



NO TO LABOUR'S PHASE 3

The Tories have gone—but Phase 3 lives after them. That is the message that Employment Secretary Michael Foot and the Labour Government had for the workers' movement on Monday.

With the active connivance of the TUC bureaucrats, Labour has decided to keep this hated piece of Tory legislation in force until a 'voluntary' agreement on wage restraint can be worked out in detail.

CHRIS BALFOUR

Such an agreement will simply be another means of achieving the same ends as Phase 3—the holding down of wages so that the working class is forced to bear the brunt of the economic crisis into which British capitalism is dragging us.

No complex new law was needed to make Phase 3 a dead letter, simply a public declaration by Foot that he would use his authority as a Minister to rubber-stamp any settlement that came before the Pay Board, as he did with the miners. The Labour Party and the TUC, if they had wanted to smash Phase 3, could easily have mobilised the mass of workers who had already settled under Phase 3 through mass demonstrations and the threat of a general strike.

But Foot did exactly the opposite. He promised, like a faithful servant, not to use his powers as a minister except in 'truly exceptional circumstances' and instructed those workers who had already settled under Phase 3 that they must swallow this bitter pill once-and-for-all.

The task of militants in the months ahead will be to give Mr. Foot his 'truly exceptional circumstances'—through truly exceptional struggle.

Millions of workers have already seen their paypackets eaten away by rising prices under the Tory pay laws. Next year prices (despite Labour's souped-up Prices Commission and food subsidies) will shoot up even faster.

Under such circumstances the

ruling class cannot seriously expect to avoid mass struggles. But what they want is an agreement between the Labour Government and the TUC to ensure that such struggles are denied official union backing.

In this way they hope to isolate and localise the militant sections of the class, so that they can then be hammered into submission by the bosses, with the support of the police and the courts.

Old trade union 'lefts' never die—they simply go into hibernation when the struggle heats up. Sure enough, rumblings have recently been heard from the grave of Hugh Scanlon.

He is now talking about a struggle for the national engineers' claim, 'whether it is within Phase 3 or not.' This rejuvenated militancy pales a little when we recall that Scanlon, just before the election, was busy assuring all and sundry that the engineers' claim did fall within Phase 3.

If Scanlon really wants to try and dress up as a militant once again he should come out for the full claim—including immediate equal pay and a 35-hour week (which is certainly not within Phase 3)—and not just the wages half. Moreover, he should call for a national engineering struggle to actually win the claim, instead of indulging in the absurd shadow-boxing of an overtime ban.

Regardless of what Scanlon gets up to, these must be the aims of militants in the engineering industry.

Other workers must also push forward wage claims that make up for past hardship and meet their present needs. But in order that such struggles can succeed, moves must be

made to overcome the treachery of the TUC and the Labour Party.

First, the bosses must be deprived of all the additional weapons they have acquired under the Tories. The Industrial Relations Act must go, as Labour promises. But all challenges to the right to picket must also be broken: all anti-picketing laws must be ended, and all the pickets on trial at Shrewsbury must be pardoned and set free. A campaign of mass action, leading to indefinite strike action, must be got under way immediately to attain these objectives.

Second, a massive protest must be mounted inside the unions to block the preparation of 'voluntary' wage restraint. Coming together around the theme of 'No incomes policy under capitalism,' all trade unionists must condemn the TUC's capitulation over Phase 3 and demand recall conferences of their own union and of the TUC to stop any further sell-out moves over wages.

Finally, every group of workers that goes into struggle—for decent wages, against redundancies, or whatever—must be able to count on the active support of the entire rank-and-file of the workers' movement, no matter what rotten tricks the bureaucrats pull. Action Committees of militants are urgently needed in every area to organise such support.

Only in this way can the working class hope to turn the electoral defeat of the Tory Government into a real working class victory, and ensure that its interests are protected from the attacks of the capitalist class.

Axe falls on Scottish newspapers

The closures of the Beaverbrook Group's *Scottish Daily Express* and the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, involving the sacking of 1,800 journalists, printers and office staff, will be the first test of workers' determination to resist mass redundancies since the election of the Labour Government.

In anticipation of this, the Beaverbrook management has announced that a third of the redundancy payments will not be made until 1 January, 1975—and these will only be forthcoming if there are no interruptions to the production of the three Glasgow-based papers before they close at the end of the month, and the production of the *Daily Express* is not interfered with before the beginning of next year.

The management has claimed that this blackmail is necessary in order to provide the funds for the redundancy payout. It just so happens that 1 January is the date that Beaverbrook is believed to have chosen for selling the *Express* to Rothermere's *Daily Mail*—which will occasion an even greater number of redundancies.

Beaverbrook has substantial property

interests, and these evidently pay more substantial dividends than newspaper publishing. Losses on the Glasgow papers were partly engineered by re-routing advertising revenue, in order to 'justify' the closures.

The *Scottish Daily Express* joint chapel's committee has responded with an attempt to organise a work-in, and the *Daily Express* joint chapel's in London have set up a support committee, backed by all the major newspaper chapels with the exception of the NGA. But a decision on the Glasgow occupation will await the results of Government talks on Friday.

The Scottish TUC has said that if it is entirely a question of money, it would expect the Government to make an offer to save the three papers.

Support of this kind, paid through taxes at the workers' expense, would do little but fill Beaverbrook's coffers until the company again decides to plead poverty.

The newspaper workers must take over the papers, and demand that the Labour Government nationalise them, place them under the workers' management and fund them by a levy imposed on the rest of the capitalist press. In this way, it is the capitalists, and not the workers, who will have to pay for the system which creates closures and unemployment.

DIRTY TRICKS FOILED AT MACLAREN'S

Shop stewards stopped attempts to move equipment out of the Glasgow IIT factory, Maclaren Controls, on Tuesday night.

By chance IMG member Erl Wilkie was passing the factory. He spotted a van being loaded and immediately reported this to Maclaren's Convenor John Morrison. The shop stewards got there just in time to stop £5,000 worth of equipment being taken away. They made the five office staff workers who had loaded the van unload it and hand over the key and then stayed in the factory overnight.

At a meeting the next morning the management claimed that the operation had been carried out by a staff member without management knowledge.

This can be taken with a van load of salt. It was just such a fly-by-night operation which sparked off the occupation, and it took place during a break which the management had requested, in negotiations on redundancies.

The management refused to sack the staff member responsible because 'He is too useful to us.' Yes, indeed. See pages 4-5.



Barricades at Essex University. This too is part of the struggle to defend picketing. Essex students are in urgent need of solidarity from the student and trade union movements in their fight against repression by both the University authorities and the police. See page 8 for full story.

The expected Tory/Liberal assault on the Government the other day turned out to be a love-in. But Police put the boot in with a vengeance at Essex, and the Price sister shive now been tortured for 17 days under a Labour Government.

In case you hadn't noticed we still have a capitalist crisis with us and we still have a date trying to keep the system going by attacking workers, students, black people and the Irish people. And we still need paper like Red Weekly to get the message across about what's happening, and how to fight back. Help us to do a better job. Send us a donation for our fund drive NOW! Send to Red Weekly Fund Drive, 37 Colindale Avenue, London, N.1.

Foot's Phase 3- Here today... here tomorrow

Foot's parliamentary demagoguery in last Monday's House of Commons debate served two purposes.

Although warned by the more sober spokesman of the ruling class, the Tories insisted on serving notice that they intended to vote down Labour's proposals. As the *Sunday Times* editorial said: 'The Tories are mobilising against a Government which has not yet, as a matter of fact, dismantled the Heath pay policy.' It described the Tories' intentions as a 'crude mistake'. Heath's tactical error was of course realised too late. A scrambled and desperate attempt to withdraw the amendment played into Foot's hands. He naturally grabbed this gift to boost Labour's electoral credibility and sharpen the divisions inside the Tory Party.

BACK DOOR

More important, it enabled Foot, as the *Guardian* said, to 'demolish the hated Stage Three with a contemptuous sweep of his right fist...'. Seconds later, the adroit Mr Foot was holding 'it aloft in his left hand...'. Stage Three was not going yet.

A week before the Minister of Employment had met secretly with the leaders of the TUC. A bargain had been made. Warning the TUC—with tongue in cheek—he raised the spectre of a Labour defeat. He then got their agreement to keep Phase Three for

another six months. In return he offered the baits of higher pensions, repeal of the Industrial Relations Act and a freeze on rents—all measures where Labour is guaranteed Liberal and Nationalist support.

This reversal of last year's TUC Conference decisions was conducted in absolute secrecy. A week later the Department of Employment still refused to confirm that such a meeting had taken place. The deal means that Foot is now in a stronger position to pressure the TUC into entering a formal pact with the Labour Government over wage restraint. The repeal of Stage 3 will be made conditional upon the acceptance of Labour Pay Laws.

No doubt the already discredited, and largely unworkable, Industrial Relations Act will also be the subject of 'delicate' and highly 'secret' negotiations with the threat of Labour's defeat again being waved at the spineless leadership of the TUC.

TIME AND ISSUE

The *Sunday Times* with its own inimitable blend of ruling class realism and cynicism had told the Tories that they should only overthrow the Government at 'the right time' and on 'the right issue'. The bourgeoisie understands that to force an election right now would mean a Labour victory. Labour would capitalise on its reforms, mild as they are, to mobilise working class support. They would be able to claim that they had

been given no opportunity to implement their programme. Furthermore, they would be able to use, with devastating effect, the cracks and divisions which are appearing inside the Tory Party.

The ruling class would then face a Labour Government with a working majority instead of a government that can be removed at 'the right time' on 'the right issue'. Such an issue is unsuitable for a capitalist class faced with a growing economic crisis and an undefeated working class.

With a chronic balance of payments deficit, estimated to reach between £3½ to £5 billion during 1974, and a forecasted inflation of 15 per cent, the ruling class will have to attack the well organised sections of the working class. To do that it needs a strong government which will centralise its struggles and which will introduce legislation to serve its interests against the unions. The Tories pursued policies which did just that. As the *Annual Report of the National Council of Civil Liberties* states: 'The misuse and abuse by the police of their powers of search continue unabated, hindered by no one, ignored by our legislators, encouraged by an over zealous executive and by an equivocal judiciary... it is impossible to isolate any single piece of legislation or change in official policy and practice in 1973 which had a commendable effect on civil liberties'. Rising unemployment—forecast

by the 'experts' to pass the million mark over the next year, coupled with an annual inflation approaching 15-20 per cent, will detonate big struggles. The working class will not passively accept mass redundancies and factory closures. This year, for the first time since 1945, it faces an actual cut in its living standards of 4-6 per cent. The ruling class, to compensate for their material weakness, shown in their inability to inflict a defeat on any of the powerfully organised sections of the workers in open confrontation, must more and more rely on anti-trade union legislation, anti-picketing laws, statutory pay laws and the open use of the police and the army.

UNRELIABLE

A Labour Government is too unreliable an instrument to serve its ends. A declining economic base rules out the integrationist policy favoured by sections of the ruling class in 1964. The bourgeoisie still remember what happened to Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife'. Even the limited measures of nationalisation proposed by Labour at its last Conference are unacceptable. To talk about nationalisation in a period of mass redundancies and factory closures has a dangerous dynamic of its own—it can encourage occupations and expropriations.

What the ruling class needs at the moment is a weak Labour Government that they can bring 'to heel'.

They understand that its mild reforms will quickly melt in the white heat of this summer's inflation. Labour's manoeuvres, dictated by pressures from the ruling class and the international bankers, will, they hope, frustrate Labour voters. They hope this situation will help them to dictate the terms of the next election and prepare for the return of a Tory Government. Meanwhile, they have to re-orient the Conservative Party.

As Ian Aitken, political correspondent of the *Guardian* remarks: 'Heath for the chop—but no axe to hand.' Thrown into disarray by their electoral defeat the Tories reflect the crisis of leadership which also exists within the ruling class.

For the working class movement the situation can be turned to advantage. The weaknesses and divisions within the ruling class must be exploited to the full. An offensive must be opened up against the Pay Laws. Closures must be met by occupations and demands for expropriation. The campaign for the release of the Shrewsbury Six must be intensified. To rely on the Parliamentary manoeuvres and back-door dealings of Foot and company would be fatal. Such policies weaken the ability of the working class to struggle and prepare the way for the return of the Tories.

JEFF KING



A large contingent from Scotland were among the thousand trade unionists who marched to the House of Commons on Wednesday to demand the release of the Shrewsbury six. Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

SQUATTERS SET UP ANTI-EVICTION FORCE

Proposals to set up an anti-property speculation united front were backed by a meeting of the All London Squatters Federation held at the luxury squat at 5-7 Dover Street, W1, on Sunday. The campaign will be around the demand: 'Decent homes for all now'.

The meeting also agreed to establish an all-London anti-eviction force, and backed the four demands of the Dover St squatters, which include the requisition of all empty property.

In Canterbury, students from Kent University who have occupied a row of cottages which had stood empty for five years, last week fought against a demolition squad sent by British Rail, owners of the cottages, on 13 March.

NOWHERE TO LIVE

One of the squatters, Caroline Hemmings, said: 'They told us they wanted to pull these places down,

which is ludicrous when there are so many homeless people in Canterbury. We are all homeless and had no option but to move in here.'

'Last year I had to leave university for a year because I had nowhere to live. The university has expanded without any regard to the accommodation situation.'

The would-be demolishers went off to obtain backing from the courts, and three days later police sent from Dover wrecked two of the houses. Over 800 signatures in support of the squatters were collected during a mass leafleting of Canterbury.

The anti-eviction force set up in London will shortly find itself confronting one of the largest speculators, Cromdale Holdings, a Joe Levy company dealing with 220 Camden High Street, NW1, has obtained a summons for the possession of the building on 27 March. The building was squatted to block Levy's plans for the purchase of a swathe of Camden High St and it has been used

as an organising centre for tenants and squatters.

Meanwhile, Brompton Securities, another of Levy's companies, is attempting to secure 'legal' possession of the luxury flats in Dover St on 29 March. Forty people, including six families, are now comfortably ensconced in these apartments, which have been empty for nearly two years and are due to be let at rents of up to £100 a week.

One of the squatters said: 'The co-ordinated action of the speculators is being met by the co-ordinated action of tenants and squatters. We will be picketing the High Court on both days, and messages of support will be extremely welcome.'

Speakers are available to address meetings, and can be contacted c/o John Clark, phone 01-485 8213. A new broadsheet on the LEB 26 campaign is out now. Copies free from 207 Railton Road, London SE24. Phone 01-733 8663

TYNESIDE BUS WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST PAY BOARD

Tyneside bus workers have been taking action against a Pay Board ruling which has cancelled back-wages of up to £100. When workers entered depots in Newcastle and South Shields on Saturday, 16 March, they were confronted by a T&GWU notice which informed them the employers, the Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive, could not pay the full amount of a pay award because of the Tory pay freeze operative between November 1972 and the following April.

The union, together with the Transport Executive, announced that it had written to Michael Foot, the new Employment Minister, asking for a full payment to be made. But this did not satisfy the workers, since negotiations on this matter have been dragging on for 18 months.

T&GWU officials refused to sanction immediate action, and instead fixed a mass meeting for the following Monday.

However by 1 pm all the buses from Newcastle's Shyford depot had gone off the road, and the buses at Bylar, the other depot rapidly followed. This pressured the union officials to bring the mass meeting forward to the Sunday morning.

At the meeting the bus workers decided to continue their strike until they had received Foot's reply, and bus services over the rest of the weekend were stopped. However, at another mass meeting the next day they decided to go back, but to carry out a series of guerrilla strikes if the matter was not satisfactorily settled very shortly.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS:

THE POLITICS OF PASSIVITY

The reports of the International Socialists' National Committee meetings published in *Socialist Worker* suggest that they are morbid occasions. Last week we were told: 'After a discussion lasting most of Saturday, the IS NC called for a campaign to turn 40,000 buyers of *Socialist Worker* into sellers.' What a joke!

To brood for a whole day and give birth to such a banality is bad enough. But to present this commonplace procedure of any political group as a major innovation after IS has been in existence for over 20 years is the height of absurdity.

Sadly, this is only one more example of a growing trend of the IS—to confuse what is of organisational importance for the IS with what is important for the class struggle as a whole. Thus the miners' strike was seen by IS primarily as an opportunity for mass recruitment, and the election campaign as an opportunity to dramatically expand the sales of *Socialist Worker*.

This is not simply an aberration. It flows from a particular conception of politics which the IS leadership holds and which is revealed by the undercurrent of the debate at the IS NC.

The debate was essentially between

those who wished to place demands on the Labour Government which would expose the Government when these demands remained unfulfilled, and those, essentially of the same mould, who thought that the Labour Government would expose itself, leaving the IS the task of mopping up battalions of recruits disillusioned in Labour.

Meanwhile all that was necessary was to make sniping attacks on the Government in the newspaper, and to throw the IS membership into the frantic activity of turning all 40,000 readers of *Socialist Worker* into sellers.

This politics of passivity is absolutely useless—especially in the present period. It is not for us to stand idly by waiting for the 'honeymoon' to be over, commenting from the side-lines on the latest sins of the Labour Government. In the absence of any clear alternative in action being offered, such a 'honeymoon' is just as likely to end in demoralisation and despair for the working class.

It is inevitable that with the rapidly deteriorating economic situation, we will see bitter-fought struggles on such questions as redundancy, housing and prices, which may even begin at a local level. And in the face of the paralysis of the bourgeois parties at the level of parliament, actions of the revolutionary organisations around these struggles can have decisive results with big effects on the balance of forces.

It is only in this way that the aim of a 'real rank and file movement' has a hope of success. If the revolutionary groups sit on their arses as they did during the crucial days when Heath was clinging to office immediately after the elections, speculating what the outcome would be, the future looks very bleak indeed.

JIM CLYNES

SHREWSBURY CONFERENCE

Hypocrisy and whitewash win the day

'Abstentions! Count the Abstentions!' was the cry which went up at the end of Saturday's conference on Shrewsbury, called by the London T&GWU/UCATT Action Committee. The poorly attended meeting ended in pandemonium, as 40% of the 250 delegates registered their disgust with the platform's refusal to take amendments by abstaining on the official resolution.

This resolution was a whitewash of the UCATT and T&GWU bureaucrats, and put forward a 'strategy' for releasing the Shrewsbury pickets which was an insult to the political intelligence of most of the delegates.

DISGUSTING LIE

How could delegates vote for a resolution which contained a disgusting lie? 'We support both the T&G National Committee and the Executive Committee of UCATT in their statements condemning the trials as a political conspiracy on the Right to Picket' it said. Yet UCATT's most recent statement said exactly the opposite!

No wonder George Smith, General Secretary of UCATT, booked to speak at the Conference, sent Derek Woods, his assistant secretary, to speak instead. As Stuart MacLennan, IMG member and UCATT steward said - 'We heard the monkey instead of the organ-grinder!'

To be at all consistent with UCATT's real policy, Woods shouldn't help but blurt out, amid angry boos and shouts, that UCATT couldn't intervene in the case because it was

a 'criminal' one. As MacLennan pointed out, the NUM did not sit back and mutter about the criminal law in 1972 when 14 Longannet miners were arrested, but pledged to stay out until they were released.

And how could delegates vote for a resolution which proposed nothing more than a call on Labour to release the pickets, a call on the union leaderships to condemn the use of the 1875 Act, support for the Day of Action already planned for 20 March, and for delegates to raise the issue in their trade union branches? The delegates had voted for this sort of thing time and again in recent months, with no noticeable effect on the course of capitalist 'justice'.

On top of all this, the platform had the gall to propose a recall Conference to 'promote further action'.

CONFUSION

It wasn't that the Conference was packed out with members of the IMG, still stubbornly trying to establish that only indefinite strike action will guarantee victory. Many of those seeking to put amendments, and who finally abstained, were rank and file members of the very Communist Party which dominates the official Action Committee stage-managing the Conference. Their modest proposals for a one-day stoppage on 1 May met with cold-blooded manipulation from the platform.

This was not the only surprise of the day. Two of the speeches in the morning showed the confu-

sion into which the CP's 'pressure the leaders' strategy has plunged the campaign.

Norman Atkinson, Labour MP for Tottenham, said that the purpose of mass activity was to speed up the court case, so that it would no longer be 'sub-judice' and could be discussed in Parliament!

By KEVIN TODD

Then the Labour Party would amend the Conspiracy Act and the verdicts 'could' be reversed. But the courts were there to 'dispense justice' and their procedures could not be overturned in an 'anarchistic' manner.

To retain any credibility at all after this contribution, Eddie Marsden of the Construction Section of the AUEW, one of the figures who has argued most for reliance on the bureaucracy, had to make all kinds of left demagoguery. He spoke of the need for mass action to force the Government's

hand, and said that this was more important now than simply pressure on the TUC and the Labour Party. Needless to add, however, he failed to move any amendment to the resolution.

Carl Gardner, member of the IMG and a NATSOPA delegate, pointed out how the Communist Party of which Marsden is a member had consistently stamped on any moves towards independent mass action. He criticised the *Morning Star* for failing to report the call for an indefinite general stoppage in the building trade made by the Birmingham UCATT shop stewards in early January. If the CP had taken up this call, widespread industrial action could have been launched, and the pickets freed there and then. But this chance was ignored.

WAY FORWARD

It was left to two other IMG speakers, Hilda Keen of the NUT and Westminster Trades Council, and Derek Brough, a T&GWU

site convenor, to argue the way forward for the campaign.

They argued that the Conference should come out in favour of indefinite strike action. Those unions like the NUM whose confidence is high as a result of victory, and those like the AUEW still to launch struggles where picketing will be decisive, should be called on to take the lead.

SPEAKING TOUR

They attempted to put forward two amendments, one which would have asked the NUM to publicly state its support for the Shrewsbury workers and to pledge active solidarity with any industrial action taken to free them, and a second that branches of the NUM and AUEW should organise a speaking tour for the prisoners' wives to help lay the basis for industrial action.

These moves would have helped bring the campaign back into the centre of the arena and would have encouraged other sections of workers to commit themselves to the fight. But the London Conference proved yet another talking shop which failed to pull the campaign out of its monotonous routine of more lobbies and smaller one-day protests and conferences such as this. Meanwhile the Shrewsbury lads are left languishing in prison.



40% of delegates registered their disgust by abstaining on the official resolution

Clock strike wound up

The unofficial strike of 5,200 Timex employees in Dundee is over after three weeks. The workers voted to go back and await the result of talks with management on their £10 wage claim—equivalent to the AUEW national claim—after a return-to-work instruction by the AUEW National Executive.

The strike started when the management responded to this claim by offering a miserable £2.50 across the board. This offer—the maximum under Phase 3—involved the downgrading of skilled men. The impetus for the strike came from the 4,000 women workers who refused to accept this downgrading.

Few Timex workers are happy with the outcome of the strike, particularly since no real gains in terms of money have been made. But at least the shop floor organisation in the two Dundee plants is still solid, and the Timex management has agreed to negotiate on a claim it flatly refused one month ago.

These gains have been won in the face of resistance by the company and AUEW officials. After the first week of the strike, the management threatened to close the two factories unless there was an immediate return to work. Faced with this redundancy threat, the workers discussed an occupation of the factories.

The management eventually withdrew these threats, but only after they had gained the willing cooperation of the AUEW at national level, in the shape of a letter, signed on behalf of Hugh Scanlon by right-wing EC member John Boyd. This instructed the AUEW members to go back, despite the support for the strike by the local AUEW branch.

Joyce Royale, the Strike Committee Convenor, said: 'The 70 shop stewards wanted the strike to continue, but we were unable to make a recommendation because of the instruction by the AUEW National Executive, which we accepted reluctantly. We shall continue to fight.'

It is rumoured that Scanlon took this action because he is about to do a deal, along with the TUC, to bail out the Labour Government by retaining Phase 3 for six months. Scanlon is petrified at the thought that a breach of Phase 2 by the Timex workers could become a norm for other settlements.

'Give us this day our daily bread subsidy'

Never let it be said that the Labour Government doesn't take care of the underprivileged. Why, at this very moment, Shirley Williams, Labour's Secretary for Prices and Consumer Protection, is working out ways of subsidising bread.

Of course, this may not mean much to your average bread-eater in the street. In fact, he or she literally won't notice the difference: all that will happen will be that a rise of 1p, or ½p that would have been there otherwise, won't be there.

But that's not the point. Think

about all the good it will do for the deserving poor—the poor, unfortunate bread companies. These impoverished souls will benefit from more than £30 million in hand-outs from the Government.

And well they deserve it. Why last year Spillers-French, our second largest baker, had to try and make ends meet with a paltry £10 millions profit; and that ragged giant, Rank Hovis McDougall, was limping along on only £28 million.

Yes, a £30 million shot in the arm is just the thing that's needed to let our food monopoly live in

the style to which they are accustomed. And if they agree not to put prices up *too much* into the bargain—well, how gallant can you get!

After all, what is this country coming to when three of the most enterprising firms in the land are barely able to make £75 million out of selling food to their fellow-citizens.

There are those who may say that food is an essential social need and should be provided free of capitalist profit-making. They may even say that subsidies on food are

absurd as long as profits are being made out of its production and sale, and call for the total nationalisation of the big food firms.

Clearly such people are flying in the face of the very essence of our capitalist civilisation. Profit-making is the holiest of activities. How fitting then, that the provision of 'our daily bread' should show a good return.

At least the Labour Government has shown a proper understanding of these matters. All right-thinking people will applaud their sound decision to contribute to the upkeep of our impoverished food monopolies.

As for the giggling critics, there is a good old phrase that can dispose of them: 'Let them eat cake.'

CARL OWEN

DOCTORS CALL FOR END TO FORCIBLE FEEDING

The following letter has been sent by a group of 38 doctors to the British Medical Association, asking the association to make a statement on the forcible feeding of Irish political prisoners. Similar letters were sent to the *Times* and the *Guardian*, but to date these have not been published.

Dear Dr Stevenson,

We are writing, as doctors working in Britain, to call for a public statement by the British Medical Association, on the

ethical position of the doctors involved in the forcible feeding of prisoners in British jails.

At the present time, as you will know, forcible feeding is being carried out at Brixton, Garside, and Wormwood Scrubs, where four Irish prisoners have maintained a hunger strike since last November against a Home Office decision not to allow their transfer to prisons in Northern Ireland, where they wish to serve out their sentences near their relatives. This ruling goes against the precedent of eighteen prisoners convicted in Ireland being moved at their

own request to England, and four others being transferred similarly to Ireland since 1971.

Forcible feeding requires that a clamp be placed in the mouth to hold it open while a stomach tube is passed, through which the prisoner is given his daily caloric requirements in liquid form. Since vomiting often occurs, this process may need to be repeated. This practice of forcible feeding is medically dangerous, psychologically damaging, and ethically unacceptable, particularly as all four prisoners are now actively resisting the procedure. In 1917, Thomas Ashe died whilst being force fed in Mountjoy Jail, and the coroner's jury said that his death was due to his treatment in prison and condemned force feeding as a dangerous

and inhuman operation.

On 1 September, the BMJ carried an editorial concerning a German court ruling that an unwilling prisoner could be medically examined, forcibly if necessary, and even with the use of a drug to overcome resistance. It stated that the forcible examination of a person is contrary to the ethical tradition of medicine in any country, the more so if that person is a prisoner.

We feel that the failure to date of the BMA to make a similar pronouncement on the forcible feeding carried out by doctors in our own country should be rectified immediately. Forcible feeding of these prisoners must cease, and their reasonable request of transfer to Irish jails granted.

Building employer tries to smash union

After 23 UCATT members went on strike at the New Telephone Exchange site, Corgie Road, Edinburgh, their employers, Trenthams, locked them out, hoping to smash union organisation at the start of this, their biggest job in the area.

The dispute is over bonus, which is already being paid on other Trenthams sites in the area. Peter Law, the joiners shop steward, told a *Red Week* reporter that the men were solid, but there was a danger of the strike being isolated. Another Trenthams site only half-a-mile up the road has taken no solidarity action and has not even had a collection.

Despite the fact that the Union

has not made the strike official, pickets are successfully keeping scab labour off the site. It is obvious, however, that combine shop stewards' committees and joint shop stewards' committees are essential to deal with these small and bitter local disputes. They are necessary also to prepare for the future confrontations. A fight for a new wage claim must surely come around 10 June, when the 1972 agreement runs out.

Messages of support and money are urgently needed. Send to: Peter Law, 41 Seaton Sands, Long Niddry, East Lothian, Scotland.

RODIN FRASER



Recent demonstration outside Brixton Jail in support of Winchester prisoners

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Photo: NOEL MOONEY

1 How the occupation rolled back ITT

After nearly twenty weeks of struggle, which included a courageous 14-week factory occupation, workers at Maclaren Controls in Glasgow will start work again on Monday having won some major concessions, but without the total victory which was possible had they not been left to fight alone.

The management of Maclaren's, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraphs, has granted in full the pay claim which initiated the dispute. Labourers and semi-skilled workers will receive a £2.25 increase; skilled men £2.50; and women, who constitute three-quarters of the labour force, will actually receive a penny more than the claim—£5.28. The claim was designed to bring equal pay for women nearer.

All agreements on union organisation within the factory will be maintained, and workers made redundant will receive 3 weeks' severance pay

plus 1 week in lieu of notice. But there will be major redundancies, the extent of which has not yet been determined.

'UNION BASHING'

The shop stewards believe that the management will press for about 50 per cent, and although the stewards will try to limit the extent of the sackings—they estimate that only about 65 per cent of the original labour force still seek re-instatement—it seems inevitable that some workers will be pushed out.

John Morrison, the shop stewards convenor, sums up the position as follows: 'As far as I'm concerned it's not a defeat; it's not a victory either. But we've saved our union organisation, and we've got the money we wanted, though it took a long fight. This struggle was not over money, but over union bashing.'

To these gains can be added the nucleus of an ITT Combine Committee, which will prove of long term

importance to other groups of workers facing the ruthless ITT bosses, still dripping with blood from their sabotage against the Allende government in Chile.

TRAIL-BLAZER

From every standpoint, the Maclaren's dispute was significant. It involved a monopoly which employs 70,000 workers in Britain, and 4,000 in Ireland. Given the proportion of women in the factory, the claim represented an important test for the Engineering Union's policy on equal pay.

The dispute was a trail-blazer for the AUEW national claim in the West of Scotland, and it involved advanced and militant forms of struggle which contain valuable lessons for the entire trade union movement.

Yet the Maclaren's workers were isolated for nearly 17 weeks, when full backing from the other engineering workers in the Glasgow area, and the immediate setting up of an ITT Combine Committee, could have won a victory in as many days.

The proof of this is the rapidity with which the management gave in on the two vital points—negotiating during the sit-in, and a guarantee on severance pay. This occurred immediately after the second meeting of the ITT Combine Committee, which discussed a blacking campaign, and a few days after a meeting of 300 engineering shop stewards from the Glasgow area had pledged their support for the struggle.

MAJOR CONCESSIONS

At the shop stewards' meeting, Alec Ferry, the AUEW Glasgow district secretary, explained that the struggle had reached a point at which outside support was necessary. He said that what was initially a wage dispute in a small factory had become, after the first three weeks, a struggle over the 'right to work' and redundancies, against the multi-national ITT corporation.

He told the meeting that the AUEW had initially played it like any other dispute, distributed appeal sheets and paid union dispute benefit every fortnight. Over the last five weeks they had 'played it very cool'; no press statements, no extension of the dispute. Their reason for this was the negotiations with the management under the auspices of the Department of Employment.

At these negotiations the union made a series of major concessions, which Ferry motivated as being necessary because of the 'isolation' of the Maclaren's workers. They gave in on the principle of no redundancies, trying simply to get a say in the extent of the sackings, and in who went out of the gate. They were prepared to discuss the inevitability of ending the sit-in.



MACLAREN

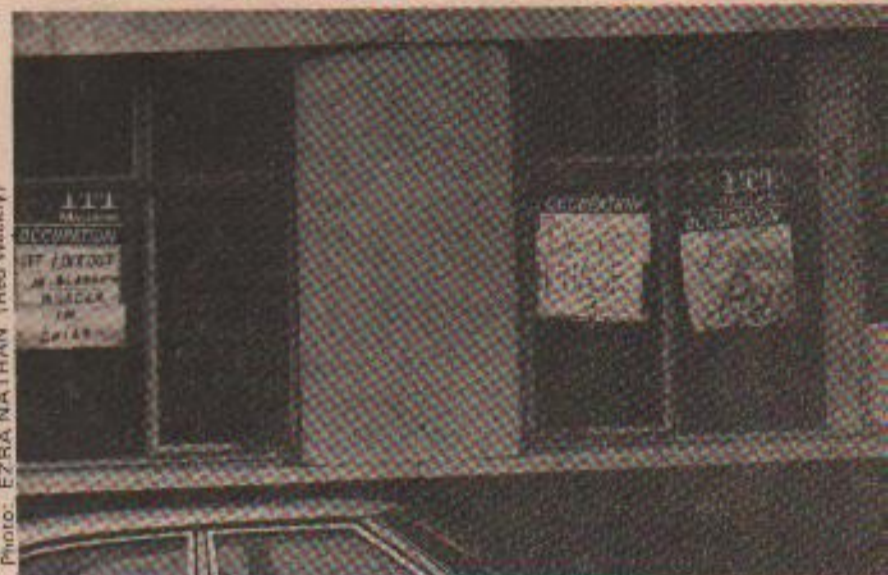


Photo: EZRA NATHAN (Red Weekly)



Photo: EZRA NATHAN (Red Weekly)

Maclaren's convenor John Morrison (right) with IMG election candidate Bob Purdie (left) and campaign manager Eri Wilkie — important politicisation achieved during occupation was reflected in warm reception given to IMG campaign

But the management refused to discuss anything until the sit-in was ended, production had started again, and the redundancies were finalised. ITT refused to commit themselves to a full settlement of the wage claim, and refused to give more than two weeks' severance pay to workers with less than two years' service. The union was claiming a minimum guarantee of three weeks' severance pay.

At this point the AUEW had told the management to 'get stuffed'. A voice from the back of the hall told Ferry: 'You should have done that at the beginning.'

Ferry's version of events is riddled with inconsistencies. It was obvious from the start that the management would not make a single concession as long as they only faced the Maclaren's workers. They had already rejected a compromise proposed by the shop stewards before the strike 'started, after considering it for all of two minutes!'

The 'negotiations' at the DEP consisted of peremptory orders to the workers to get back to work, and accept swingeing redundancies. The

fact that they started to move out production indicated their contempt for the AUEW and their determination to either break the power of the union inside the factory, or close it down altogether.

SHIFTING SANDS

Despite appearances, Ferry is not a fool. You do not get to be Glasgow district secretary of the AUEW without at least a certain flair for judging the shifting sands between Catholic Action and the Communist Party. The 'isolation' which necessitated the AUEW concessions was a result of his delay in organising support. The ease with which he summoned a meeting of 300 shop stewards indicates that he could have mobilised outside solidarity at any time, but he chose to wait until nearly four months of struggle had plunged the Maclaren's workers to the nadir of despair.

A possible explanation for Ferry's foot-shuffling can be guessed from the date of the meeting of 300 stewards, which was 27 February. This guaranteed that any action in support of Maclaren's would take place after the General Election.

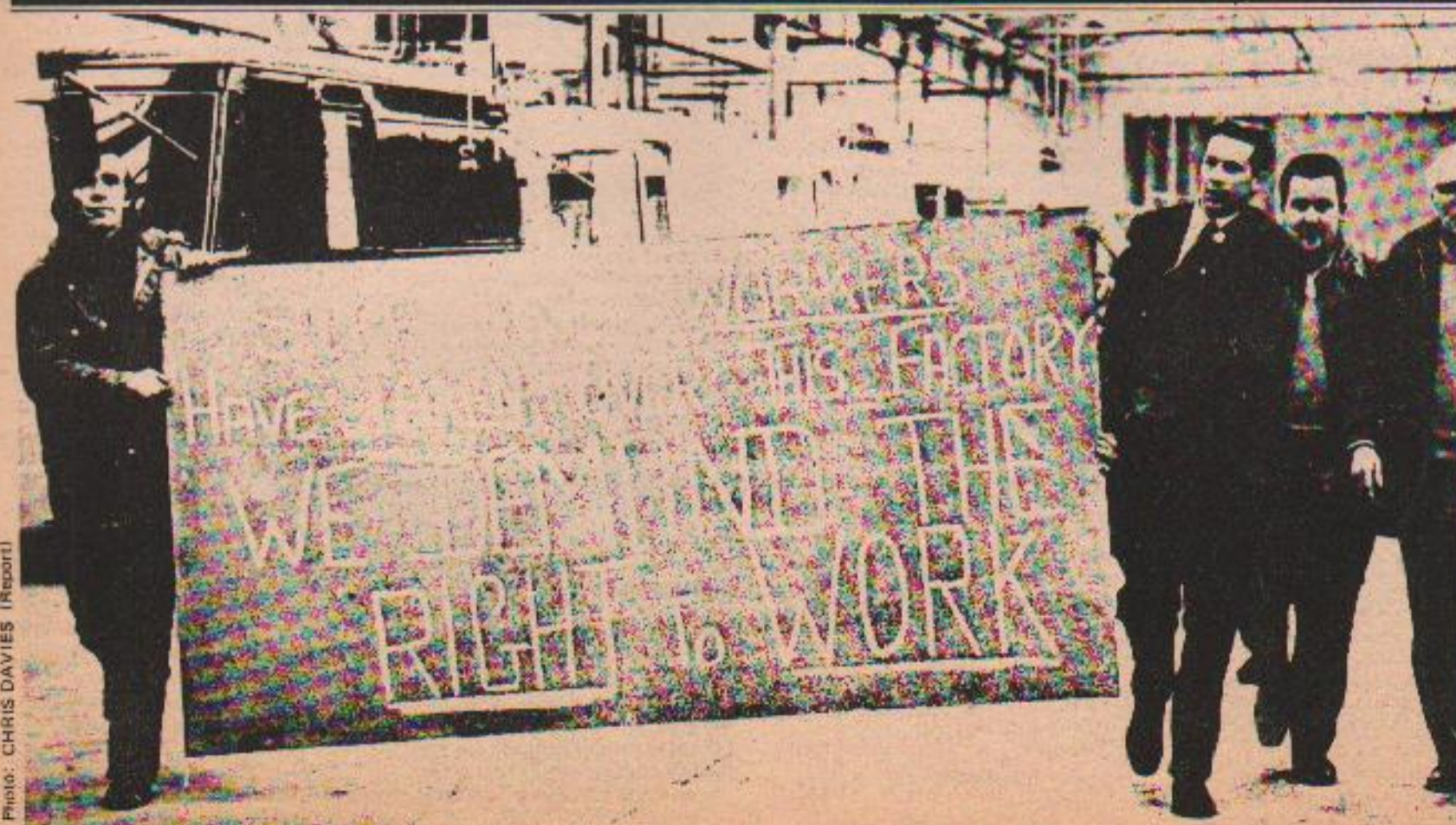


Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

STRACI WORKE SITTING

On 28 February, the day of the election, the jobs of 600 workers in two Hampshire factories were axed by Maxwell Joseph, one of Britain's richest men, and his fellow directors of Giltspur Investments. The following day the factory was given 1½ hours notice that the company no longer required their labour.

Although the workers at the Hamble factory have not yet begun to fight back, the men at Eastleigh are deter-

MACLAREN'S



With somewhat convoluted reasoning, Ferry himself, in commenting on the settlement, made it clear why, despite his handling of the dispute, limited gains were won: 'It's hard to claim a victory when you know that some people have lost their jobs, voluntarily or otherwise. But it is a victory when a group of workers can stand up against a multi-national

company and win.' It was the Maclaren's workers themselves who salvaged this limited victory. Without their tenacious struggle the factory would have been closed down, and ITT would have moved production elsewhere—accompanied by ineffectual bleatings from Ferry's office.
GAVIN ROBINSON

2 'On to the national claim'

The Maclaren Controls factory is on the fringe of Govan, which must be one of the most concentrated industrial areas in the world, with a long tradition of working class organisation. The names of the shipyards and heavy engineering factories which

cluster around this stretch of the Clyde are a roll call of the most important centres of class struggle during the great days of Red Clydeside. But Maclaren's did not share in this tradition. A small light-engineer-

STRACHANS ARE TIGHT



Convenor Pat Doyle: 'We have got to stay united in this dispute, otherwise it will be a serious defeat for the whole trade union movement in this area.'

mined that they are not going to be kicked out of their jobs at the stroke of a millionaire's pen. They have occupied the plant and are sitting tight.

Strachans Engineering, the factory at Eastleigh, manufactures buses and vans, mainly under contract from Ford. The reason given for the closures was 'sustained unprofitable operations'. Yet there are orders from 21 countries for the vans, and commercial vehicles are increasingly making up a larger

share of production in the motor industry as a whole.

'DISRUPTIVE'

The Occupation Committee, representing the T&GWU, Sheet Metal Workers, AUEW, ASTMS and EPTU, is convinced that the proposed closure is an attempt by the management to break down Trade Union organisation in the plant. The directors have made constant reference to 'disruptive elements',

ing factory, it had no history of militancy, and was led by shop stewards very conscious of their own inexperience.

Last October, the stewards submitted a wage claim within the terms of Phase 3. The management responded by offering £2 across the board, plus an extra £2.06 for women. John Morrison, the convenor, says: 'This offer was completely unacceptable. It was the first firm in Glasgow which did not bother to use the excuse of Phase 3 to put a ceiling on their offer.'

STRIKE ACTION

The workers unanimously rejected it, and gave seven days' notice of strike action, which started on 6 November when the management rejected a compromise settlement proposed by the stewards.

It was obvious from the start that the management was not interested in reaching a settlement. They called the shop stewards to a meeting at AUEW House in Glasgow where the astonished stewards, who had expected to be discussing some kind of offer, instead heard the management lay down conditions for a return to work which included acceptance of redundancies, and a 2-year no-strike agreement. A mass meeting rejected the management's insulting diktat.

OCCUPYING

This was how John Morrison described the background to the decision to occupy, and the occupation itself:

'During a conciliation meeting at the Department of Employment in the fifth week of the strike I received a phone call which told me about the removal of a machine from the factory by non-union labour, in fact by the office staff. It must have been done during the night as it was a big job.

'I reported this to the shop stewards committee, and we immediately started thinking about occupying the factory and made this recommendation at the Saturday mass meeting.

'The following Monday the management sent a letter to all of us: if we were not back at work by Wednesday they would terminate our employment. It was necessary to move quickly.

'We held another mass meeting outside the factory gates and unanimously agreed to occupy. Black, one of the managers, asked me if I was going back to work. I pushed past him and opened the door.

'Eight of us got in, and Black chased us round the factory while we looked for a way to let the others in. We finally got them in through another door, but not before Black tried to stop some of the girls by running a steel

gate at them. 'We were now in occupation. The police asked me to talk to them, but the others wouldn't let me. The police and management talked to us through Ferry, the AUEW district secretary, and said that they wouldn't bother us so long as we did no damage.'

And once the occupation had begun they had to solve a broad range of problems which threatened its continuation. They had little experience on which to base their decisions, and had to 'cross each bridge as we came to it,' as one shop steward put it.

In any strike there is a tendency for the involvement of the workers to gradually decline. In an occupation, which requires a higher level of participation, this tendency represents an even more significant problem.

After five weeks on strike, the Maclaren's workers were in financial difficulties. They eked out unemployment and strike benefit, with collections and donations—UCS threw them a sorely needed financial lifeline. But economic pressure on the worst off forced a proportion of them to seek other jobs.

Since the majority of the workers were married women, home, children, and the economic position of their husbands increased the pressure on many of the women involved. The division in the family between the man as wage earner, and the woman as the person responsible for home and children could be seen here as a direct barrier to working class struggle. It was one of the failures of the occupation that no creche was set up, and no collective responsibility taken for domestic commitments.

LESSONS

Some lessons can be learnt from other errors which were made, although it was a tribute to the leadership of the Maclaren's workers that the struggle was kept going for so long.

At the start the shop stewards were very anxious to keep control of the struggle. They argued that they had been elected, and the members should have faith in them and in their decisions. But towards the end of the occupation they recognised that they should have tried to get broader participation from the start, especially in fund-raising.

John Morrison says: 'If we had to start again we would have set up another committee for fund raising right at the beginning. We've learned the real need of it through experience. At one point we blocked the idea of a separate committee, and when it was finally agreed to, the workers were used to sitting and not acting. It should have been done at the beginning when everyone was eager to act. We should have used their

enthusiasm.' But they still tended to see the organisation of the struggle in terms of themselves, as the elected representatives, taking decisions but obtaining assistance from other workers. They did not appreciate that the struggle polarised those who were willing to fight, and those who would remain passive.

In order to strengthen the struggle it was essential that the reserves of energy and initiative produced by the best workers should be tapped, by directly involving them in decision making. This would have required control of the occupation by a democratically elected occupation committee.

The shop stewards committee was not adequate because it was elected before the struggle in a period when this polarisation had not taken place. This strengthening of the leadership of the struggle would have made mass meetings more effective, and increased the general level of involvement.

The organisation of the occupation tended to reflect the organisation of the factory under the management. While the stewards debated in the downstairs offices, up on the factory floor the workers sat discussing rumours. Inevitably, an 'up there, and down there' atmosphere developed. But despite these deficiencies the Maclaren's struggle was an immensely positive achievement. Not only did the degree of militancy increase, but there was also an important degree of politicisation.

SOLIDARITY WITH CHILE

This could be seen not only in the warm reception given to IMG members, but also in the natural identification made with the resistance to the ITT-backed Chilean coup. Indeed, one of the most moving experiences of the struggle was a concert at which an exiled Chilean folk group dedicated a song to the working women of Chile and to the women at Maclaren's.

But in the end they could not win a complete victory alone, and the shop stewards correctly see the future in terms of a fight around the AUEW national claim. As John Morrison says: 'If our union does not go for the full claim, then Scanlon should not be where he is. The TUC tried to make a deal with the Tories, saying the miners were a special case. This does not hold now.'

'We have a clause in our own claim which says that in the event of a national claim being met, we expect the differentials here to be maintained. We want the AUEW to go for the full claim.'

BOB PURDIE

and where this has failed to split the organisation in the factory they have tried to 'buy off' members of the Works Committee,

As Pat Doyle, T&GWU Convenor, told *Red Weekly*, 'They have offered some of us hand-outs: foremen's positions, and other jobs walking in at the top rate. But we have got to stay united in this dispute otherwise it will be a serious defeat for the whole trade union movement in the area, and particularly the struggles of smaller sections of workers'.

Since the occupation started nothing has moved out of the Eastleigh factory and pickets have prevented any movement of plant or material from the Hamble factory.

GUARANTEES

The Occupation Committee has received a guarantee from Ford drivers that no vans will be transported. Stewards at the Ford plants in Southampton and Langley have pledged that if van bodies are delivered from an alternative supplier they will be blocked. British Leyland Combine Committee has agreed to levy its

members to help provide the financial assistance that is so urgently required.

But this support must be extended. The Occupation Committee is arranging meetings at various factories to explain its case and ask for financial support. Pledges of support should also come from these meetings to stop work if the police enter the factory and break up the occupation.

The way to save these jobs is not through the trade unions buying the factory and setting up a workers co-operative, as has been attempted elsewhere. This is no solution, because these co-operatives would have to compete in the market with the big capitalist firms, and would either adopt their methods or go bust.

NATIONALISE!

The employers, and particularly Grand Metropolitan - the parent company of Giltspur - should be made to pay for their gross mis-management, as well as for the results of a system which puts the private interests of a small group of shareholders before the interests of the mass of working people.

Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Industry, is being brought in to solve the dispute, and it must be impressed upon him that the best way to keep these jobs is for the Labour Government to nationalise the plant without compensation and place it under workers' management. Any subsidy required for continued operations should come from an industrial levy on big business.

The occupation committee is supporting a conference called by the Ford Shop Stewards Committee to be held in the Southampton area to bring together local militants to discuss ways in which to fight the attacks on the trade union movement - particularly in regard to picketing and redundancies. The occupation at Strachans must now become a central focus for the conference so that maximum support can be provided for this struggle.

The workers and their families urgently need money. All resolutions of support and collections should be made payable to Strachans Joint Union Occupation Committee and sent to: The Treasurer, P. Hann, c/o T&GWU, 67-75 London Road, Southampton.

Graham Peterson,

The international oil industry is about to strike one of the biggest bonanzas in its gold-plated history, right in our own backyard.

Hidden beneath the waters of the North Sea, to the east of the Shetlands, lies some £75,000 million worth of oil. If the international oil monopolies get their way, most of this vast sum—twice Britain's national income—will pour into their hands as undiluted profit over the next 25 years.

GREAT GIVEAWAY

The search for North Sea oil and gas reserves began in 1964.

Since there was little firm evidence that commercially viable sources of oil or gas actually existed, companies were offered rights over large 'blocks' of the sea-bed (about 100 square miles) for six years at the bargain price of £6250. After this period is up, they can opt to retain rights over up to one-half of the original area for 40 years at a rent that starts at £10,000 a year and rises to a maximum of £72,500. Royalties of 12½ per cent of the value of any oil or gas produced are also payable to the Government.

Then, in 1970, oil was struck.

The definite existence of lucrative reserves of oil and gas made it a whole new game as far as capitalism was concerned: North Sea exploration was a serious business proposition. The Tory Government decided to test the new commercial climate by offering licences for 15 blocks of North Sea territory by competitive bid, as well as other blocks on the previous terms.

The competitive bids brought in combined offers of as much as £37 million for the 15 blocks. But, despite this fact, the remaining 98 blocks were virtually given away at the old price of £6,250 each. The Government thus presented the oil companies with vast North Sea oil rights for some £250 million less than the companies themselves were prepared to pay!

BIG BONUS

But the really big bonus to the North Sea oil operators has come from a different source—the rise in world oil prices.

Take, for example, British Petroleum's Forties Field—one of the major finds in the North Sea. This is centred in a 'block' in which BP acquired rights for just £6,250 and on which they will pay an annual rental of no more than £72,500.

This is just pocket money compared with the money which BP has put into exploring the block and opening up the field for production: some £470 million.

But even this pales in comparison with the potential pay off. The Forties Field is estimated to contain about 2000 million barrels of oil. At the market prices prevailing when oil was first struck in the North Sea, this would be worth some £1,000 million pounds or just over twice BP's investment. With production at the peak level of 400,000 barrels a day, BP could have expected to make pre-tax profits of about £50 million a year—a healthy return, by any standard, of 10% on capital invested.

But all that has now changed. At today's world prices the oil in Forties Field is worth more than £6000 million—over twelve times BP's invest-

THE OIL PIRATES OF THE NORTH SEA

ment, and annual pre-tax profits should run well above £350 million a year—a phenomenal return of 75% on capital invested!

TAX LOOPHOLES

Of course, these are pre-tax profits. But here's the catch. First, almost all the capital costs involved in exploring and opening up production can be deducted from the first year's profits. As a result, the taxpayer will end up subsidising these money-spinning operations of the oil monopolies by up to 50% (more than £1,000 million).

Even then, the taxman may not be allowed to bite. The oil companies benefit from a wide range of generous tax allowances that make them virtually immune to taxation.

First of all, all the payments which they make to the producing states (and which are regularly cited as grounds for swingeing increases in retail prices of petrol and oil) are tax deductible. Most multi-national companies take advantage of this fact by adjusting the internal accounting within their empires so that the branches in Western Europe

and North America show no more profit than they pay in taxes and royalties to the oil producing states, thus neutralising any liability to tax.

Moreover, the multi-national giants are allowed to charge capital expenses they make in any part of the world against their tax liabilities in another.

All these loopholes have put the companies in a highly privileged position. Over the past five years, despite their gigantic profits, the top oil companies operating in Britain have paid less than £500,000 in corporation tax. More than that—they have actually had the cheek to claim £1500 million in tax losses (tax allowances greater than their liabilities to pay tax), which will be set against future earnings before any tax becomes due!

TAMING THE MONSTERS

These are the monsters that the Labour Government is setting out to tame. But their proposals for dealing with the oil monopolies' plundering operations in the North Sea are not up to the job.

All they plan to do is close some of the tax loopholes (as did the Tories) and set up a public company to buy and sell the oil produced from the North Sea. There is also talk of acquiring a majority share in the North Sea oil producing operations.

Such measures are totally inadequate. Even the patching up of the tax loopholes will not stop the oil companies raking in thousands of millions of pounds in profits from concessions that were given to them on a silver platter.

As for the establishment of a state-run company to buy and sell oil, what effect can this have as long as the producing, refining and distribution operations remain in the hands of the multi-national giants? Such a company would buy oil from the monopolies in order to sell it back to them again, and would soon find itself at the mercy of these great multi-national powers.

Here is the central question: how does Labour propose to break the power of the great monopolies? Without doing this none of even its limited policies can succeed.

Acquiring a majority share in the production operation is useless. BP has long had a decisive slice of its shares in Government hands, but it works just like every other oil monopoly.

The question is not in whose bank vault the share certificates are deposited, or into whose account the dividends are paid, but *who controls* the company, and *how does it operate*: does it work according to the capitalist laws of the market, or does it operate in the interests of society as part of a planned, socialist economy?

BREAK MONOPOLY POWER

The ability of the oil monopolies to force Governments into line is undeniable. Recently the Japanese Government tried, for several months, to resist the oil companies' demand for big price rises. But just last week, faced with all sorts of threats (including the cutting off of oil supplies altogether), they were forced to give way and allow the increases through.

The oil companies hold a virtually complete monopoly of information on what is going on in the industry (this was something which even the House of Commons all-party Public Accounts Committee felt obliged to complain about) and can easily wage an effective war against a Government that is left blundering around in the dark.

During last year's supposed oil shortages in this country the Tory Government tried to publicly task the oil companies to task for re-routing oil that had been earmarked by the Arab states for Britain. But, faced with a flood of facts from the companies and no means of checking them, the Government was forced to make a humiliating backdown.

No policy designed to stop the profiteering of the oil monopolies and the plundering of our natural resources, no attempt to establish a rational, planned development of energy sources, can be carried out until the power of the big international companies is broken.

This can only be done by opening the books of the entire oil industry to thorough and regular inspection by elected workers' committees, and the nationalisation of the big British-based monopolies and the British assets of the multi-national giants operating in this country.

But such measures cannot be carried through by the 'moral force' of the Government, or by the capitalist state machine. Only the mobilised power of the trade union movement can force open the oil companies' books, secure the cooperation of sufficient skilled staff to ensure the running of industry in the face of sabotage, and police the industry to prevent wrecking operations by the management.

This is the only way in which the vast benefits of North Sea oil and gas can be made to serve the interests of society as a whole, and not the profit-seeking of the international oil monopolies.

RAY ALEXANDER



Revolutionary Students' Rally

ORGANISED BY

International Marxist Group

SATURDAY 4 MAY

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Further information from:
IMG Student Commission, 97
Caledonian Road, London N.1

WHAT'S ON

LONDON RED FORUM: Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Pictor pub, Caledonian Road, N.1. (5 mins Kings X tube).

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: National Action Conference, Saturday 23 March, 11 am at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. Credentials from: Chile Solidarity Campaign, Co-operative Centre, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG.

'UKRAINE: UNREST & REPRESSION'—pamphlet produced by the Committee to

Defend Ukrainian Prisoners, price 15p plus p&h from: 83 Gregory Crescent, Eltham, London SE9.

HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK: Socialist Medical Association Day Seminar, Sunday 24th March, 10 am to 5.30 pm in Assembly Hall, NUR Headquarters, Euston Road, NW1. Details from: T.C. Thomas, 54 Finchley Court, London N3 1NH.

RED BOOKS: Revolutionary literature—Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Eastern Europe, Third World, Ireland, Women's Liberation, 81a Bershaw Street, Liverpool. Tues—Fri: 12.30—3pm, Sat: 11am—3pm.

FIGHT RACISM and the IQ myth in education! Public meeting organised by Campaign on Racism, IQ and the Class Society. Speakers: Mike Cooley, Steven Rose, Aithia Jones; plus workshops and

discussion. Saturday 23 March, Polytechnic of Central London, 115 New Cavendish Street, from 10.30 to 6.30. Details c/o BSSRS, 8 Poland Street, W1.

GAY WOMEN'S CONFERENCE: To be held at University of Kent at Canterbury, from Friday evening 26 April to Sunday 28 April. Please send all ideas, suggestions, papers for discussion, applications etc to: Sherry Maurion, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury, or phone Cathy McFerran at Canterbury 60614.

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere: for Bengali books and *Lalal* (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mullvadon, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Widening series of discussions based on the

politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

'WHEN THE PEOPLE AWAKE': Film on Chile, Wednesday 27 March at 7 pm, Croydon Technical College, George St., Croydon. Organised by Croydon NUT Young Teachers.

'FREEZE PRICES, NOT WAGES': Socialist Woman Forum, speaker—Jane Brown from Nottingham Prices Campaign. Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Road (Warren Street tube), 8 pm, Wednesday 27 March.

TARIQ ALI on 'Racism, Repression and the Labour Movement'—Kilburn & North Brent IMG public meeting at the 'Crown' Cricklewood Broadway, NW2 at 7.30 pm, Thursday 4 April.

CAMBODIA: Lek Hor Tan speaks on the continuing military struggle, also film on life in the liberated areas of South Vietnam. Indochina Solidarity Conference public meeting, Monday 25 March at 7.30 pm in Room 3E, University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

MEN'S LIB: Men Against Sexism Conference, weekend 6-7 April at Leeds Poly. For further information, write to Men's Group, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2.

WORKERS FIGHT public meeting, 'In Ireland after the elections', speaker Sean Maguinn, 8 pm, Sun 24 March, Golden Lion, Britania Street, Kings Cross, N1.

MID-WALES IMG public meeting, Fri 22 March at 8 pm in the Sionne's Arms, Aberystwyth. Chris Wilkinson on 'After the elections— which way forward?', also Steve Vokes on 'What next for students?'

On the fourth anniversary of the U.S. backed coup in Cambodia Victory in sight for liberation forces

On 18 March 1970, while returning from a visit to the USSR, Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia, learned that he had been deposed in a coup d'état led by Lon Nol—a one-time friend—and Sirik Matak—another prominent member of the Cambodian ruling elite.

The coup sparked off a massive wave of protest in Cambodia, which was only put down—temporarily—by an equally massive invasion of the country by US and South Vietnamese troops on 30 August. This move was ordered personally by Nixon.

In its turn, this development produced an international outcry, fed by daily TV films of bound and decapitated Cambodian and Vietnamese peasants floating down the Mekong River, together with the destruction of Cambodian rubber plantations and villages by US tanks.

Cambodia had officially entered the Indochinese Revolution.

'Neutralism'

The coup marked the end of two conflicting processes. On the one hand, Sihanouk had failed to build a neutral State, resting on an independent economy, and controlled by a Government which was intended to unite the various classes in Cambodia but only served to focus the conflict on the parliamentary arena.

Sihanouk's manoeuvres in the face of numerous conflicts, based on diplomacy and persuasion rather than on the struggling masses, were doomed to failure. Despite all that happened in Cambodia before 1970, Sihanouk never learned that, in an imperialist epoch, the road of independent capitalist development for a poor country is closed off by the forces of the world market, and that there is no middle road between imperialist domination and the struggle for workers' power.

Nor did he understand that the economic dependence of small countries on the imperialist powers rules out any prospect of real political independence. Hence the perspective of developing a national bourgeoisie—which would somehow unite the contending classes as well as opposing imperialism—was simply an illusion. Thousands of Cambodians have paid with their lives for this mistake.

US failure

On the other hand, the US had failed to force Cambodia into the same subordinate relationship enjoyed by the regimes in Laos and Saigon. The coup succeeded where economic and diplomatic pressures, numerous CIA plots, Thai, South Vietnamese and US military expeditions, and daily bombing of Cambodian territory since 1966 had all previously failed.

Inside Cambodia, the coup produced a rapid crystallisation of the class polarisation that had been developing since the mid-1960s. Within a week, the National United Front of Cambodia (FUNK) had been formed and was fighting back. This body was based very firmly on the Red Khmers: intellectuals and workers, many of whom had already left Phnom Penh before Sihanouk's fall, to take up the struggle against what they recognised as a developing US puppet elite.

It is now four years since the coup. The contending forces are much the same now as they were then, but the relationship between them is vastly different. The Lon Nol regime now controls only 10% of the country—the capital, Phnom

Penh, and a few towns, all isolated—and even here its control is only maintained by systematic police activity.

Famine and disease are widespread. Supplies can only enter along the Mekong River (along which heavily armoured convoys attempt to pass, with substantial losses) and by air drops. All the Highways are cut by the FUNK, although they allow selected trucks through to allay the starvation of the urban masses.

Lon Nol's army, the main base of his regime, is now completely unreliable. Whole battalions desert to the Red Khmers when they get the chance, and those that don't simply refuse to fight.

Slaughter

While the US was still bombing Cambodia (before August 1973), ground troops would not advance until the area had been thoroughly flattened by the B-52s. Now that that has been stopped, they won't move at all. To replace the losses, women and children have been drafted, to be sent to a pathetic slaughter.

As could be expected, there is widespread dissatisfaction. Airforce officers have twice bombed Lon Nol's palace, and there have been repeated ground attacks by soldiers on local profiteers. There have also been numerous clashes between the police and the army—one of the more spectacular was the bulldozing of a police station by a tank a few months ago.

The only units that are still in any way loyal to the regime are the Khmer Krom. These are a mercenary band originally recruited by the CIA for guerrilla activities against Sihanouk's Government. They go into battle flying the skull-and-crossbones, and are only loyal because the CIA still pays them, and because they know that they will receive no mercy from the Red Khmers.

Government

The Government itself is rotten right through. The base of the regime is almost entirely made up of office-holders who grew fat over the years by diverting US aid into their own pockets, and who are still doing well out of it.

These are men like Sirik Matak who has had very close ties with various foreign concerns for a number of years, and cannot desert the regime because of his history. But it will also be difficult for such men to find refuge abroad, because of the embarrassment they could cause to the US and its allies. So they are likely to remain loyal to the regime, but only as long as they can continue to add to their fortunes. Those who could leave have already done so.

It is quite clear that Lon Nol commands no support at all from the masses. Indeed, the past period has seen quite vigorous attacks mounted on the regime by students and workers who oppose him but are unable to leave and join the FUNK.

Liberated zones

In marked contrast to Phnom Penh is the 90% of the country which has been liberated by the FUNK. Since the withdrawal of US bombers, there has been no fighting in the liberated zones, and the only military threat has come from marauding South Vietnamese units. Indeed, the region is so secure that the Provisional Government (GRUNK) returned to Cambodia last August.

The agrarian reform programme

has been widely successful in these areas in raising living standards from near subsistence level to the production of two or even three crops a year. Along with the stabilisation of the economy, by and large on a collective basis, a free medical aid educational programme is in progress—new schools and hospitals are being built all over the region.

Women have been released from their previous age-old subservience, and there are also moves to make the autonomy of ethnic minorities a

puppet regime much longer.

Problems

Nevertheless, the FUNK faces serious problems. The inexperience of the cadre in facing the political problems involved in consolidating the base areas, and that of the guerrillas in open warfare, has led to serious difficulties in defending the liberated zones, as well as the loss of hundreds of lives caused by their



Sihanouk on a recent tour through the liberated zone of Cambodia

reality. Although power is formally in the hands of the GRUNK, it is largely exercised through villages and commune committees.

On the military front, the general offensive launched at the beginning of the dry season has gradually escalated. All the roads into Phnom Penh are controlled by the liberation forces. To the problems of famine and drought in the capital is added the rocket and artillery bombardment which has been in progress now for several months, with occasional breaks to allow refugees to leave for the liberated zones. Most of the foreign colonies in the capital, as well as the State offices and Lon Nol's palace, have been hit repeatedly.

Town captured on anniversary

The fourth anniversary of the Cambodian coup was marked by yet another victory for the Red Khmers when they captured the town of Oud Orn, 18 miles north of Phnom Penh. At the same time Sihanouk, on a visit to Laos, made a point of attacking the 'Great Powers' for not coming to his aid.

Assaults on the city suburbs are gradually whittling away at the area under the regime's control. Even massive excursions by Cambodian Army divisions now fail to dislodge the insurgents for more than a few days, and the airport has had to be closed several times because of the intensity of the bombardment.

The struggle is not only taking place outside the city walls, however. Within Phnom Penh itself, Red Khmer cadres and sympathetic workers and students are engaged in guerrilla actions, as well as more routine political activity. Before each bombardment, these insurgents leaflet the target area thoroughly to warn the occupants to keep clear.

As regards other towns, a major assault was launched against the seaport, Kontum, a few weeks ago, where there are large stores of food and arms. Despite the airlift of 3,000 troops into the town, it is not likely to remain in the hands of the

inability to cope with airborne attacks.

These are happily now being overcome, but the crucial problem for the FUNK, that of supplies, is not. The majority of their arms, and all their heavy weaponry, are US made, captured from puppet forces. Their desperate shortage of ammunition is the main reason for the present military (although not political) stalemate, since they are unable to press any offensive at more than one point for any length of time.

The Chinese and Russian bureaucrats must therefore bear the responsibility for the continued existence of the Lon Nol regime. They are the only people who could have aided the FUNK with military supplies, and this they have refused to do (although the bourgeois regimes of Egypt, Syria and Pakistan do not seem to go short!). It is obviously ludicrous to expect the NLF to supply the arms to the FUNK since they themselves are also being very poorly supplied.

Betrayal

This betrayal does not just amount to military hardware, either. For both the Peking and Kremlin bureaucrats, the interests of peaceful co-existence have been systematically put before those of the Indochinese Revolution.

Neither China nor the USSR have made a single move to try to prevent the continuation of US support for Lon Nol, even on the diplomatic level. Indeed, up to the end of last year, the USSR continued to recognise Lon Nol as the legitimate Head of State in Cambodia (and even to service Russian tanks in his army.)

As a counter to the military stalemate, the diplomatic offensive that was launched in 1970 has been revitalised, and the GRUNK won an important victory at the Algiers conference of 'non-aligned nations' when it was recognised as the sole Government of Cambodia. Although they failed to get the United Nations to evict Lon Nol's representatives from the Assembly, they did at least succeed in embarrassing the Kremlin enough to do an about-face and

grant the GRUNK diplomatic recognition.

What of the future? With the FUNK, the dominant political tendency is undoubtedly the Red Khmers, who gained the leadership in struggle from the 'Sihanoukists,' who still hold 'neutralist' conceptions and positions.

Sihanouk himself now accepts that he is only a figurehead, completely without any power, and although the Red Khmers cannot yet ditch him because of the personal loyalty the peasants have to him, the tensions between the two (arising out of differences over the deepening of the social revolution) have now been almost finally settled in favour of the Red Khmers.

The latter recognise clearly that there is no social force in Cambodia between the revolutionaries and the

reactionaries. They therefore hold firmly to a programme of 'no compromise.' Their aim is total victory with no concessions, a position which daily exacerbates the contradictions inside the Lon Nol regime, and helps it crumble more and more.

Indochina

Whether these aims can be realised or not depends essentially on three factors outside their control. First of all, on the Indochinese Revolution as a whole, since Cambodia although relatively isolated is still an intrinsic part of the revolutionary process as a whole in the area. The continuation of the revolutionary dynamic in Laos and Vietnam is the best aid that the Pathet Lao and NLF can give to their comrades on Cambodia.

Secondly, it depends on the USA, the USSR, and China. The USA, since it is the force that keeps Lon Nol in power: £600 million has been earmarked for his regime this year. Without this 'aid', the puppet regime would hardly last a week. The USSR and China, since they could so easily turn the tide by granting the material aid that the FUNK so urgently needs and at the same time forcing the US to cease its aid to the reactionaries.

Solidarity

However, we have to realise that it is extremely unlikely that Nixon and his cronies will suddenly become altruists, or that the bureaucracies in Peking and Moscow will give up their champagne parties for something as distant—and dangerous—as the Cambodian Revolution.

This means that the potential solidarity movement is key to the whole situation. The same force that helped to stop the bombing of Cambodia in August 1973, and of Hanoi in 1972, and which denied imperialism the room for manoeuvre it needed, so that Nixon was forced to sign the Paris Accords last year, is the force that can and must aid the Cambodian Revolution now—the solidarity must be maintained.

David Johnson

MASS ARRESTS AT ESSEX

In an all-out attempt to smash the anti-victimisation struggle at Essex University, police arrested more than 90 pickets on Wednesday.

The arrests started at 9.30 a.m., when about 250 police marched up to a mass picket of 500 students, and tried to get some lorries through the barricades which have been erected. As the pickets tried to block the vehicles police moved in and made 50 arrests.

During a brief truce in the early afternoon discussions took place between the Vice-Chancellor, the police and the Students Union Executive, but ended in deadlock when the Vice-Chancellor refused to drop the disciplinary charges which had led to the pickets. The police then resumed their attempts to smash the picket and a further 40 were arrested.

SERIES OF ATTACKS

This is only the latest in a series of police attacks on pickets at Essex. Last Monday a force of 60 police surrounded the picket line and ordered them to disperse, making 15 arrests as they were doing so. The 15 arrested, who included two IMG members, were all militants and were deliberately picked out by Detective Chief Constable Markham.

At a general meeting on Monday evening 950 students unanimously passed a resolution to strengthen the pickets. This was moved by Ronnie Munck and Will Rich, the two IMG militants who were expelled last week, and who are now the subject of a High Court order restraining them from entering the campus.

For over three weeks, the delivery of supplies at Essex has been stopped by barricades and pickets. This is a protest against disciplinary hearings and victimisations arising from the NUS Day of Action on grants last term, and the subsequent 23 day occupation of the University administration block.

The picketing has had considerable effect. The University is rapidly running out of heating oil, the restaurants are serving austerity meals, the coffee bar is closed and the University shop is unable to maintain its stocks.

But it was probably the turning

back of a lorry containing £70,000 worth of computing equipment which spurred the authorities into action.

Since then the police have been very much in evidence on the campus. Plain clothes men mingle with students, vans full of uniformed police regularly patrol the campus boundary road, and there have been reports of dog-handling vans stationed in the car-parks.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A national conference met at the University last Saturday (16 March) with the support of the National Union of Students to discuss the current wave of repression and victimisation in colleges. This body adopted important proposals for action. The 200 delegates from all over Britain decided:

*To continue the picketing at Essex, and to ensure that it is maintained over the Easter vacation by setting up a picketing pool, drawn from colleges all over the country.

*To submit a resolution to the NUS conference in Liverpool calling for full backing for the struggles at Kent, Oxford and Essex, and for solidarity action on a national and local basis next term.

*To call for a national demonstration in London on 3 May demanding the ending of all trials, and that police should be kept out of the colleges.

John McGeown, President of Kent University Students' Union and IMG candidate for NUS President, received prolonged applause from the Conference when he brought the greetings of Kent students to their comrades at Essex. He called for the continuation of direct action, and urged delegates to meet the offensive by college authorities and the police head on.

STOP PRESS

Following the police attack on pickets at the University of Essex coachloads of students have gone to swell the picket lines from a number of Universities, including Chelsea College, Imperial College, Brunel, Lancaster, Oxford and Kent.

Telegrams and messages of support from student and trade union organisations are urgently required: send to Student Union, University of Essex, Colchester.

Bitter fight over sacked convenor

Several hundred workers from Armstrong Patents plants in East Yorkshire went on a one-day strike on Monday in protest at the fight to reinstate Jean Jepson, the convenor who was sacked in January for refusing to sign away a national T&GWU agreement guaranteeing 40-hours' pay during the three-day week.

The workers, led by scab stewards 'elected' under management auspices, received time off to attend factory meetings at which it was decided to send 20 coachloads to Hull docks, where dockers have been blacking all goods destined for Armstrongs, in support of Jepson's reinstatement.

The strike leader, Jack Duggleby, made it plain whose side he is on: 'We have nothing against our firm,' he said. 'We are trying to help it. We want to show the dockers they can't run our affairs.'

FALSE ALLEGATION

This visit to the docks followed an impassioned appeal to the dockers, containing a large number of factual errors and totally false allegations concerning Jepson's ability to negotiate for the members at Armstrong's. She immediately wrote a reply to this appeal, answering all the points raised, and the

indications are that the dock shop stewards will not be lifting their blacking.

There is now a vigorous campaign in support of Jepson to bring the whole disreputable affair into the open, by means of leafletting and public meetings. The vast majority of trades unionists on Humberside are still unaware of the full implications of the dispute, and it has not been in the interests of the T&GWU district officer, Les Upfold, to open up an investigation. From the start of the struggle, Upfold has played into the hands of the management, in spite of the fact that Jepson was defending the union's official policy.

MANOEUVRES

Earlier this month, an attempt was made to call a special branch meeting at the union's headquarters in Hull to bring charges against Jepson under T&GWU rules. This was thwarted when it was pointed out that such a trial could not be held unless a branch meeting had mandated such a course of action. No such meeting had been held.

Meanwhile, the Employment Exchange has refused to pay Jepson any benefit until the end of March, although it will then be 10 weeks since she was sacked. Financial support is therefore urgently required, together with resolutions of support.

These should be sent to:
Armstrong-Strike Committee,
39 Hixlas Street,
Bridlington,
Yorks.

Red Weekly

Chile meeting to debate solidarity



Chile Solidarity Campaign demonstration at Downing Street on Friday. It is only by demonstrating in practice that the working class will not tolerate any links with the junta that Callaghan can be compelled to take the necessary steps.

One of the three ex-ministers of the Popular Unity who was due to stand trial in Santiago—Jose Toha—is now reported by the junta to have 'committed suicide' in a military hospital.

His funeral was the occasion of one of the first open demonstrations of mass resistance to the junta. It was attended by 3,000 people who began to chant a number of political slogans until troops and police moved in.

It is against this background of continuing repression and daily growing resistance in Chile that the National Action Conference of the Chile Solidarity Campaign meets this Saturday, 23 March. None of the demands of the campaign have yet been secured—the British Ambassador is still in Chile, aid and trade continue, before the end of the month the Club of Paris will be discussing loans to the junta, and refugees from Chile are still not being admitted into Britain.

BLACKING

But a number of important actions have shown the way to fight for these aims. In particular, the blacking of Chilean goods at Liverpool and the refusal of workers at Rosyth and Portsmouth to service Chilean warships have demonstrated the possibilities of working

class solidarity.

The failure of the trade union bureaucracy to offer any concrete support to these actions only shows the urgent need for a conference of rank and file workers to come together, to discuss not only how blacking can be extended but also how to organise throughout the labour movement to prevent the isolation of workers who do black Chilean trade.

The need to force the Labour Government to break all links with the junta makes such actions even more necessary, for it is only by demonstrating in practice that the working class will not tolerate any links with the junta that Callaghan can be compelled to take the necessary steps.

In the face of the show trials which the junta is now preparing, an immediate campaign must also be taken up for the release of all political prisoners. This should also be used to bring additional pressure to bear upon the Labour leaders to act at once.

LESSONS OF COUP

But it is equally important that alongside our solidarity activity there also develops the maximum debate on the lessons of the coup. This is essential not only because the Chilean events have a significance which extends far beyond

the borders of Chile, but also because they are inseparably bound up with the present and future course of events.

Now that this struggle against the junta is beginning to develop and take on definite forms, the orientation adopted by the parties of the Chilean working class becomes vital.

Are the lessons of one of the heaviest defeats of the international working class being assimilated for the future? Or are we going to see the same mistakes being repeated, with the development of the struggle being subordinated to the search for an alliance with the Christian Democrats—a bourgeois party at present opposed to the junta's policies for its own sectional reasons?

The overwhelming importance of these questions demands an immediate and open debate on the lessons of the coup and the way forward now. In the coming weeks, Red Weekly will carry a series of articles contributing to this. If the Action Conference—with a workshop devoted to the lessons of the coup—succeeds in taking the first steps towards such an open debate, as well as deciding on concrete forms of solidarity, much will have been achieved.

GERRY CORBY

WOMEN DEMAND ACTION ON COUNCIL'S CHARTER

The London Trades Council has thrown away an important opportunity to begin the organisation of women around the demands of their 'Working Women's Charter'. This Charter, which takes up matters not normally dealt with by trade unions (including abortion and nurseries) has been circulated throughout the London trade union movement and was the basis for a London Trades Council conference on working women, held on Tuesday.

More than 200 women, many delegated from unions, attended. But the platform failed to provide leadership on how the conference could be followed up, and discussion centred on individual experiences in the trade union movement, without much perspective for action.

When asked what plans the Trades Council had for follow-up work, W. James, Chairwoman of the Women's Advisory Committee, explained that the Council was being wound up in two weeks time—part of the TUC reorganisation plan—and sat down again.

Two resolutions from the floor attempted to fill this gap. These proposals were contradictory, but James, from the chair, refused to follow recognised trade union procedure and take discussion on both before moving to the vote. Instead she railroaded through a vote on the resolution moved by a member of Haringey Trades Council. It called for the setting up of an action committee, members to be selected from various district committees, possibly with six elected from the conference floor.

When this resolution failed the chairwoman announced the meeting was closed,

leaving the conference without any policy at all.

The alternative resolution, which the Chairwoman refused to put to the meeting, called for an ad hoc committee from the conference to begin a London-wide campaign on the demands of the Charter, which could draw in rank and file working women as well as women's liberation groups.

When women from the floor tried to continue the discussion to work out a policy, the microphone was cut off and

the lights turned out.

Women everywhere should take this matter up in their union branch, demanding that the Charter should be published to form the basis for a local campaign. In London, we should demand that the conference is recalled, to carry out the urgent business of planning a campaign of action around the Charter.

Copies of the Charter, and the two resolutions from: L. Smith, 97 Caledonian Road, London, N.1.
Linda Smith

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