
not think so. They do not feel  
bound to Lenin because he has  
been in the right a thousand  
times, but because, if he has  
once been in the wrong, if a  
mistake has been committed  
under his leadership, he ad-  
mitted openly: "We have made  
a mistake, and therefore we  
have been defeated here; this  
mistake must be made good in  
such and such manner."

Many have asked him why he  
speaks so openly of mistakes  
made. I do not know why  
Lenin does it, but the results of  
this course of action may be  
plainly seen. The workman is  
much too enlightened to believe  
in redeeming saviours any  
longer. When Lenin speaks of  
his mistakes, he hides nothing,  
he leads the worker into his own  
laboratory of thought, he makes  
it possible for the worker to take  
part in forming the final deci-  
sion, and the workers see in him  
the leader who represents their  
laboratory, the embodiment of  
their class struggle.

A great class, itself needing  
absolute truth, loves with  
whole heart a leader who is him-  
self a truth-loving human being,  
one who tells the truth about  
himself. From such a leader the  
worker can bear any truth, even  
the hardest.

## FREED FROM BONDAGE

Human beings have faith in  
themselves only when they con-  
ceal nothing, when they know  
everything about themselves,  
even the most unfavourable  
possibilities, and yet feel that  
they can say: in spite of every-  
thing ... Lenin helps the work-  
ing class to a full knowledge of  
every decaying and decompos-  
ing element of its own existence  
and yet enables it to say in the  
end: I am His Majesty the Pro-  
letariat, the future ruler and  
creator of life.

On this day of the 25th  
anniversary of the party which  
not only bears responsibility for  
the destiny of the sixth part of  
the globe, but which is at the  
same time the main lever of  
proletarian victory, the Russian  
Communists, and every revolu-  
tionist among the proletariat of  
every country, are filled with  
the thought and the wish that  
this Moses, who has led the  
slaves from the land of bond-  
age, may pass with us into the  
promised land.

THE ignominious defeat of Kornilov's counter-revolutionary coup in August tipped the balance of forces back towards the revolutionary proletariat. Trotsky compared the situation with July: "Retribution is not slow in coming. Hounded, persecuted, slandered, our party never grew as rapidly as it is growing now. And this process will spread from the capitals to the provinces, from the towns to the country and army..."

In contrast to this the Provisional Government of Kerensky, now dominated by the conservative, if not counter-revolutionary, Cadets, grew weaker by the day. It was incapable of decisive action in any area. Whilst the problems of land, of freedom for national minorities, of peace and war only grew with their ineffectual meddling.

As support for it ebbed both in bourgeois and proletarian quarters it struck feebly out to both right and left — both banning parties involved in the Kornilov affair and brutally suppressing strikes. "A comic opera team" was how the Menshevik historian Sukhanov contemptuously described these vainglorious petty bourgeois and their pathetic illusions of international and domestic reconciliation.

○○

For the Soviet majority of SRs and Mensheviks, also, events were not conforming to their lifeless and empty dogmas. Their wooing of the bourgeoisie had only brought Kornilov on their heads and his defeat had left them only with the pocket Bonaparte Kerensky. Their programme had collapsed before them.

But so firmly were they attached to petty bourgeois politics that they pressed through the logic of their positions: this was a 'bourgeois revolution' and, if the Soviets were an incongruous element, they must make way for other institutions.

Thus on September 28th Izvestia declared: "The useful life of the Soviets is coming to an end; the moment approaches where they, together with other organs of the revolutionary apparatus, must disappear from the political life of a free and victorious people that will henceforth struggle in peaceful ways."

In their place the Mensheviks put forward the scheme for a "democratic Conference", which became widely known as the "Pre-Parliament". Like the farcical "Moscow Conference" in August, this body was meant to fill the gap



From September 1917 the alternatives were clear: either a Bolshevik seizure of power, or counter-revolution. And mass support was rapidly gathering behind the Bolsheviks.

In this fifth article of his series on 1917, ARNIE PROUT shows how Lenin and the Bolsheviks prepared for the seizure of power. The theoretical aspect of that preparation was summed up in Lenin's "State and Revolution".

The final article of the series [to follow] will deal with the actual seizure of power.

(Left: the Paris Commune, Lenin's model.)

# PREPARING FOR POWER OCTOBER 1917

There were similar results in Petrograd.

More importantly the institutions of the masses themselves had swung to the left. Not only in the two capitals were the Soviets pro-Bolshevik but also in many provincial areas. At the 3rd All Russian Conference of Factory Committees the Bolsheviks could claim the allegiance of 167 of the 211 delegates.

In the army and navy too the tide was with them. The Fleet Conference of the Baltic Sailors sent the following message: "To you, Napoleon Kerensky, traitor to the Revolution, we send our curses."

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In the countryside the ferment was reaching the proportions of a peasant rebellion. Over three quarters of all districts saw violent attacks on landlords, and land seizures. The self-proclaimed 'peasant party', the SRs, preached moderation and patience whilst their programme was put into effect by the people themselves. Only the Bolshevik Party supported land seizures, and indeed organised them, where they had influence, in the most orderly way.

The glaring contrast between the proclaimed principles of the SRs and their actual timid constitutionalism led to the rapid development

left by the oft-postponed elections for a Constituent Assembly.

When it met at last, SR and Menshevik faiths were pinned on it gaining a degree of control of the government. Kerensky soon disabused them of this illusion.

At first, against Lenin's advice, the Bolsheviks participated, but at the beginning of October they walked out after Trotsky had declared "We, the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Party, announce that we have nothing in common with this government of treason ... We

refuse to shield it either directly or indirectly for a single day". With their departure the Pre-Parliament was exposed as the sham it was and the Soviets remained as the only bodies representative of the mass of workers, soldiers and peasants.

The new situation meant that the Bolsheviks too had to revise their tactics. The Soviet majority were simply unwilling to take power, and during the period of semi-legality Lenin had therefore placed great stress on the preparation for an armed insurrection by the Bolsheviks.

It was still necessary to continue the campaign of mass education. The slogan of "All Power to the Soviets" was again taken up as the crowning piece of innumerable partial demands by which the masses were brought into struggle. As Lenin wrote: "Arrest Milyukov; arm the Petrograd workers; legalise the transfer of the land to the peasants; dissolve the Duma; introduce workers' control over grain and factories, etc etc."

But if the armed uprising remained uppermost in Lenin's mind it was now connected to winning the Soviets to a Bolshevik majority. On September 12th he wrote to the Central Committee of the party: "...having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, the Bolsheviks can and must take power into their own hands... (and therefore) place on the order of the day the armed uprising in Petrograd and Moscow."

Lenin could put forward powerful arguments for this call. Bolshevik advances had been massive. In the Moscow local Soviet elections the Bolsheviks won 51% of the popular vote whilst the SRs and Mensheviks plummeted to 14% and 4% respectively.

of a pro-Bolshevik SR left wing led by Maria Spiridonova. So both at a mass level and within the political organisations as class re-alignment was taking place. The peasants, hostile now to the representatives of the bourgeoisie, were becoming at least neutral towards the workers.

However, Lenin based his call for immediate insurrection on a theoretical ground as well.

○○

In hiding, he had been completing "State and Revolution" which resurrected the authentic Marxist view, debased by social democrats of the Second International, that the working class must destroy the old bourgeois state machine and construct its own, proletarian, state.

He therefore now called for "boundless audacity in destroying the old state machine entirely... for the purpose of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, destroying bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic, after the type of the (Paris) Commune, or a republic of Soviets, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

Finally, the perspective was placed in the context of the international class struggle, with the seizure of power in Russia being seen as a first step in the world-wide socialist revolution.



One of many 1917 demonstrations at the Winter Palace — whose storming in October was to be the climax of the seizure of power in Petrograd

## workers' ACTION supporters' groups

Basingstoke, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Chester, Coventry, Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Newtown, Northampton, Nottingham, Rochdale, Sheffield, Stoke

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

C.P.S.A. IN  
POST OFFICE  
VOTES TO  
'PARTICIPATE'



## Post Office 'industrial democracy' to go ahead

TWO weeks ago, the CPSA Post Office Group agreed by 24,974 votes to 7,400 to participate in a 2-year experiment in "Industrial Democracy". Since the POEU and the UPW have already accepted participation, the way is now clear for participation to go ahead, albeit "experimentally". These 3 unions represent the vast majority of Post Office workers.

The scheme provides for a Post Office Board of 20: 7 from management, 7 from the unions, and 5 mutually acceptable 'independents', with a chairman appointed by the Minister for Industry.

In fact all the Board are appointed by the Minister, as the Unions are to provide a list which the Minister can reject.

At regional level there will be similar Boards and Consultative Policy Committees at local level.

Much of the argument on this at the last CPSA conference was about the mechanics of the experiment, as virtually all delegates accepted the principle of participation from the start. Indeed, the whole history of the debate has been one of the various Post Office unions haggling among themselves over the division of the "spoils". This was reflected in the

Executive's report, which stated that the CPSA would only participate if they had a guarantee of a place on the Board.

The "workers" side of the Board is distinctly seen as a representation from the various unions.

These union 'directors' cannot be mandated by the unions and must relinquish any negotiating responsibility. They can report back to their unions, but are expected to discuss the content of their report with the Chairman of the Board. They may refrain from defending policies they disagreed with, but they must not publicly attack them. Board confidentiality must be respected.

At local and Regional level the details have not yet been agreed, but will be similar.

In the CPSA, there is a feeling that it is only an experiment, and after two years we can always drop it if the results are not to our benefit. But by then there will be a substantial number of union officials who have positions in the Industrial Democracy framework and will be most reluctant to resign such positions.

The attitude militants in the Post Office should take to the 'experiment' is clear from the experience of British Leyland and British Steel — where the participation of

## THE UNIONS



the Unions in management has led to the Unions policing their members and ensuring they accept management decisions. We must have nothing to do with the scheme. We do not stand in elections, and we argue for others not to do so.

There is a sizable minority of workers in all the Post Office unions opposed to this so-called "Industrial Democracy". We must build on that opposition and ensure that in two years' time the 'experiment' ends for good.

To those who argue that we should get involved to get the best we can from the scheme, we reply that it is not just the terms that are wrong, but the principle itself. It is vital for trade unions to remain independent of management, and for workers to refuse any responsibility for the running of any section of the capitalist economy.

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD  
CPSA, Bristol

## Right wing starts its purge in CPSA

TERRY ADAMS, a full time officer of CPSA, who politically tends towards Militant, is not being confirmed in his post at end of his probationary year, in spite of the recommendation of the General Secretary and the support of the Sections of CPSA he has responsibility for.

Why?

Last year CPSA was involved in a major dispute in Gibraltar, where its members were locked out for more than half a year by the Ministry of Defence over a claim for parity with Gibraltar Government Clerical Staff.

Terry Adams was the full timer responsible for Overseas branches. He fought hard for the success of the dispute — against the NEC at times, but with the backing of CPSA Conference and always within the policies endorsed by the NEC.

The right wing claim he was too enthusiastic.

The right in the CPSA is led by Kate Losinska, who took the union to court last year to prevent conference discussing motions critical of her actions as President. This year she admitted at Conference that she was a supporter of the boss-backed Trade Union Movement for Industrial Democracy; and TRUMID supporters won a narrow majority on the NEC.

Now it seems the purges of left wingers are starting.

All CPSA members are urged to support the campaign to defend Terry Adams and to send in resolutions against the witch hunt to the NEC and for next year's Conference.

CW

## 35 hours campaign launched by POEU

The Post Office Engineers' Union have started a campaign of non-cooperation with the Post Office management in pursuit of their claim for a 35 hour week. The claim follows the introduction of new electronic exchanges which drastically cut the number of engineers necessary for maintenance.

When will other unions follow suit — especially in the Post Office where CPSA at least also has a 35-hour week policy. But at present the CPSA Executive say they are going to wait and see the outcome of the POEU's action and claim...

## Finding out what Army peacekeeping means

Next spring the International Tribunal on Britain's Crimes in Ireland will be beginning its investigations. Tribunal secretary JANE CRAWFORD told Workers' Action about the campaign for the Tribunal:—

£25,000 was recently awarded to Pat Devine, a Derry school-teacher who was assaulted by soldiers at his school three years ago. His is one of a trickle of cases of brutality which have come to public attention; but the Irish men, women and children who daily come into contact with the security forces in Ireland and in Britain know only too well that there is in fact a torrent of evidence which could be brought to light.

We remain mostly in ignorance because the British press and the British state authorities collaborate to make sure that no news which might provoke opposition to the government's policies of repression is made public.

Trade unionists and socialists would do well to note how the English police are abandoning their "friendly bobby" image — as we saw at Grunwick's, Lewisham and Ladywood — in favour of the RUC-inspired thuggery of the Special Patrol Group.

The riot shields which appeared on the streets of London and Birmingham have been tried and tested against the Catholic people of Belfast and Derry, and everyone in the labour movement should remember the words of Nazi Front leader Martin Webster, who demanded after Lewisham that the police should protect his organisation with the whole armoury of weapons perfected in Ireland — tear gas, plastic bullets, water cannon and armoured cars.

We must ensure that it is not only the police and the fascists who learn the lessons of Britain's war in Ireland.

Maximum support is needed for an inquiry involving the British working class in an investigation of what their government is up to in Ireland — an inquiry totally free from the

ensorship which is rife at every level of the bosses' media.

The Committee for the International Tribunal is planning such an inquiry for Spring 1978. It will provide a platform for Irish people who have for years been on the receiving end of a kind of state violence the British labour movement is only barely beginning to face.

Delegates from bona fide labour movement bodies are invited to take part in a "jury" to hear evidence direct from the mouths of men and women for whom "the troubles" are a daily reality. The Tribunal will also involve a panel of "judges" — people internationally known for their defence of human rights — as well as the widest possible mass audience.

The Committee for the International Tribunal is campaigning widely for sponsorship and other forms of support from significant organisations and individuals. Sponsors so far include two MPs, several lawyers, writers and political figures from Britain and other parts of the world, ten leading labour movement figures, and half a dozen trades councils and trade union branches, as well as "Friends of Ireland" groups in several countries.

Any labour movement, political or other organisation in sympathy with the general aims of the Tribunal is invited to affiliate to the Committee and send delegates to the planning meetings. (Next meeting, 7.30pm November 15th at the Northumberland Arms, 141 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.)

A £2000 appeal for funds has been launched. Donations are desperately needed, and collection sheets are available from the Committee at 182 Upper Street London N.1. (Cheques & postal orders payable to "The International Tribunal".)



Effects of a British Army rubber bullet



# BLACKMAIL AT FORDS

FORD management's 'final offer' in response to the claim for a 15% pay rise for all Ford workers is miserable, mean, and clearly intended to be divisive.

The majority of Ford workers (those on grade B) are offered 11.1%, but the top skilled grade is offered roughly 14%, that is, £3 more.

The offer was the last of three made on October 10th. That it had been carefully prepared in advance as the 'sticking point' was shown by the fact that within hours workers on the night shift at Dagenham had been presented with a detailed breakdown.

The offer is above the Government's declared 10% ceiling, but is not nearly enough to stop real wages from continuing to decline in face of inflation.

In addition to the money, workers who survive for over 25 years in the plant are offered one additional day's holiday per year!

**No extra money for line workers! No shorter working week! No lay-off pay!**

On the need for lay-off pay

and a shorter work week, the Workers Action Ford Bulletin had this to say:

"Management have said that they can't afford a 37½ hour week.

"It's an argument they always use when we want to improve our position — until we force them to think otherwise. 2½ hours less work would be a big gain for us, and

one that inflation couldn't take away. It would also create more jobs for workers on the dole.

"On lay-offs, they've 'offered' a few words about trying to remove the causes. We've seen their attempts to 'remove' disputes before. The causes of lay-offs will only be removed when Fords no longer exists!

"In the meantime, we're supposed to suffer getting sent home and losing money. This has gone on too long. Last June, Danny Connors (convenor in Body Plant) told the Body Plant to leave the fight for 80% lay-off pay until the pay claim 'when we would all be united'. Now is the time to make that true!"

The union side in the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee left a decision on the offer to a national meeting of works councils, that is, of delegated convenors and senior stewards. At a meeting on Friday October 14th 22 out of 23 of the Fords plants were present (all but Belfast). The following position was agreed unanimously and put in a statement after the meeting.

"The company offer made on Wednesday October 12th,

1977, does not fulfill the expressed wish of our members in our claim and the Ford national negotiating council is therefore unable to recommend acceptance. Our trade unions have now achieved all that is possible through negotiations; if the offer is not acceptable, we should recommend a withdrawal of all labour!"

But it didn't exactly convey a mood of militant determination!

Voting, plant by plant, took place in the week beginning 17th October. Early results favoured accepting the offer.

Rejection, of course, would mean strike, a fact which was emphasised both by Moss Evans and at the national meeting. But neither Evans nor the national meeting recommended strike action, and no political or organisational preparations were made for strike action.

In this situation the talk of a strike was nothing less than pressure by the union leaders on shop floor workers to accept the offer — using the fact of their own abdication from responsibility to blackmail carworkers into voting for a slow cut in their living standards over the next year.

The way the decision is to be reached makes a 'yes' vote the most likely. The result will be determined by a simple majority of plants, with all plants have an equal vote. This means that 300 workers in the Treforest plant in South Wales will have the same weight as the 6,000 workers at the Body Plant in Dagenham! So much for a democrat-

ic decision by the workers involved.

In this system the smaller plants hold the key, and the first votes were taken on Monday at the KD plant, Dagenham (650 day shift workers), the Research and Engineering Centre, Dutton, Essex (600), and the Croydon components plant (300). All voted in favour of accepting the offer.

JOE MACAULAY

## WAS IT JUST COINCIDENCE?

Last week a London pub, the Northumberland Arms, was fire bombed. There were several injuries.

The police stated immediately that no political connection was suspected. They didn't give their evidence, and we don't know that they are wrong. If they are right, though, there is a very strange coincidence.

In recent years there have not been many public meetings on the Irish question in London pubs. Over the last few weeks, however, there have been several — all, or almost all, in the Northumberland Arms.

Just coincidence?

## VOTE NO IN LEYLAND BALLOT from page 1

campaign warns that Leyland will be run down, dismantled, or dismembered if the workers don't toe management's line. And even before the senior stewards' meeting the press was cooking up stories of a 'rank and file revolt' in favour of the management proposals.

There's no mass enthusiasm on the shop floor for management's plans! But the problem is that with the trade union leadership giving no clear explanation of the issues, workers will vote management's way for lack of an alternative.

The 'toe the line or face your doom' line is the opposite of the truth. If management's proposals go through, then speed-ups, cut-backs and redundancies will multiply. It is only a fighting and determined workforce that can save jobs and conditions in Leyland.

There must be shop meetings and mass meetings, and a full democratic discussion. If things are done that way, the bosses can be beaten yet. Last week a mass meeting in the Assembly plant in Cowley discussed "corporate bargaining" — and rejected it.

### — CORRECTION —

In last week's Workers Action we referred to reports of '3,500 unfilled vacancies' in the Longbridge works of British Leyland. The total of 3,500 should have referred to the whole of Leyland Cars, not just Longbridge.

## WAS P.T.A. LAY-OFF PROVOKED?

THROUGHOUT the week beginning October 10th, the night shifts in both the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant and the Body plant at Dagenham were laid off.

The situation arose the previous week, with a strike in the PTA for the removal of a foreman who had been recently and provocatively appointed. The section involved met on October 17th, and the laid off shift returned to work — but for the whole of the previous week management were clearly happy at a situation which kept over 5,000 workers at home, away from collective discussion and organisation.

## BAADER, RASPE, ENSSLIN: continued from p.1

who have been trapped and imprisoned for the last five years before being killed off.

For the three prisoners to have committed suicide it would need to be true that two of them managed to get hold of guns, though

they are housed in a special tight security jail, in solitary confinement, and recently have been denied access even to lawyers. It is virtually certain that the suicides could not have been prepared and carried out without the collaboration — official and authorised, or unauthorised — of some of the jailers. For all three to have committed suicide at more or less the same time in response to news of the failure of

the hi-jacking presupposes that they had access to news which they were not officially supposed to have, and a possibility of coordinating action to a degree that would be incredible in the circumstances.

If Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe did not commit suicide, then their jailers killed them — with or without the knowledge of or orders from authorities higher than those of the prison.

## CARVING UP THE MINERS

THE RIGHT wing of the National Union of Mineworkers has managed to get a majority on the National Executive Committee in favour of a pit-head ballot on a productivity scheme for the coal industry.

This pit-by-pit productivity or incentive scheme has been negotiated by the National Joint Negotiating Committee in defiance of the decisions of the last NUM conference, which rejected the idea of such schemes, and in defiance of the 1974 ballot on the same issue, in which 63% of the members rejected pit-by-pit productivity dealing. On both occasions the miners showed their hostility to schemes which would favour certain areas and certain pits where working conditions and plant make high productivity easier; which set pit against pit and area against area; and which would lead to a big increase in accident rates.

On the question of the straight pay claim, however, the £135 for face workers, there have been no moves. By negotiating what the conference rejected before what the conference approved, the right wing is trying to throw dust in the eyes of the membership.

It is clear that the strategy of Gormley, of once-Left Daly, and of their followers is to take the heat out of any struggle for the £135, and thereby keep the NUM more or less within the Government's pay guidelines. By not proceeding on the claim itself these people are trying to create more favourable conditions for acceptance of the twice-rejected productivity scheme. They hope that under the pressure of constant price rises and delays in moves towards wage increases, the rank and file will opt for a short-sighted policy of money-in-the-pocket-now.

Gormley denies that what he is proposing is an 'incentive jungle'. Yet that is exactly what it is. He is not even proposing a national incentive scheme, but a scheme that divides area from area and pit from pit. If the Right wing has its way on this, it will be a big step to breaking up the powerful unity achieved in the NUM over recent years.

Although the Left lost the NEC vote, the eleven left votes on that committee represent more NUM members than the victorious 13. That means that a campaign can still be waged to defeat this move by the right (just as they were defeated on their scheme for concessionary coal recently), and to insist that the NEC gets down to banging on Derek Ezra's table in support of the £135 demand.

PAUL ADAMS

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

**FRIDAY 21 OCTOBER.** Seamus Costello memorial meeting, with a speaker from the Irish Republican Socialist Party and a tape recording of a speech by Seamus Costello. 7.45 at the Small Hall, Camden Centre, Biddborough St. Organised by the Seamus Costello memorial committee.

**FIRDAY-SUNDAY 21-23 OCTOBER** "Critique" conference on "The 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the World Crisis". Starts 7pm Friday at Conway Hall. Speakers include George Haupt, André Gunder Frank, Ernest Mandel, Hill-el Tickten, and Fernando Claudin. Registration £2.50.

**SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER.** ASTMS Rally on Women and the Unions. From 1pm at Unity House (NUR), Euston Road.

**SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER.** Birmingham Workers' Action readers' meeting: 'Ireland's struggle for freedom'. From 4pm at 721A Pershore Road, Birmingham 29.

**TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER.** Lambeth Trades Council support meeting for Grunwicks. At Lambeth Town Hall.

**THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER.** Coventry Anti-Apartheid and Coventry Trades Council: meeting on "The Struggle in South Africa", with Stephen Dlamini, President of SACTU. From 7.30pm at Lanchester Poly, room D14.

**TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER.** Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting: "The quest for left unity". 7.30pm at the Rhymney Hotel, Adam St, Cardiff.

**SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER.** Midlands conference on Ireland. Details from 7 College Street, Leicester.

**SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER.** International-Communist League public meeting: "How to fight the fascists". 7.45pm at the 'Prince Albert', Wharfedale Road, London N1.

**SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER.** Working Women's Charter day school on women and the trade unions. From 10.30am at Friends Meeting House, Church St, Reading Details from Anita Turnbull, Flat 2, 3 Coleridge Road, London N8.

**SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER.** "Rank and File" delegate conference. 11.30am at the New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester. Credentials for delegates from trade union bodies, 50p from the Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

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