



LABOUR'S BUDGET MEANS— HIGHER PRICES & LONGER DOLE QUEUES

Trade union leaders, backed by a chorus from the capitalist press, have given Labour's budget a warm welcome.

TUC general secretary Len Murray has said that Labour can now 'count on a good response from the mass of working people' for carrying out their economic policy, and TGWU leader Jack Jones has described Labour's brew as 'a very good socialist budget.'

All of this is just wishful day-dreaming on the part of the union bureaucrats, eager to stampede their membership into a wage deal with the Labour Government, and avoid the prospect of struggle.

Certainly, the sugar coating is there: the long-promised pension increase, an overdue increase in tax allowances, subsidies to hold back food price rises.

But the cake underneath is pretty mouldy indeed. What Chancellor Healey is giving with one hand he is busily grabbing back with the other—and collecting interest to boot.

•INCREASED TAXES on consumer goods will mean immediate higher prices for beer, cigarettes, petrol, etc.

•INCREASED CHARGES by nationalised industries for domestic coal and electricity, rail travel and postage will push up the cost of living in the next few weeks.

•INCREASED COSTS for private business—higher steel prices, increased employers' national insurance contributions, higher transport and telephone charges—will all be passed on in the form of higher prices (allowed under Labour's price rules) and fuel the fires of inflation over the months ahead.

Even more serious is the impact the budget will have on unemployment. The deep-going problems of British capitalism means that mass unemployment is on the way again—and the budget could speed it up.

Only the working class movement itself can ensure that it is not workers' heads who are placed on the chopping block by the capitalist crisis and Labour's hopelessly reformist policies.

Any announcement of redundancies must be met with the demand of 'share the work at full pay,' and—following the recent example of the Scottish newspaper workers, and many before them—refusal to meet this demand or any attempt at closure should be met by immediate occupation.

The cry must go up from such occupations for Labour to immediately nationalise the companies concerned, recognise the workers' right to take over and run their operations without compensation, and levy a special tax on business to provide the necessary financial support.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Militants were forced to hold their own meeting in another part of the hall to make sure that some action actually came out of last Saturday's Chile 'Action' Conference in Birmingham

Bureaucratic manoeuvres fail to block action Chile demo set for 5 May

The one-day 'action' conference of the Chile Solidarity Campaign Committee, held in Birmingham on Saturday 23 March, ended in uproar because of the refusal of the chairman, Dick Etheridge (well-known CP member) to allow discussion on the only proposal for action to emerge from the conference—a call for a national demonstration on 5 May to demand that Labour immediately end all diplomatic, trade and military relations with the counter-revolutionary military junta.

The whole conference was organised in such a way as to prevent a real political discussion on how the solidarity movement could be built in this country

LESSONS

The opening speaker, Ricardo Figueroa, introduced as a Chilean exile, gave a political justification for the politics of the Chilean CP. The lesson he had learnt from Chile was 'that the Popular Unity had made mistakes—they had tried to go too far too fast.' After three other speeches the conference broke up into three workshops (Lessons of the Coup, 'Trade-Union Activity,' 'Other Forms of Solidarity') where what little discussion was possible took place.

In the 'Lessons' workshop a number of speakers, including Robin Blackburn of the IMG, intervened to discuss the whole question of the apparatus of the bourgeois state (and in particular the army), which had to be smashed by building organs of real workers power.

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The following resolution was passed unanimously by the Coventry No. 6 AUEW-TASS branch:

'This branch calls on the national conference of the Chile Solidarity Campaign to:

'Call on the Labour Government to break off all diplomatic relations with the Chilean counter-revolutionary junta immediately.

'Mount a campaign throughout the labour movement to: a) Block all trade with Chile—especially in weapons of war, and b) Draw the lessons of the Chilean coup, in particular that any Workers Government must set about the immediate task of dismantling the armed forces of the capitalist state machine, the mobilisation of armed workers militia so as to prepare the way for the overthrow of the capitalist class, and the establishment of workers democracy, workers law and a workers state.'

Police invade IMG offices

In their third raid within twelve months, Coventry police forced their way into the house at 27 Paynes Lane, which contains the Coventry IMG office, at 1.00 am last Saturday.

IMG member Paul Shevlin, who lives in the house, was thrown back against the wall by the invaders—four plainclothes men and four uniformed policemen with two dogs—who then proceeded to ransack the building. Cushions were torn off the sofa, bedding thrown off the bed, cupboards emptied, and their contents left strewn over the floor.

No reason was given for the raid, and, when challenged, no warrant was produced. After 30 minutes spent wrecking the house the police left, taking with them a quantity of books and pamphlets, which they then left strewn along the pavement for several hundred yards.



Coventry IMG offices after police 'visit'—without a warrant.

It seems that the telephone at 27 Paynes Lane was tapped, as Shevlin was told that a call he made shortly before 1.00 am had been the signal for the raid.

This is only the latest in a long record of harassment directed against the IMG in Coventry, including surveillance of the premises, and the following of individuals. Police have taken the names of IMG members and others distributing leaflets about the Coventry Seven, and the Shrewsbury 24. A building worker who had been given copies of the latter was followed home, and the police burst into his house and removed the leaflets. Earlier this year an Inland Revenue investigation into 27 Paynes Lane was ordered, on the grounds that it was a 'Marxist H.Q. Offices'.

In April this year four plainclothesmen raided the premises, and took away a large quantity of papers and documents, including passports and personal documents. Again, last September, three plainclothesmen raided the premises and questioned the four occupants. On both these occasions the police produced warrants. No charges were made as a result of these raids.

On this latest occasion the police did not even pretend to maintain legal form, and the number of officers used was much larger.

This incident must be seen in connection with the formation of the Special Patrol Group, the use of trained police to break up picket lines, as at Essex University, and the increasing use of the Army as a civil police force.

The IMG is taking out a complaint against the police, alleging forcible entry without a warrant, assault, illegal and unreasonable manner of search, and theft of papers and pamphlets. The possibility of a court action is also being investigated.

Chile solidarity Organise for 5 May

Anyone interested in further information or in taking part in organising activities should contact: Charles Howard, 97 Caledonian Road, London, N.1. tel: 278-9526.

Trade unionists back student pickets

Trade unionists, for perhaps the first time in this country, have come to the aid of students at Essex.

Jack Collins, Kent NUM leader, spoke to the militant demonstration which protested against the arrests and demanded the dropping of all disciplinary charges. Collins denounced Reg Prentice, the new Education Minister, for encouraging the authorities to continue their campaign

against students, and his refusal to intervene to stop the trials and keep the police off the campus.

By RAY BURNS

Derbyshire miners followed up Collins' call for support by writing a blank cheque for the bail of the arrested students, and two of the largest trades councils in the

country—Manchester and Liverpool—have sent messages promising support for the actions of the students.

Local trade unionists have responded by blacking goods destined for the university, and the campus workers are moving to black any goods delivered by scab drivers.

These are the moves which are frightening the college authorities and it is this sort of strategy, backed up by militant direct action, which will win the students friends where it counts—not with the capitalist press and the college authorities, to be sure; but with workers, tenants, and all the other groups in society who can expect the rough end of the stick from the Labour Government.

£170 CLAIM

Students have been fighting for 18 months around their rapidly increasing poverty. The real value of the grant is declining by over 6 per cent a year.

The NUS has submitted a claim for an extra £170 a year, and an end to the system where students on nearly all non-degree courses have to rely on their local council's 'discretion'. A system which often means that they get nothing at all.

At the same time, the college and local authorities are being progressively starved of money for the expansion of higher education.

Labour's budget this week confirms that the Government will not and cannot reverse the giant cuts of £182 million made by the Tories last December—cuts made in welfare in order to better serve the interests of a crisis ridden capitalist economy.

This means that the stakes in the fight for a decent standard of living for students have been raised that much higher. The Labour Government will not come anywhere near the full claim of the NUS, and the college authorities are determined to pass the cost of the cuts onto students and workers in the colleges.

The militant fight led by the left in the colleges has delayed this process and raised the spectre of a student-worker alliance.

VIOLENT ATTACKS

Following the attacks made on working class militants, the college authorities and the State have begun to launch violent attacks on those who join the struggle to protect and defend the interests of students. This offensive has reached a high point in the last few months.

The attack on students in Oxford. Squads of strong-arm men hired by the University administration attacking students. The rigged disciplinary trials. The violence shown by the police at demonstrations and the arrests during street fights between students and police.

Kent students being threatened with conspiracy charges and disciplinary hearings after their defence of the principle that students should not be expelled from colleges. The rabid red-baiting campaign of the local and national press, aimed at the IMG in particular.

The latest massive confrontations

at Essex University. The arrest of over a hundred pickets and the bringing of charges of unlawful assembly—the same charge on which the Shrewsbury building workers were convicted.

The NUS Conference in Liverpool this coming week must be the place where the call goes out to defend the struggle at Essex, Kent and Oxford. For if the militants at these universities cannot be defended, then the prospects for relaunching the grants campaign and carrying it to final victory are dim indeed.

KENT PRESIDENT REPLIES TO CP ATTACK

The Communist Party's paper Morning Star carried an article in its 'Student World' column on 22 March attacking the positions of the International Marxist Group in the recent struggle at Kent University. In this article John McGeown, President of Kent Students' Union and IMG militant, replies:

In the recent campus battles at Essex and Kent Universities, conflicts have arisen over what strategy students should adopt in the fight against victimisation.

Last Friday's article on Kent in the Morning Star is only the latest of a series of attacks made by the Communist Party on the strategy supported by IMG militants in the student movement.

But, when applied to reality, the line of the Communist Party has proved to be highly dangerous for the outcome of the various struggles. Take for example, the successful fight waged at Kent. Here students, by taking direct action through the occupation of the main administration block, were able to challenge the decision of the Humanities Faculty to expel a Communist Party militant, Joe Cotter. In the course of the occupation, students worked hard to win over college workers and academic staff, despite the attempts of the University to use the trade unions as a tool for their own purposes.

The very plain demands that the IMG and the mass of militant students fought around were 'Cotter in—Chilver out' (Chilver was Dean of Humanities) and 'No Victimisations.' Yet the CP claim that we put forward 'unrealistic demands' which could not be achieved without the 'overthrow of the bourgeois state!'

As it happens, the outcome of the struggle was precisely in line with our demands: Cotter has been reinstated and

Chilver has resigned. At last check the bourgeois state was found to be intact.

One can only assume that what the CP is trying to say is that the mass of students cannot be involved in militant direct action. Such a criticism would be more in line with their actual practice.

For, at a very crucial stage of the occupation, when there were the beginnings of a movement from the right for a referendum, the Broad Left members of the Executive withdrew from the occupation, and pushed for an emergency meeting of the students' union executive, to be followed by an emergency meeting of the union which would end the occupation.

In the face of an increasing range of attacks being mounted by the University, there was little that activists could have achieved without the use of the occupation—the main centre of resistance and the organising base for the campaign. The Broad Left, in splitting off from the centre of the struggle (which directly involved more than 600 students) provided fuel for an opposing body of students, not seriously committed to defending Cotter, who wanted the occupation ended. The Broad Left succeeded in their manoeuvre, but were left with no alternative proposals for how the campaign could be carried on. They must have been amazed to hear that the University was actually backing down and reinstating Cotter. Gradually, they have admitted it was due to the success of the occupation.



Photo: PETER HARRAP (Report)

The start of the demonstration called last week in solidarity with the students of Essex, which was supported by contingents from colleges and universities all over Britain. But students alone will not win the fight for higher grants — that is why the support for the Essex struggle from the organised labour movement is so important.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS WAGE JOINT FIGHT

In two South London schools, important steps have been taken to unite all those affected by the cuts in educational expenditure in a common struggle.

In one secondary school in Croydon, parents and teachers have drawn up a charter of improved conditions, for which they will carry out a joint fight.

At Kingsdale school in South London, teachers, parents and school students have organised a strike for 4 April, to protest against the staffing situation, and for an improved London Allowance for teachers.

The Labour Government has not yet committed itself on the Tories' plans for a £182 million cut in education, but Labour's budget indicates that they are going to maintain the overall level of cutback in public spending. So the time to fight is now.

In London alone the planned £5 million cut would mean not replacing 31 dilapidated primary schools. The Inner London Education Authority forecasts that next year's cash will be the same as this; given the rate of inflation this will mean a cutback in every sector of education from the nurseries upwards. Elsewhere the cuts would mean a

choice between books and materials, or teachers. In Sheffield there is even a forecast of large-scale teacher redundancies.

The defence of the education service requires the mobilisation of support from parents, trade unionists and school students as well as teachers. The TUC has decided to encourage local trades councils to hold public meetings on the education cuts. This gives an opportunity for teachers to take the struggle to wider sections of the working class.

Haringey Trades Council in North London recently held such a meeting, and the local NUT has issued thousands of leaflets.

Unfortunately, at the annual conference last weekend of Rank and File Teacher the International Socialists, who dominate this group, were more concerned with stage-managing the conference, than with the current crisis in education.

Even when delegates unanimously passed an IMG resolution on wages (an old IS hobby-horse), calling for a £500 across the board increase, to be settled by October 1974, the conference was unable to work out a plan of action to fight for it. Rank and File must respond to the example of the two South London schools. If a question mark hangs over its ability to do so, the responsibility is that of IS.

NO LET-UP IN ACTION TO FREE HOSTAGES

A militant 50-strong picket outside Roy Jenkins' plush Ladbroke Grove home last Saturday showed that the return of a Labour Government had not led to a de-escalation of the activities of the Irish Political Hostages Campaign.

At a series of pickets this weekend the IPHC will demand that Labour MPs, elected with the aid of Irish votes, press for the return of the political prisoners—the Price sisters, Hugh Feeney, and Gerard Kelly—to serve their sentences in the North of Ireland, before they die on hunger strike.

The pickets will be at the following Labour Party rooms on Friday evening or Saturday morning, 29 and 30 March: Islington South, 295 Upper St., N1; Islington North, 9 Pemberton Gdns, N19; Islington Central, 95 St Pauls Rd., N1; Wood Green, Stirling House N22. For further information contact Maureen Maguire 800 8392.

On Sunday, 31 March there will be a picket at Wormwood Scrubs, assembling

at White City tube at 3 pm. The following Sunday a coach will leave Kings Cross, London at 10 am for a demonstration at Gartree Prison, where Hugh Feeney is being held in solitary confinement.

Interest has been stirred by reports of the conference on the British Army and Repression, which is being organised by the Troops Out Movement in the Collegiate Theatre, Gordon St., London WC1, on Saturday, 11 May.

As part of the build up to this conference, the Free Ireland Forums, held weekly in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, (Kings Cross), will hold five forums, designed to give a background to the Irish struggle. They will be held between 5 April and 3 May on the following subjects:

'The Origins of the crisis in Ireland'; 'The Orange Monolith—the Question of the Protestants'; 'The Provisionals—Have They Contributed to the Struggle for National Liberation and Socialism in Ireland?'; 'Who Owns Ireland?'; and 'The British Labour Movement and Ireland'.

For further information on TOM: contact Alastair Rowick, 28 Tammas Park Road, W5. 567 4963.

CHILE CONFERENCE (Continued from front page):

'... majority opposed to manoeuvres'

The opening reporter in the 'Other Forms of Solidarity' workshop, Steve Parry (NUS & CP) stressed the need to build a broad campaign and pointed out various forms of solidarity which could be undertaken.

Tariq Ali (IMG) stated that given the fact that Ron Hayward (Labour Party General Secretary) and Judith Hart (Minister for Overseas Development) had state publicly that a future Labour government would 'break off all relations' it was vital to call a national demonstration to focus attention of the fact that relations had not been broken. He proposed 5 May 1974. Steven Hart, the secretary of the Campaign, opposed setting a date. We should wait and see how Labour acts in the coming months and not be too hasty, he argued.

At this point a Chilean militant intervened to state that if Labour had broken off relations by 5 May we would turn the demonstration into a celebration. By an overwhelming majority the workshop

voted to propose to the plenary session of the Conference later that afternoon to call a demonstration for 5 May.

FIREWORKS

But, when the conference resumed, Steve Parry failed to put the views of the workshop to the conference. Tariq Ali challenged Parry's presentation, and argued that Conference be allowed to decide on the question of the demonstration. The chairman, Dick Etheridge, refused to allow a discussion and despite three requests by Ali refused to allow the conference to vote on whether they wanted the question discussed.

It was clear that a majority of the 250 people present were opposed to Etheridge's manoeuvres. Delegates from the Huyton Labour Party and the Peace Pledge Union rose to challenge the chairman's handling of the conference, but were not allowed to speak. Faced with this fact Tariq Ali, on behalf of the IMG delegates, appealed to all those in favour of a demonstration to move to the gallery

to discuss concrete proposals.

Speaking for the IMG at the second meeting, Ali made clear that:

(i) We had not split from the Chile Solidarity Campaign, but would fight for its democratisation.

(ii) Bearing in mind the vote at the Solidarity workshop we would go ahead and organise a demonstration for 5 May.

These points were agreed to by the meeting.

THE FUTURE

How the Chile Solidarity Campaign develops in the future remains to be seen. The IMG is in favour of united work on this question, but we will not tolerate bureaucratic manipulation of the campaign by any organisation. If the CP wants to collaborate with other working class and socialist organisations, they should abandon their sectarian practices, which are not a very enticing example of how things would be in Chile if the Chilean CP were totally in control.

CHARLES HOWARD

Communist Party confronts racists ... with rhetoric

In recent months there have been some important struggles against the use of platforms in colleges by racist speakers. The banning of Enoch Powell from Durham, and the breaking up of Martin Webster's meeting in Edinburgh are two examples.

By JOHN KILBANE

Despite this, and despite the importance of the Communist Party in the student field, it is only recently that the CP has put forward any clear position on these struggles.

The *Morning Star* of 15 March, carries an article based on a statement from the CP's University Staffs Advisory Committee. It puts forward three main points:

'Agitate for laws banning the expression of race hatred;

'Until such laws are passed seek to convince organisations that they should not provide platforms or halls for racist speakers;

'Falling this to organise mass counter demonstrations and meetings to expose the falsity of racist ideas and to make their advocacy difficult or impossible.'

Despite its apparent support for the 'No Platform for Racists' position, the statement as a whole is a cover for liberal positions. For the CP the central thing is to get laws passed through Parliament banning the expression of race hatred, for only 'until' this happens is it necessary for students and workers' organisations to take steps to deprive racists of a platform.

MASS ACTION

But even if laws like the Race Relations Act were toughened up so as to cover 'scientific' racism like that of Eysenck, the racists are not necessarily going to obey the law. This is only to be expected; Fascists and 'anti-democratic' elements care nothing for laws passed by Parliament. The 'no platform' position cannot therefore be made dependent on the legal situation.

This means that mass action will remain necessary. The CP statement talks about 'counter-demonstrations', but remains ambiguous about what their aim should be. Should they physically prevent racists from speaking? Or should they simply be parallel meetings, hoping to win over the audience by reasonable arguments, or by dint of greater numbers?

The first interpretation is ruled out by the amount of time spent warning against 'violent incidents' (which apparently give the bourgeois press the excuse it needs to publicise the views of the reactionaries. It seems then that, provided the racists are not

deprived of a hall by 'managerial prerogative', there is nothing we can do to implement our 'no platform' position, since any course of action which risks a physical confrontation must be avoided.

IMPASSE

This leaves anti-racists in an impasse, for while they might want to avoid 'violent incidents', their opponents may not take the same view.

The article itself quotes an example of an apparently unprovoked attack by reactionaries on a meeting of students held in solidarity with the miners' recent strike. What should anti-racists do? Call the police?

The statement sidesteps the question of physical struggle by ranting on about 'violence by small groups of people to break up meetings'. This gives rise to nothing but confusion. Is all violence conducted only by small groups of people? Is breaking up meetings something always done without mass support? Perhaps where a majority is won for some kind of anti-racist action, violence is rendered unnecessary in any case by sheer weight of numbers?

Two clarifications are needed here. First, even if 'mass violence' is to be used (or we expect it to be used against us), it is generally advisable for 'small groups of people' to spearhead the action of masses of people (or to form defence groups to shield them).

Second, while it is always desirable to mobilise masses of people when engaging in a physical struggle, there are some occasions when the mass of students are sympathetic to your cause but remain inactive, either through fear or confusion. In such situations decisive action by small groups of people may indeed provide just the example which is needed.

POWER OF THE MASSES

The evasions in the statement flow from the CP's overall politics. For them, 'mobilisation' is not related to the need to develop the power of the masses against the capitalist state. It is rather to get the capitalist state to do the dirty work, while the CP is meanwhile fighting racism amongst the masses by the ideological struggle alone.

Unfortunately the bourgeois state has never proved willing or able to prevent racists from making propaganda, and certainly never stopped the growth of a fascist movement. And unfortunately mass mobilisations to force the Government to put an end to military conspirators and fascists in Chile failed to stop the latter from smashing up a working class literally disarmed by talk of avoiding 'violent incidents'.

Educationists vote to evict fascists from conference

The national student organiser of the National Front and four henchmen were thrown out of a conference organised by the Campaign on Racism, IQ, and the Class Society, in London on Saturday.

But this decision was taken after a narrow majority of the 250 participants—a large proportion of them sociologists, educational psychologists, and teachers—had voted in favour of letting the fascists speak.

Michael Duane, champion of participation by teachers and pupils in running schools, and several other members of the audience argued that to deny the fascists 'free speech' was to 'stoop to their level' and the conference should 'let them condemn themselves'.

This was strenuously opposed by IMG members and other militants, who made it plain that they had no intention of extending 'free speech', which the workers' movement had fought for, to those who would

deprive the workers' movement of it. They explained how the fascists had responded to recent strikes by black and Asian workers.

When, after a few rowdy minutes, the absurdity of discussing racism in the presence of fascists had become apparent, and half a dozen of the audience had already left the hall in disgust, the conference agreed to eject the scum, one of whom turned to proclaim: 'Long live the purity of the Anglo-Saxon race.'

However, although the conference had earlier been split on the demand of no platform for fascists, when IMG member Stuart Madewell proposed in the closing session that no fascists should be tolerated at future meetings, there were only six votes against.

The conference itself was the beginning of a campaign to expose the 'scientific' racism behind the theories propounded by Professors Eysenck, Jensen, and Shockley—that blacks, Asians, the Irish and just about everyone else are intellectually infer-

ior to white Anglo-Saxons, thanks to the latter's abundant supply of higher order genes.

This is dressed up in elaborate statistical charts of IQ performance, which have already been used as a justification for dumping thousands of West Indian children into schools for the 'educationally sub-normal', and led some scientists to call for selective breeding.

Workshops at the conference discussed such topics as genetics and racial myths, ESN schools, and the class nature of the education system. The campaign aims to reach all those involved in educational testing and assessment, particularly teachers themselves, and plans to mount an offensive against all forms of selection and control inherent in the education system.

A meeting to decide on action around the campaign will be held on Wednesday, 3 April, at 7.30 pm in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Details of the campaign, c/o NSRCS, 9 Poland St, London W1.

NALGO CLAIM AT THE CROSSROADS

Local government workers have now reached the crossroads as far as their £400 London Weighting Claim is concerned.

The NALGO bureaucracy have agreed to recommend jointly with the employers an offer of £186-£216 to Employment Secretary Michael Foot on 1 April. This agreement, first reached in the General Purposes Committee of the Greater London Whitley Council, has now been ratified in the Metropolitan District Local Government Committee by a vote of 25 to 15. This decision is nothing less than a sell out.

At the moment two local government branches, Camden and London Boroughs Joint Computer Consortium, are taking selective strike action. A further 14 are banning overtime and banning work with agency (lump) staff. Electricity branches are also taking this action but have so far received no offer. However, further strike action planned for last Monday in Islington, Tower Hamlets and Kensington and Chelsea has been postponed.

So far the union bureaucracy has made every effort to ensure that the struggle remains partial and fragmented. In spite of an overwhelming vote in an all-London ballot for

banning overtime and not co-operating with agency staff, the bureaucrats refused to call an all-District action and proceeded to put the responsibility back onto the branches to decide what action they wanted to take.

PAY LAWS

The NALGO leadership's attitude to the Pay Laws has always been ambiguous. While verbally opposing Phase 3 they have allowed the claim to go to the Pay Board, and now state that the £186-£216 offer is an 'interim' one until the Pay Board reports in June. However, the leadership have also said that they would accept agreement on the claim in principle with the employers and then wait until payment was allowed by legislation. As far as the bureaucrats were concerned the struggle's aim was only to get the employers to agree, then they could happily give in to Phase 3, whether administered by a Tory or Labour Government. Their approach to Foot will be one based on special case arguments, not one based on struggle to smash the Pay Laws.

Attempts have been made by the rank and file in the union to organise for the claim. Campaign and action committees have been set up in eight or nine branches. However, attempts to build co-ordination on an all-London basis have remained generally

weak. Co-ordination of this kind now becomes crucial if the sellout is to be resisted. A meeting of militants is being organised this week to plan the next steps forward in the campaign.

One action which must be built on is the decision of Islington branch, taken by an overwhelming majority, to strike from 2 April if the full claim is not offered. This decision must be used to pull in other branches to take this kind of action. Demonstrations and rallies like the one in Islington last Monday which was supported by 7 branches can be used to build up this kind of campaign. Areas of strength must be used to bring in the weaker branches where they have not been involved up to now in the struggle.

One further way that this campaign could be strengthened would be if it took up the question of the national claim, up to now shelved by the bureaucracy. Action in London which is tied specifically to both the national and the London Allowance claim could start to bring in other branches of the union into national action. The dangers of a sectional struggle can be overcome by starting strike action for both the London and National claims, and against Phase 3, now.

ALAN BENNETT

Free jailed black youths!

A demonstration through Brixton on Saturday will express opposition to the savage sentences passed against three black youths two weeks ago.

Organised by the Black Student Action Collective and supported by the Black Peoples' Defence Committee, and Lambeth NUT, it will demand the release of Robin Stirling, Horace Parkinson and Lloyd James, currently serving three-year sentences for alleged police assault at Brockwell Park, Brixton, last summer. The demonstration starts from Brockwell Park at 1 pm.

In the last four years there have been a number of attacks by police and racists on black people in Brixton, where the Special Patrol Group has been operating for over a year. Certain cops seem to be continually involved in such incidents, such as PCs Tucker and Castle, who arrested Robin Stirling.

BOMB ATTACKS

A year ago a series of bomb attacks were made against the houses and shops of black people, including the burning of the Black Workers Movement bookshop.

The local press portrayed the events at Brockwell Park on 9 June as three heroic policemen battling against 300 black youths. In fact, minutes after the initial incident—a stabbing—there were over a hundred police in the park, most of them arriving in vans at two of the park entrances. The whole exercise resembled a carefully planned military action.

The initial response of local organisations to the arrests and other attacks was poor. The local NUT tried to set up an anti-racist committee in September, but despite the fact that the first meeting was supported by eight organisations, including the local NALGO Action and Brixton UCATT, the Communist Party abandoned serious work on an organisational objection, and the International Socialists did not bother to participate.

Local opinion has now been stirred by the sentences, especially since it is clear that the hearing was held back until after Robin Stirling's 15th birthday, so that he could receive a prison sentence.

During the past week a number

of black organisations have met, and the Black Peoples' Defence Committee is co-ordinating action. They are raising money for the appeal, and petitions to the local MPs have been organised, to force them to demand that the Home Secretary quash the sentences.

A successful campaign must mobilise support from the local labour movement. This requires a broad organising committee, pledged to an ongoing struggle against racism in the area.

Send telegrams of support and donations to the Black Peoples' Defence Committee, 1 Mayall Road, London SE24. Also send telegrams to the Home Secretary.

Val Gilbert and Mike McKenzie



In for three years: Horace Parkinson



... and 15 year-old Robin Stirling

'Social Contract' is a capitalist contract -

SMASH CAPITALIST COUNTER-ATTACK

The fall of the Heath government, the success of the miners' strike, and the formation of the Labour Government are all important victories for the working class. But big victories have been won before and wasted, because they were not followed up. If it had its way, Labour would waste this latest working class victory as well.

The Labour Government is not preparing any real moves to deal with the cause and effects of the capitalist economic crisis. The rents freeze, the promised pensions increase and the order to cut food profits are all useful. But they are mere drops in the ocean.

Phase 3 has not been repealed. Unemployment is rising. The Shrewsbury lads are still in jail. No proposals for immediate equal pay for women are being put forward. The fines exacted by the Industrial Relations Court are not being repaid. The rent rises already imposed under the Housing Finance Act are not being repealed. The Clay Cross councillors have not been reinstated. Prices continue to soar.

Worst of all, Labour is putting forward no plan to take over the capitalist firms which dominate the economy. Even the plan to nationalise North Sea oil has been dropped. Without a plan to break capitalist domination of the economy, no matter what short term manoeuvres it may take, the Labour Government will inevitably be forced to carry out vicious anti-working class measures.

Behind the protection of Labour's refusal to act against capitalism, the employing class is preparing its counter-offensive. Price increases will be running at 15% over the next year. The 1,700 workers sacked by the *Scottish Daily Express* are just the first of the million who will be on the dole queue by the winter. House building is plummeting. The vicious police attacks on students at Essex University show what is in store for the working class.

By first launching attacks against individual sections of the working class, and against other oppressed sections of the population, the capitalist class believes it can create an atmosphere of demoralisation and defeat. The inactivity and reformism of Labour will provide a cover for this attack. When this demoralisation has been achieved then the Labour Government can easily be got rid of, and a new, openly anti-working class Tory Government put in its place. (Even better for the employers, perhaps the working class can be so severely defeated that the Labour leaders will no longer be afraid of entering an anti-working class coalition Government.)

At present the working class is too strong for any Government to use repressive laws such as the Industrial Relations Act or the Incomes Policy. If Labour tried to use them it would discredit itself very rapidly.

But tens of thousands of individual

capitalists and their agents are in a position to launch anti-working class attacks.

SMASH THE CAPITALIST COUNTER- ATTACK!

Thousands of employers will create unemployment. The police will be launching vicious attacks on workers. Judges will be dragging up still more anti-working class laws. College authorities will keep up their attacks on students. Racists, fascists and the police will keep up their attacks on black people. Reactionaries of all sorts will try to deprive women of even the limited rights to abortion and contraception which they have now. The use of private scab forces against workers will increase.

Against all these attacks the Labour Party and the present trade union leadership will provide no protection. On the contrary, as in the case of Shrewsbury and Clay Cross, it will be trade union and Labour leaders who sabotage the fight back of the working class. Socialists and revolutionaries have a vital role to play in fighting all these attacks.

In particular, four issues stand out as vital ones:

Unemployment: Nothing demoralises the working class so much as hundreds of thousands of workers on the dole queue. The fight against unemployment is an absolutely central one. In the last economic recession struggles such as those at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and at the Brians printing factory in London inspired the fight back against unemployment.

This time as well, in addition to the fight for jobs and the fight for full pay for the unemployed, every redundancy must be met with an occupation. Big national campaigns, far better organised than that over Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, can be waged round every major fight against redundancy. With Labour in office the demand should go up that every firm which creates redundancy should be immediately nationalised, without compensation, and placed under the management of the workers.

Shrewsbury and the picketing conspiracy laws: One of the scandals of this Labour government is that the building workers imprisoned at Shrewsbury

are still in jail. Labour has not even a fig leaf of an excuse for this. No Act has to be passed through Parliament to release them. One stroke of Home Secretary Roy Jenkins' pen is enough to set them free.

But Labour relies not on the struggle of the working class and its fighters such as the Shrewsbury building workers, but on capitalist laws and Parliament. Labour is terrified to release the Shrewsbury Six because they may have acted 'illegally'. The working class movement must therefore force their release. Mass action release of the dockers jailed at Pentonville. The same must be done now on Shrewsbury.

But not only must the Shrewsbury Six be released but there must never be the possibility of another Shrewsbury. A vital task of the hour is to force an end to the anti-picketing laws and the conspiracy laws and gain the release of all those imprisoned for trade union activity. This is in addition to the complete repeal of the Industrial Relations and Incomes Policy Acts.

SELF-DEFENCE

Workers' self-defence: Every oppressed section of the population is going to come under physical attack by the capitalist class in the coming months.

Special anti-picket squads of the police have already been in action in the last years against Hull dockers and in the Footprints tools dispute in Sheffield. Private thugs were organised by employers against strikers in the *Sheffield Telegraph* dispute and at Chrysler. Squatters have been viciously attacked by the police. Immigrants have been attacked by the police and by racists and fascists. The police violence against students at Oxford and Essex shows what lies in store here.

The organisation of physical self-defence now is a key question for every oppressed section of the population. The students who resisted the police at Essex, the squatters who have formed mutual defence groups, the workers who have set up picketing pools, the militants who have broken up fascist and racist attempts to organise, all show the way here.

The racist and fascist threat:

The Heath style of open Toryism completely failed to convince any section of the working class that it held out any solution to their problems. This is one of the chief reasons Heath fell from office. But other servants of the capitalist class are more subtle and dangerous in their approach.

The racists and fascists, such as Powell and the National Front, try to convince backward sections of the working class that their problems can be solved by smashing the blacks. This is the most dangerous kind of capitalist attack of all. The racist demagogues have shown a real ability to make some inroads into the working class in the way open Tories never could. Powell's aim is to permanently weaken the working class by splitting it on racist lines.

Of course there are many other issues of the capitalist attack on which revolutionaries and socialists must struggle. In particular, they must fight for the reversal of the unseating of the Clay Cross councillors; the repayment of the fines levied by the Industrial Relations Court; against the anti-abortionists of SPUC. But it is

and finally threatening to occupy the union's headquarters.

Then came promises from members of the district committee, the local officials, and even the national executive, that all the company's components supplied to the car industry would be blacked.

This step was essential, and ordinarily it would have been a routine matter. It should have been an automatic reflex of a trade union movement which has long experience of dealing with employers like A.L. Dunn, the owners of Art Castings, who had decided to sack a militant for 'slow working' after he had been blinded in one eye by hot metal and demoted.

But his name was Pawittar Singh, and very little of the blacking materialised. The strike committee did not leave it to the T&GWU officials. They put out extensive publicity, directly contacted shop stewards committees for blacking and joint picketing, and went to address a series of factory meetings.

Yet they remained isolated. One shop stewards committee after another in the Coventry area voted

around the four main questions dealt with above that the main struggles of the summer must be waged.

The final key problem for the ruling class counter-attack is the Lab-

our Government. Although this Government will carry out anti-working class policies, its existence has important effects.

Millions of workers saw the election of Labour as a real victory. Just as the defeat of the Tories increases the confidence and combativity of the working class, the fall from office of Labour would be seen by the mass of the working class as a defeat and would decrease their confidence and combativity.

For this reason revolutionaries must have a very clear attitude on capitalist attempts to unseat Labour. They must be for maintaining Labour in office—not because of Labour's policies or because of anything Labour does in Parliament, but because of the effect Labour's fall would have on the struggle outside Parliament.

But revolutionaries must point out that Labour can only really be kept in office as an independent government party by what can be done outside Parliament. Any attempt to unseat Labour by the Tories and Liberals should be met with mass strike action.

The German workers have already set an example here. When, three years ago, the Christian Democrats, Germany's Tories, tried to turn out the Social Democratic-led Government, engineering workers immediately went out on strike and 80,000 workers participated in mass actions and demonstrations. The Christian Democrats were scared out of their wits and quickly backed off.

Any attempt to unseat Labour should be dealt with in the same way here.

But keeping Labour in office cannot be an excuse for inaction. The decisive struggle from every point of view is that *outside Parliament*. Preventing the unseating of the Labour Government must just be one aspect of a central campaign to **SMASH CAPITALISM'S COUNTER-ATTACK.**

The main obstacle to the working class consolidating the victories of the last few months is not the strength of the capitalist class. The employing class suffered a defeat even with the Tories in office. Now, with the Tories gone, the ruling class is temporarily without a clear way forward. All the individual capitalist attacks could be

against blacking in their factory, and the union officials were apparently reluctant to press the issue for fear that the stewards would be ousted by racist white workers.

There were exceptions. The call for blacking was supported by AUEW (TASS) members at Alvis, and by one of the shifts at Chrysler, where a number of the workers are T&GWU members. Yet when all the T&GWU stewards at Standard Triumph voted in favour of blacking, all the AUEW stewards voted against it.

The position of sympathetic stewards would have been enormously stronger if a full-scale campaign had been launched inside the T&GWU and other unions, but instead the officials chose to capitulate to racism.

From the start the T&GWU district committee and local officials made it clear that they regarded the dispute as an embarrassment. They were so embarrassed, in fact, that they said nothing about the 50 white members of the union who continued to work at Art Castings throughout the strike—or the scab labour brought in

relatively easily defeated.

The main problem which more than ever holds back the working class is the political spinelessness and reformism of the Labour and trade union leadership. In 1972 these people wasted the great working class victories of the miners and the release of the Pentonville Five. Instead of moving in and finishing off the Tories then the trade union leaders went quietly to Downing Street to discuss incomes policy. The result was a wages freeze and Phases 2 and 3 of the incomes policy, which lasted until the miners once again won a great victory.

THE ONLY SOLUTION IS A SOCIALIST SOLUTION!

Exactly the same mistakes are being made again now. The employers are on the ropes. The miners have smashed Phase 3. The task now should be to finish off the capitalists by decisive measures such as nationalisation and workers control, and by the stepping up of the wages struggle.

Instead the trade union and Labour leaders are trying to work out some 'social contract' within capitalism. This just means anti-incomes policy and more anti-working class policies. Meanwhile, the trade union leaders use the slogan of 'don't rock the boat for Labour' to call off any struggle which could exploit the victories over the employers.

The 'social contract' is in fact the most dangerous threat facing the working class at present.

This deal will not solve a single one of the problems which face the working class. As the capitalist attacks mount this will become rapidly obvious to wide sections of the working class.

Throughout the summer revolutionaries therefore have two vital tasks. First, they have to explain that this social contract in reality holds the working class back while the capitalists mount their counter-attack. Second, revolutionaries have to show the steps which can be taken which break up the social contract and

by the management and recruited to the union.

White and Asian workers at the New Inn Bridge plant in Coventry, which supplies all the basic aluminium parts to the Nuneaton factory, were in favour of coming out in solidarity. This could have brought Art Castings to a standstill. All they asked was that their solidarity strike be made official—but even this was turned down.

All these stabs in the back for the 83 Asians who had fought for years to establish a strong union delivered them straight into the hands of the law. Their consistent and determined picketing was insufficient to keep out the scabs and lorries, thanks to the equally determined picket-busting of the police.

The answer—mass picketing—was obvious, and the Asians made every attempt to implement it. But only a dozen white workers and a few students turned up for the first organised mass picket. No Tories got through that day because the police could not use the excuse of examining immigration papers to remove the

Art Castings workers stabbed in the back

'From the start, the T&GWU district committee and local officials made it clear that they regarded the dispute as an embarrassment . . . they said nothing about the 50 white members of the union who continued to work at Art Castings throughout the strike—or the scab labour brought in by the management and recruited to the union.'

The strike by 83 Asian workers at Coventry Art Castings in Nuneaton is over. After 13 weeks they have been forced to go back and accept a settlement which could well lead to the permanent removal of three leading militants.

The struggle began over the sacking of one of the three militants, whose reinstatement will now depend on the decision of an arbitration board.

Yet the strike was waged with considerable determination and strong organisation on the part of the Asians. This victory for the management of one of the worst sweat shops in the Midlands was brought about by the racism which permeates the trade union movement, combined with a sustained offensive against the pickets by the police.

It took eight weeks to force the Transport and General Workers' Union to make the strike official eight weeks of arguing, pressurising,

IN THE CAPITALIST TACK!

the only solution is a socialist solution!

point the way to a socialist solution to the crisis.

More than ever the steps to socialism are not at all in contradiction with the solving of the immediate problems which face the working class. On the contrary it is only socialist measures which can protect the working class in the slightest from the effects of the capitalist crisis.

What all this means in practice is showing the working class that there are real alternatives to the non-solutions of an alliance with the employers and the capitalist State—which is what Labour's social contract is. The key steps are the following.

WEAKEN THE ENEMY

THE WORKING CLASS has to take advantage of every opportunity to weaken its enemy—which is not simply British, but also international, capitalism. In particular, this means supporting the struggles in Indochina, Chile, the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and in Ireland.

The struggle in Indochina is the most important of these on a world scale, but British revolutionaries can probably have the biggest immediate impact on Ireland and Chile.

The campaign for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, for the release of all Irish political prisoners, and, first and foremost, the Price sisters, is absolutely in the interests of the working class. Similarly, with the campaign to break off British diplomatic recognition of the junta in Chile and for the entry into Britain of Chilean political refugees.

These steps at present are not even just an internationalist duty. Labour undoubtedly hopes to gain some popularity with its foreign policy. After all it doesn't cost British capitalism much. (Hence, for example, cancelling the gunboats' trips to Greece.) A strong attack to show the real nature of the Government's foreign policy will help rapidly dispel the illusions in Labour.

DECISIVE STEPS must be taken to protect the living standard of the working class from inflation and to secure a decent standard of living for all. Most important of all, this means protecting wages from the effects of price increases.

With price increases running at over 15% any wage increase can vanish in no time. Automatic cost of living increases—a sliding scale of wages—are necessary to protect every penny against the increase in the cost of living.

Workers in Belgium and Italy have won something resembling this. The 7% threshold agreements under Phase 3 were an inadequate version of this. A number one



Photo: HK

The vicious police attacks on students at Essex University show what is in store for the working class

demand for the summer must be a real sliding scale of wages: the 7% 'threshold' must be reduced to 0%, it must be extended to all the working class, include state benefits and unemployment pay, and a real workers cost of living index must be drawn up to replace the present biased one.

In addition, all wage claims settled under Phase 3 must be re-submitted for the full amount and in all wage claims not yet settled (for example the engineers' wage claim) the full claim must be fought for. For the autumn and winter, apart from the demand for the sliding scale of wages, across the board increases which unite all groups of workers should be submitted.

AGAINST PRICE INCREASES

Industrial and other action against price increases must also be taken. The workers at Allied Suppliers in Glasgow and housewives in Nottingham have already shown the way here. A campaign for a national minimum wage must be launched.

The trade unions must make it absolutely clear that they are not prepared to accept any form of incomes policy, from any Government, under capitalism. Last year the AUEW and ASTMS conferences voted for this. This year this decision must be enforced and every other union should pass a similar motion. Against Labour's capitalist social contract, **NO INCOMES POLICY UNDER CAPITALISM** must be the central slogan.

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN is completely tied up with defending working class living standards, but is so important that a special campaign must be launched on it. This was promised years ago by the last Labour Government. Nothing has been done about it. All unions must launch a struggle for equal pay now. Conferences on the question must be organised in as many areas as possible.

AS WELL AS FIGHTING AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT the working class must force the capitalist system, which creates unemployment, to bear the cost of supporting those they deprive of work. Work or full pay must be the key demand here.

workers elsewhere to organise support for struggles like that at Art Castings. If necessary they could enforce blacking by bringing plants to a standstill where white workers refused to respond to the appeals of the strikers.

At the same time, there must be bodies through which white and black workers organise to oppose racism in the unions. They must campaign throughout the movement to support the struggles of black workers, and fight to ensure official support for these struggles.

The problem of attacks on pickets—whether by the police or plain-clothes thugs—faces any group of workers considering industrial action, and trade unionists must be prepared and organised to meet such attacks.

This requires the formation of regional organisations charged with the defence of picket lines, able to call on militants to join the lines when they are under attack. The existence of such committees would make it much more difficult for shop stewards and trade union militants to refuse to rush reinforcements to a group of strikers who happened to be black.

EVERY MOVE MUST BE MADE to unite the working class across race lines. All racist laws, including the Immigration Act, the Pakistan Act and the Abens Acts, must be repealed. Most urgently of all, the House of Lords ruling on retrospective prosecution of illegal immigrants must be overturned.

WHILE THE ONLY REAL SOLUTION for the housing problem lies in a planned economy, nevertheless immediate steps must be taken to deal with the problem of homelessness and slum conditions. All property being kept empty must be taken over by local councils at once, without compensation. Squatters, supported by the labour movement, should take over property, and demand this.

NATIONALISATION FROM BELOW

WHILE THE WORKING CLASS is not yet organised to take over the whole economy from below, a real campaign for some limited but important nationalisations can be waged. This must start with North Sea oil, the food monopolies, the banks, the property companies, and all firms creating redundancy.

In the case of firms creating redundancy, and in the case of property companies, there is a real possibility of 'nationalisation from below'. Workers can occupy factories and buildings and, using them as a base to show that workers can take property out of the hands of the capitalists, wage a real campaign for Labour to nationalise these firms.

All these demands can begin to be put in practice the need to break with the social contract and begin the struggle for the only solution—a socialist solution. If revolutionaries are able to orient in this way in the coming months this will be one of the best opportunities they have had for a long time to influence the course of events.

What is crucial about all these demands is not only that it is possible to make propaganda about them in the unions, but that it is possible on

many of them to begin to take action now. They provide one of the key ways in which revolutionaries can carry out their central task at the present time—to help prepare, within the partial outflankings of the Labour government, in the coming months, the conditions for a general outflanking of Labour when the mass struggle restarts.

PREPARE FOR GENERAL STRIKE

Finally socialists and revolutionaries must never forget in their work in the coming months that the fundamental evolution of the situation in Britain is towards a general strike, or similar, clash between the classes. This has been the trend ever since 1969 and the struggles against 'In Place of Strife'. Only the particular form which the confrontation will take, not its content, changes with time.

In 1969 a general strike was posed to force the withdrawal of 'In Place of Strife'. In 1970-71 a general strike focus could have developed round the Industrial Relations Act. Towards the end of Heath's term of office the tendency was towards a fundamental clash directly on the question of the existence of the Tory government. 'A General Strike to Bring Down the Tory Government' represented the clear line of advance.

The coming to office of Labour again alters the form the confrontation will take. Obviously now a mass confrontation would not have as its first aim removing Labour. There is as yet nothing to put in its place. But all the economic and social forces still push towards a confrontation. The slogan of preparing the general strike is still the vital one in uniting the working class to stand the best chance in the coming clash.

It is not yet clear around exactly which issues a general strike could be posed in the coming months. If Labour remains in office for any length of time a general strike will almost certainly be posed against the vicious anti-working class measures it will pass. If a real working class offensive develops the general strike may be needed to obtain some key social demand of the working class—perhaps against some outrageous programme of sackings or to secure a sliding scale of wages. But if the exact vital issues on which a general strike will be posed are not yet clear, the general line of advance is:

For the moment the question of the general strike is a propaganda one. But it also defines certain key tasks which are necessary to prepare for the coming confrontation. In particular, workers control and workers self-defence must continually be brought to the fore.

Sooner rather than later, however, the general strike slogan will become an agitational one again—either against the ruling class's counter-attack, or to secure the key demands of the working class.

For now, however, revolutionaries, both to meet the immediate needs of the situation and to prepare the way for a general strike, must take as their main tasks dealing with the ruling class attacks and breaking up the social contract with which Labour hopes to paralyse the workers.

The watchwords of the coming months are that *in order to smash capitalism's counter-attack and to solve the problems facing the working class it is necessary to break with the social contract and start the struggle for the only solution—a socialist solution.*

ALAN JONES



Why all trade unionists must support Working

Women's Charter

By LINDA SMITH

What have birth control, abortion, nursery facilities, and family allowances to do with the struggle on the factory floor? If you are a male worker, you may not see the connection. From the point of view of women, there are many dimensions to the economic struggle which male trade unionists rarely see. The lives of women workers are not so neatly divided between home and work, and the problems of one tend to spill over into the other.

Women's liberation has often been treated as a joke by trade unionists, but in fact it is precisely these 'private corners' which the Women's Liberation Movement has succeeded in illuminating. Without the work done by this movement over the past four years, documents like the Charter presented last week by the London Trades Council would simply not exist.

But how important is it that the trade union movement as a whole fights around the issues raised in the Charter? Without birth-control facilities the working lives of women are interrupted unexpectedly—and this includes their work in trade unions. Without nursery and creche facilities it is scarcely surprising that women with young children find it impossible to attend union meetings.

In occupations like those at MacLaren's, the lack of nursery facilities meant that the involvement of women with children was restricted by their family commitments. In a similar way, all the other demands in the Charter have immediate relevance for women workers.

FIERCE OFFENSIVE

Over the summer these issues are likely to assume greater importance as women find themselves faced with redundancies, the need to struggle over equal pay, and the problems of low pay in a period of inflation. At a local level, isolated workers will face a fierce offensive by employers, trying to recoup their losses from the last few months and prepare for the autumn offensive as the national claims are lodged.

Firms already suffering from foreign competition and the effects of the three-day week will be going to the wall in droves. And these smaller firms often employ women workers—who they feel will cause fewer industrial problems and whose labour is cheaper.

The big monopolies, such as the Beaverbrook newspaper group, where large numbers of women are employed in clerical departments, have already started to chop off the dead branches with callous disregard for workers' jobs. In past periods of high unemployment the trade union movement has often refused to protect women workers when men are standing in the dole queue. The possibility of a strong fight against the resulting redundancies in this situation is therefore threatened from the outset by the prevailing attitude that women do not really have the right to a job—that their primary responsibility is in the home.

And in large firms, such as engineering, the time for escape is running out for those employers for whom the Equal Pay Act—due to become law at the end of 1975—will mean a massive increase in the wage bill. Women workers who have waited this long on the strength of 'pie in the sky' promises are running out of patience.

The trade union movement must take up the Charter and its demands now to prepare the ground for making them part and parcel of struggles

women workers will be fighting in the months to come.

And in adopting these demands, recognition must be given to the contribution made by the WLM in spelling out how family life affects at all levels the ability to take part in any struggles.

The Charter, if adopted by the trade union movement, will represent a major breakthrough. For the unions to fight for these objectives they must overcome a deep prejudice which prevents them treating 'private' and 'individual' problems as questions which should be tackled by the work force as a whole. The task of creating a socialist society will not be seen as merely an economic question, but as one of re-constructing the whole of society—a society where 'individual' problems will be solved collectively.

CHARTER

This Charter was presented last week by the London Trades Council. It was unanimously endorsed at a conference of the socialist current in the Women's Liberation Movement, held in Oxford on the weekend and attended by over four hundred women.

'We pledge ourselves to agitate and organise to achieve the following aims:

- 1) The rate for the job, regardless of sex, at rates negotiated by the trade unions, with a national minimum wage below which no wages should fall.
- 2) Equal opportunity of entry into occupations and in promotion regardless of sex and marital state.
- 3) Equal education and training for all occupations and compulsory day-release for all 16-19 year olds in employment.
- 4) Working conditions to be, without deterioration of previous conditions, the same for women as for men.
- 5) The removal of all legal and bureaucratic impediments to equality, eg with regard to tenancies, mortgages, pension schemes, taxation, passports, control over children, social security payments, hire-purchase agreements.
- 6) Improved provision of local authority day nurseries, free of charge, with extended hours to suit working mothers. Provision of nursery classes in day nurseries. More nursery schools.
- 7) 18 weeks maternity leave with full net pay before and after the birth of a live child; 7 weeks after birth if the child is stillborn. No dismissal during pregnancy or maternity leave. No loss of security, pension or promotion prospects.
- 8) Family planning clinics supplying free contraception to be extended to cover every locality. Free abortion to be readily available.
- 9) Family allowances to be increased to £2.50p per child, including the first child.
- 10) To campaign amongst women to take an active part in the trade unions and in political life so that they may exercise influence commensurate with their numbers and to campaign amongst men trade unionists that they may work to achieve this aim.



'OPEN DOOR' PROGRAMME EXPOSES RACISM IN UNIONS

Forty Asian workers were due to take part in an 'Open Door' TV-programme made principally by the National Committee of Trade Unions against Racism. But none of them showed up.

They gave various reasons. Several were afraid of losing their job. Some were scared of antagonising their union. Most said that if they were identified they or their relatives would be picked up by the police and deported.

One of the white participants in the programme, which was shown on Monday and is to be repeated on BBC-2 next Sunday at 4.35 pm, considered it best not to mention his union. In fact, until a few months ago he was the AUEW convenor at the STC factory in North London.

He had been convenor for 12 years, and he was the only white

worker in the plant who joined the strike by West Indians last summer, over the refusal of white machine setters to train a young West Indian.

Although the AUEW reluctantly made the strike official, the white shop stewards scabbed. And it wasn't the stewards who lost their credentials. It was the convenor who was voted out.

In the circumstances, his reticence to name his union is understandable. It is also a massive indictment of the trade union movement.

Through a series of interviews, the programme brings out very sharply the lack of official support which has been given to a whole series of strikes by black and Asian workers, which have taken place since the Indian workers at Mansfield Hosiery Mills in Lough-

borough successfully fought for the right to train for skilled jobs, in the winter of 1972.

At Coventry Art Castings, for instance, where the defeat of a 13-week strike is described on the centre pages of this issue of *Red Weekly*. At Crepe Sizes in Nottingham, where the T&GWU did not make a strike by Pakistanis against an 84-hour week official.

The appalling and discriminatory conditions which are imposed on the vast majority of black and Asian workers are vividly described, and behind it the growing determination of these workers to resist them. As Benni Bunsee, secretary of the National Committee, explains:

'Immigrants no longer see themselves as immigrants. They feel they belong here. This feeling has released a tremendous amount of energy and with it demands for equality.'



No 'open door' at Mansfield Hosiery, as gate is slammed in photographer's face

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WHAT'S ON

LONDON RED FORUM: Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, N1. (5 mins Kings X tube).

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE: Organised by NUSS, Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 March, starting 10.30 am at South Bank Poly, Rotary Street, Elephant & Castle, SE1. Films, music, poetry, seminars, workshops, theatre, etc. Cheap food, free accommodation. Admission 40p teachers, 30p students.

BIRMINGHAM RED FORUM: Linda Smith on 'The Labour Party and the developing struggle', Wednesday 3 April at 7.30 pm in the Wellington Pub (corner of Bransgrove Street and Bristol Road).

SHREWSBURY 24: Public meeting, Sunday 31 March at 3 pm in the Legion, Aylesham Working Men's Club. Speakers include: Jack Collins (Kent delegate, NUM Exec), Bill Jones (N. Wales Defence Committee).

CEYLON SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: Public forum on 'Ceylon—why the continued repression?' Speakers include: Tariq Ali (IMG), Rook Tansoy (Haldane Secretary), John Chowcat (trade unionist). Friday 5 April at 7.30 pm in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Hoborn tube).

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

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 Mayrent, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury, or phone Cathy McFerrer at Canterbury 60614.

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

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging 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.

HARROW/HILLINGDON Socialist Women's Group forum at Northwood Hills Primary School, 1 April at 8 pm: 'Teach-in and Street Theatre on Abortion'. More information: Sue on 01-863 2294.

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.

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.

ETHIOPIAN REGIME FIGHTS FOR LIFE

Despite pleas by Ethiopia's new prime minister, Endalkachew Makonnen, to be given a 'chance' to return the regime to 'normality', reports indicate that students, workers, and even some peasants are still engaged in action in support of their demands.

This continued unrest—which is also reflected in further agitation by 'revolutionary elements' within the armed forces—clearly shows that last month's upsurge was no mere flash in the pan.

On the contrary, the events sparked off then—when a series of strikes and student demonstrations were followed on 26 February by a revolt by troops in Ethiopia's second largest city, Asmara, leading to the downfall of the cabinet two days later—have shown just how unstable the present social structures have become.

FEUDAL SYSTEM

At the root of the problem lies the survival of a feudal system of landholding in a country whose economy is based on agriculture and where the peasantry form 90% of the population. Small tenants, for

example, are forced to hand over up to 75% of their produce to the landowners, and four-fifths of the land is owned by just 0.2% of the population (the Church and Emperor Haile Selassie being the biggest landowners).

What this means is that agricultural production is highly inefficient, and that there is no real incentive towards modernisation. Moreover, since the economy is based almost entirely on agricultural production for export, crops such as coffee—which accounts for around 60% of the total revenue derived from exports—are cultivated at the expense of subsistence food crops.

A further consequence of the survival of these feudal relations is that the limited economic development which has taken place has been financed largely through taxation—a burden which, needless to say, falls mainly on the peasantry and working masses rather than on the feudal landowners. This has further cut away at the already narrow social base of the present ruling elite.

FAMINE

Over the last year, two developments have accelerated the effects of

this situation—the widespread drought and famine, and increasing inflation as the result of the dramatic rise in world prices. Not only has the famine caused a large-scale drift to the towns, but the corruption and mismanagement which characterised the official relief operation did much to fan the flames of dissent.

This situation was worsened as inflation began to bite—indeed, it was a strike against rising fuel prices by taxi drivers in the capital, Addis Ababa, which was the signal for the flood of strikes and demonstrations which broke out at the end of last month.

At its height, the movement took the form of a general strike called by the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions for 7 March in support of demands for higher wages, the right to strike, health benefits, the extension of free education, and nationwide price controls. The strike ended four days later after major concessions by the Government, although on the question of higher wages the demand was only conceded 'in principle', with a figure to be set after a two-month 'cooling-off period'.

However, the decision by the

CELU to call off the general strike was opposed by some workers, who carried on with their action independently. Most of the schools and colleges remained closed, as teachers—backed up, and indeed spurred on, by their students—stayed out on strike. Airline workers had hardly gone back to work before they too walked out again in protest at the arrest of 46 of their number for distributing leaflets during the general strike. And new groups were also involved in the strike movement—2,000 workers at the government-owned Imperial Tobacco factory, for instance, as well as workers at the Fiat car plant.

At the same time, while Government concessions soon swung the army leaders firmly behind the regime again, agitation in the units has continued to spread. This has taken quite radical forms in some instances—leaflets dropped by an air force helicopter over Addis Ababa, for example, demanded freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, release of political

prisoners, the right to form political parties, liberalisation of labour legislation, free and universal education, wage increases, imposition of price controls, land reform with 'land to the tillers', trial of the previous cabinet ministers for corruption, and the formation of joint committees of soldiers and civilians.

Moreover, reports indicate that at least isolated peasant uprisings have taken place in some areas. The Paris daily *Le Monde* reported on 22 March that loyal troops had been despatched to 'restore order' in the village of Maki, 60 miles south of Addis Ababa, and it was believed that this had resulted in a number of deaths.

As yet the final outcome to the present upsurge is unclear. At the moment the strike movement seems to be dying down, and the teachers have mostly returned to work although the student mobilisations continue. However, one small spark could yet ignite further explosions in what remains a highly inflammable situation.

French and Belgian school students challenge repression



French technical college students—new laws propose to turn them into cheap workforce for capitalist class

PARIS:

Since May '68, French schools have been almost permanently in crisis—a crisis, essentially, of bourgeois values.

The French Government has therefore introduced measures intended to end this situation by increasing selection, reducing expenditure, and re-establishing order.

One of these measures—the 'Royer' law, named after its sponsor—was passed in November, and is a good example of how it is intended to reduce expenditure. Under this law, the 100,000 plus students in the CET (technical colleges) will have to undergo long periods of low paid practical training in industry, thus providing the capitalist class with a new, cheaper and more disciplined workforce.

Another measure—the 'Fontanet' law—is currently under discussion. This is a model of tougher selection: (i) it steers children arbitrarily from the age of 13 towards professional life; (ii) it selects children at the age of 15 according to their ability in Maths; (iii) the Baccalauréat exam will no longer give automatic entry to the university at 18—each university will have its own selection procedure; (iv) a new second year exam at university has been introduced at the same time that the postponement of military service has been abolished—this means that students will have to do their military service after their second year, and only those of bourgeois families are likely to be able to afford the time to take up their studies again.

Everywhere in France the school students are now in struggle against these laws. The vast majority of the schools are closed, and some have been occupied.

The national school collective, which consists of delegates from the various strike committees which have been elected by school assemblies, has so far called two

demonstrations in Paris. The first, on 7 March, brought together 30,000 students; the second, on 14 March, attracted 60,000, who went on to take part in a mobilisation by the striking bank workers.

The school students have drawn certain lessons from their mobilisation last year—notably, that they can successfully take on the might of the bourgeois State alone. Hence they have also been active this year in supporting workers' struggles—at the Saviem and Rateau factories, for instance, as well as in the bank workers' strike.

And despite the stammering attacks of the Government—'our youth are being manipulated by professional agitators', declared prime minister Messmer—despite attacks by fascist bands, and despite large-scale expulsions, letters to parents, and even legal action against students who have occupied school premises, the movement is rapidly taking hold in every corner of France. The State authorities cannot now hope that the coming holidays will mark its end—at best they will only provide a temporary breathing space.

BRUSSELS:

In January 1973, 175,000 school students of both sexes smashed an attempt by the Minister of Defence, Van Den Boynans, to suppress the right to postpone military service and to tax those exempt from it.

Not being one to give up easily, he has now returned to the attack this year with a much more subtle—but equally dangerous—project.

The central point in this plan is the establishment of a professional army: combat units, voluntarily signing up for periods of up to eleven years, and living well away from the public (in barracks in Germany). This means that recruits—many joining up simply to escape the effects of unemployment—will become totally dependent on the army.

Such an army is obviously preferable for the bourgeoisie to one made up of people who are only away from civilian life for a few months. Because of its isolation, it can be more easily and regularly indoctrinated by the bourgeoisie, and can safely be trained in using equipment in anti-guerrilla exercises, etc.

A second provision involves the integration of the police force and public services under the orders of an 'integrated command for the defence of the country'. The police force—in collaboration with the army—will be responsible for the military aspect of this defence.

Thirdly, 'VDB' proposes to create defence units composed of militiamen, living in barracks in Belgium. With a wide knowledge of the countryside, their purpose will be to guide the operations of the professional army and to create military nuclei in each area in case of a workers' uprising.

In exchange for all this, the Minister is kind enough to offer to reduce the period of military service from a year to six months.

Since last September, many leftist organisations—including the Communist Party and our comrades of the Revolutionary Workers League—have produced thousands of leaflets opposing the proposals. These have been distributed not only to school students, but also to the working class.

Since January, work has gone ahead to set up 'committees against VDB', initially organised by school students. These have achieved wide support, and last month a national committee against the professional army was established.

Four demonstrations have already taken place, as well as several strikes in the schools and universities. A major theme in the mobilisations has been that of solidarity with the Chinese and Greek resistance against military dictatorship.

'Socialist' Hungary attacks right to abortion

Recent changes introduced by the Hungarian Government to the law on abortion mean that it will now be illegal except in certain limited cases. Nevertheless, this move has been highly praised in the British Communist Party daily, the *Morning Star*.

The motivation for these changes, according to the Hungarian Party daily, *Nepzabalyag*, lies in the stagnation of the birth rate at 1.4%. And so, along with the tighter restrictions on abortion, come a certain number of 'incentives': women will be 'able' to stay at home for the first three years after they have had a child, and monthly allowances for such women will be substantially raised.

But why is it that Hungarian women thus have to be forced to have children they do not want? The main reason is simply that for very many women the arrival of a child means a considerable drop in living standards. And this is the case because nursery facilities in Hungary have not been sufficiently developed to allow child rearing to become the responsibility of the community rather than of the family unit.

STRENGTHENS FAMILY

So these new bureaucratic measures far from advancing the liberation of women and the social equality of the sexes—have the effect of forcing women back into the home, forcing them back to the burden of bearing and bringing up children. They thus contribute to the strengthening of the family as a social unit—which is, incidentally, the declared aim of all the regimes of Eastern Europe. Indeed, the *Nepzabalyag* article even goes on to explain how from now on people will not be allowed to get married without a certificate showing that they have been through a course in pre-nuptial

March to protest repression in Pakistan

A march through London on Saturday 30 March has been organised by the Pakistan Progressive Movement to demand the release of one of the leaders of the opposition to President Bhutto.

Mukhtar Rana has already served much of a five year prison sentence of hard labour for opposing the imposition of martial law. In March 1971 he led 50,000 industrial workers in Lyallpur during one of the most militant struggles ever seen there. While in prison he has successfully fought a parliamentary election, defeating the biggest industrial tycoon in Pakistan, Rafique Saigol.

The march leaves Speakers Corner in Hyde Park at 2.30 p.m., and is expected to arrive at the Pakistan Embassy (Lowndes Square) by 3.30 p.m. where a petition will be handed in.

education about the family.

Such aims would appear to contrast sharply with the positions held by the British Communist Party. These have been expressed, for instance, in the pamphlet *Women—the Road to Equality and Socialism*, by Rosemary Small, where it is recognised that child rearing should become the responsibility of society, and that women should have 'free contraception and abortion under the NHS, in order to ensure the right of women to decide if and when they will become mothers'.

Yet as soon as the changes in the Hungarian law were announced, the *Morning Star* carried an article by Ursula McLean (on 16 January) extolling the 'comprehensive approach which Hungary's socialist authorities try to adopt when dealing with social problems'. Is this because somehow the question is completely different there, so that police regulation of abortion in a workers' state has a revolutionary character, while in Britain a mobilisation against such regulations is central to the struggle of women?

Hardly. After all, Lenin was very clear on this point: 'Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism.' (*On the Emancipation of Women*, Progress Publishers, Moscow—p.46)

No these legal changes have a very specific purpose—to help maintain the rule of the bureaucratic caste in Hungary. This depends above all on the continued fragmentation of the proletariat, which is achieved not only by open repression, but also through measures which strengthen the family unit and split the working class along sex lines.

And the fact that the British Communist Party chooses to ignore Lenin's teachings in its glorification of the Hungarian regime, is simply another indication that this party has long abandoned the struggle for the world socialist revolution in favour of shallow apologies for those regimes it terms 'socialist'.

NEXT WEEK

The resistance in Chile - what kind of unity?

CO-OPERATIVE PLAN SPELLS DANGER FOR SACKED NEWSPAPER WORKERS

Workers at the axed *Scottish Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, and *Glasgow Evening Citizen* have announced their intention to sit-in from Saturday.

They plan to publish a new Scottish daily produced by a workers' co-operative. And they hope to use their redundancy payments to finance this enterprise.

The confusion involved in such a venture was typified by their demonstration on Sunday—the platform including Labour, Tory and Scottish Nationalist MPs.

A workers' co-operative is no guarantee of workers' jobs, or of the conditions under which those jobs are retained.

BANKERS' RAMP

If the 1,900 journalists, printers, and office staff that the Beaverbrook group has decided to dump were prepared to make enormous sacrifices, pay themselves a pittance, and then be prepared to say who should be sacked, it is possible that the bankers, newsprint suppliers, and advertisers, might consider supporting the operation—on their terms.

The survival of the co-operative would be entirely at the whim of these merchants, and the politics of the newspaper it produced trimmed to meet these 'market' considerations. That, after all, is what the capitalists tell us is a 'free' press.

The *Daily Express* and its stablemates are no friends of the working class. These papers have viciously attacked workers in struggle, and are consistently racist and sexist. Appeals to trade unionists to save them in their present form would—and ought to—fall on deaf ears. Production under the management of the newspaper workers is therefore an essential proposition to put to the labour movement.

But the question of finance is crucial, and there is only one correct way to pose it: Who should be made to pay for the capitalists' crisis? Certainly not the newspaper workers themselves, and not the rest of the working class, in the shape of taxes to subsidise continued production.

EXPROPRIATE!

The capitalists must be made to pay, and the way to achieve this is to expropriate the Beaverbrook plant, demand that

the Labour Government nationalise the whole Beaverbrook Group, and provide financial assistance for continued production under workers' management by means of a levy imposed on the rest of the capitalist press.

If this means that they too fall under the axe, so much the better! The workers can then take them over and extend the levy to the whole of the capitalist class.

A resolution passed by the London NATSOPA branch last Thursday begins to point in this direction. The resolution, put up by the *Evening Standard* chapel, pointed out that the closure of the *Scottish Daily Express* was only to be expected under private enterprise, and it called for the setting up of a national commission of all the unions involved to investigate alternative methods of producing newspapers.

This task is now urgent. The proposed sit-in in Glasgow needs immediate support, and the Beaverbrook Group's plans to publish a Scottish edition of the *Daily Express* in Manchester from 1 April must be blocked by all the workers involved.

Richard Brinsley

HONEYMOON WITH LABOUR OVER FOR CONCORDE WORKERS

The honeymoon with the new Labour Government is over for the Bristol aircraft workers employed on the Concorde project. Pressure from the world banks and British financiers for a cut-back in public spending is forcing the self-styled champion of the Bristol working class, Tony Benn, towards throwing 10,000 of his supporters out of work.

At last Thursday's meeting of Bristol Trades Council there was overwhelming support for a resolution opposing any redundancies, regardless of whether Concorde is cancelled or not. But the confused perspectives of some of the aircraft workers' leaders were apparent.

John Blackley, AUEW Convenor at Rolls Royce, said that the Rolls Royce/BAC Joint Union Liaison Committee had demanded a parliamentary select committee and an enquiry by Avon County Council. In this way they would buy time in which to question Benn's figures, and the effects of closure on the local community.

At the same time he talked about taking industrial action on the RB211 and Pegasus engines, also produced at Rolls Royce, as another way of putting pressure on the Government.

The mass of workers are beginning to realise that their jobs cannot be saved by appealing to the patriotism of the Government to save the supersonic businessmen's plane.

Only a commitment by the Liaison Committee to take any action necessary—focussing on the demand that the Government carries out its promise to nationalise the aircraft industry—and an understanding of the need to involve the whole workforce and the rest of the working class in the struggle, can give the workers confidence in their ability to save these jobs by their own actions.



50pc redundancies at Maclaren's

After Saturday's mass meeting at ITT Maclaren's in Glasgow, it appeared that the Shop Stewards Committee has accepted the management's demand for 50% redundancies.

Only 60 workers started work again on Monday, and this is to be increased to 130 over the next four weeks. The maximum number to be taken back is 30, out of a workforce which was 325 last December, before the 19 week strike and occupation.

These figures are still being negotiated, but by a Shop Stewards Committee on

which four members are seeking voluntary redundancy. A demand that they be replaced was not accepted by a mass meeting, on the stewards' advice. The Committee is also allowing some workers to go back to work while jobs are still in jeopardy.

The stewards gained a potential lever against the management when attempts were made to move out components during the negotiations (see *Red Weekly* 44). In response to this the Convenor, John Morrison, planned an extension of the blocking campaign, and an emergency meeting of the ITT Combine Committee. But AUEW District Secretary, Alec Ferry, advised no 'precipitate' action, and unfortunately the Shop Stewards Committee accepted his advice. They even conceded in face of the management's refusal to sack the individual whom they claimed was responsible for the incident.

The settlement at Maclaren's must serve as a warning. The setting up of the ITT Combine Committee, the offer of support to the miners, and the telegrams of solidarity to the Dundee Times strikers, were all initiatives taken by the workers themselves. The District Secretary only agreed to an extension of the struggle in face of management intransigence.

The playing down of the Maclaren's dispute, Scanlon's letter to the *Times* workers, telling them to get back to work—actions like these will increase as a result of the 'social contract' between trade union leadership and the Labour Government. The alternative was shown by the Maclaren's workers: no let up in the fight, organise independently, and extend the struggle.

It is a tragedy that, faced by the manoeuvres of the management, the complexity of the AUEW leadership allowed this struggle, successful as it was on the wages front, to suffer such a disastrous set-back at the last minute.

Red Weekly

CP CRUSHES CHANCE TO LAUNCH STRUGGLE ON ENGINEERS' CLAIM

Another opportunity to launch a struggle for the engineering pay claim was deliberately stifled by the Communist Party-controlled District Committee at last week's Sheffield AUEW shop stewards quarterly meeting.

The scene was set by a press release from the District Committee, two days prior to the meeting, predicting that there would be no moves locally over the claim, 'due to loss of earnings during the three-day week'. This ensured a poor attendance at the quarterly.

At the shop stewards' quarterly the line was put in an hour-long speech by Foster, AUEW National Organiser, who barely mentioned the claim. Although he denied having specific knowledge (he is not on the Executive), the message was clear enough: the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions would probably move to re-negotiate the claim, 'taking into account the measures which the Labour Government had introduced'. The main thing was to get claims put in at factory level.

This line had no great support, even from CP members. Balfour Darwins' convenor called for the immediate implementation of the national overtime ban, and Snow's Shop Stewards Committee called for a national strike.

Two shop stewards at Firth Brown Tools called on the meeting to set up a body to campaign in the area for a national strike for the full claim. The backtracking of the Executive during the three day week and the refusal to link up with the miners, had been a serious set-back. Now it was up to the engineers to continue the struggle on the basis of no incomes policy, whatever the government, they said.

The meeting obviously reflected the influence of the *Sheffield Engineer*, a bulletin written by IMG militants in the industry. One leading CP steward moved an amendment to the platform's resolution, to eliminate the implied acceptance of re-negotiation of the claim. His grounds were that unless this was done the 'left-wingers' would have a field day.

As a sop the final composite resolution included a reference to a national strike—but only in the context of giving support to the Executive in whatever action it wished to take to pursue the claim! The demagoguery does not conceal the complete reliance on the official leadership, which paralyses the rank and file at a time when it is clear that Scanlon and Co. are absolutely unprepared to launch a serious struggle around the claim.

The recall of the national convenors' and shop stewards' meeting on 5 April is an important step, but it will be a wasted opportunity if it simply tail-ends the Executive or contents itself with half-measures. Preparation for a national strike is an urgent priority; where possible district strikes should be called to launch the fight for an all-out national stoppage. Only a policy such as this will have any chance of winning the full claim, and preventing the Executive from doing a deal on the basis of a few extra bob.

BOOST FOR ARMSTRONG STRUGGLE

The strike at Armstrong Patents in Beverley near Hull, which began in January over the sacking of the factory convenor Jean Jepson, received an important boost last week.

The T&GWU's Regional Committee met in Hull on Wednesday and decided by a 12-3 majority to support the demand that Jean Jepson be reinstated. This is a significant step forward in the struggle and in the campaign to make the dispute official.

The following day 60 militants attended a public meeting sponsored by the Armstrong strike committee and Hull IMG, and addressed by Jean Jepson and Tariq Ali. It was unanimously decided to form an Armstrong Defence Committee, to fight both locally and nationally for the reinstatement of Jean Jepson—who was sacked for refusing to sign away a 40-hour pay guarantee—and the other Armstrong workers who have been fired because of their strike action.

The meeting of the union's Regional Committee was prompted by the action of 800 Armstrong workers, led by scab shop stewards, who appealed to Hull dockers to lift their blocking on Armstrong material. Despite pressure from the T&GWU and a local press campaign, the dockers have remained firm—and called on car workers to institute blocking of Armstrongs, who have a virtual monopoly of the supply of shock absorbers to the car industry.

The campaign to force the T&GWU to make the dispute official must be taken up by all trade unionists as a matter of urgency. The blocking of all Armstrong components must be extended throughout the country, and it is especially crucial that this be taken up in the car industry.



Jean Jepson, the sacked convenor

The strikers need money—the SS has refused to dole. Last week York University Students' Union showed the way by donating £50 to the strike fund. Rush donations and messages of support to the strike committee at 39 St Hilda's Lane, Bridlington, Yorkshire.

RED BOOKS

Open at new premises from Tuesday 2 April — at 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1., just five minutes walk from King's Cross station, and opposite the General Picton pub. Opening hours are 10 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday; Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm.

The more spacious accommodation now available makes it possible to extend the range of books and periodicals for sale. Although RED BOOKS will have a distinct Trotskyist flavour, it will carry material from every section of the radical left. It will also have a wide range of foreign language publications, besides selling the papers and journals of the international left.

WILSON'S NEUTERED MICE

Wilson has laboured for a month now, and has brought forth two neutered mice in the shape of the Queen's speech and the budget. But the Bristol aircraft workers, and the Scottish newspaper workers are facing a mountain of redundancy.

One month, and already Labour is running out of time. Already the signs of a new crisis are unmistakable.

Red Weekly needs to be improved if it is to put forward an alternative in that crisis. Send us a donation NOW.

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