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NATIONAL HEALTH - WORKERS MUST TAKE CONTROL



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

LABOUR NEC BACKS CHILE DEMO

SUPPORT is mounting rapidly for the 15 September demonstration marking the first anniversary of the bloody overthrow of the Allende government in Chile. The Labour Party National Executive Committee has decided to sponsor it; the TGWU, AUEW and NUPE are giving support; and hundreds of local trade union bodies, including several NUM areas, have pledged action.

Such a big response by the British labour movement in solidarity with an international working class struggle has not occurred for years. Delegates at last Saturday's Chile Solidarity Campaign conference recognised this as an important victory for the campaign.

But the struggle is not over by any means. The Labour Government continues to give diplomatic recognition to the Chilean junta. Discussion on sending the junta military spurs is continuing. No Labour action has been taken on the bar-

barous torture trials being carried out by the junta.

For all these reasons the Conference voted to step up the activities of the Campaign in the coming months. In particular it is calling for a series of local conferences in September and launching blacking initiatives against Chilean goods in October.

In an ambitious policy, it was also proposed and agreed that the Campaign would campaign for solidarity actions in the factories on September 11th, the actual date of the coup, by calling for workers to down tools for periods of time such as an hour or half an hour. This latter action would be a tribute to the struggle of the Chilean working class and a serious warning to the Labour Government to rapidly change its policy on Chile.

One unfortunate thing about the Conference however was one decision on the speakers platform for the demonstration. It was proposed that this be Madame Allende, Alec Kitson, Ron Haywood (Secretary of the Labour Party), Hugh Scanlon, Jack Jones and speakers

from the Communist Party and International Marxist Group. A proposal that the International Socialists be given a speaker, which was supported by the IMG, was rejected on the grounds that the IS does not participate in the Chile Solidarity Campaign. This latter fact is unfortunately true, but to get the IS to change their sectarian practice to united fronts such as the CSC and to help create the strongest possible revolutionary wing within the CSC and on the demonstration the IMG will continue to fight for the right of IS to have a speaker.

PORTSMOUTH ACTS

The Chile campaign locally has taken important steps forward in Portsmouth. A demonstration has been called for July 27th against the use of the naval dockyard by Chilean frigates. This is being supported by local trade unionists as well as political organisations. Although the armed forces are continuing to work on them the blacking of the frigates by trade unionists is now complete.

After thirteen hours of double-dealing with the British Medical Association Mrs Castle has come out with a sell-out formula. Put bluntly, the settlement means status quo. There will be no immediate reduction of private beds. Until the findings of the *Working Party* are reported the policy of the Government will be to allow private beds to stay. The future of private patients will depend on the findings of the *Working Party*.

Interpretations vary. Stevenson BMA secretary has 'neither condoned nor accepted the concept of the abolition of private beds in public hospitals.' Dix, the spokesman for NUPE, claims that the 'BMA has compromised by accepting as inevitable that private patients will be phased out.'

But it is the action of the health workers at Charing Cross, followed up by workers in other hospitals which shows how to 'phase' out private patients.

DEPENDENT

These workers were not kidded by the threats of the consultants that they would withdraw from the NHS. Consultants are completely dependent on the NHS. They are dependent on the resources of the NHS, resources paid for by the working class.

Modern medicine needs enormous funds to purchase complex and sophisticated equipment. The consultants use this equipment for their private patients.

In 1948 Bevan accepted that to get the service of the consultants you had to bribe them. The nurses, ancillary workers and NHS employees had to settle for poverty-line wages. This has meant that the consultants have sold their labour at outrageously high prices while they in return had the use of cheap NHS labour for their private practice.

The private patients' allocation of two per cent of hospital beds is a

misleading figure. In the provincial hospitals and the psychiatric hospitals, the allocation often falls well below two per cent. This is then averaged out by boosting the number of beds used in the main centres. The new Royal Free in London allows five per cent of its beds to private patients. The longest waiting lists are in those areas where the number of private beds is the highest.

Even BUPA - the private health insurance scheme, admitted in its evidence to the *Select Report* that it was impossible to have an alternative to the NHS.

The extension of private patients is an integral part of the capitalist plan to solve their crisis.

Charges for NHS treatment, already account for six per cent of the total budget. Faced with a crippling crisis of social expenditure, the capitalist class want to extend not only these charges, but to involve even wider sections in the private patients' scheme. This would mean 'better-paid workers' forking out for these schemes and the poorer paid sections being made dependent on a decaying, under-equipped, run-down NHS. The Health workers have the power to close down private wards. By using that power now, and imposing workers control in the hospitals, they can force the Labour Government to introduce a complete ban on private practice in the NHS.

one day conference
CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Saturday - 27 July - 11 am

University of London Students' Union, Malet St., WC1.

organised by central London Branch, ASTMS and sponsored by other trade union branches

Details from: Colin Smith, 18 Fife Street, London, N1.

IN FOCUS

LABOUR BACKS THE LOYALISTS

The latest Government White Paper on Ireland doesn't even pretend to offer a solution in the aftermath of the loyalist general strike.

However, at least one thing is clear. The Labour Government has made big concessions to the loyalists. In this White Paper the proposals differ from those of Sunningdale, where, in the interests of the longer term imperialist strategy, the British Government attempted to run roughshod over the protestants.

To do this successfully, though, required the isolation and military defeat of the Provisional IRA and the crushing of the catholic minority. The British Army failed to achieve this, which precipitated the mass backing for the loyalist general strike. Acknowledging their power, the White Paper puts the working out of future arrangements in the hands of the loyalists.

The loyalist United Ulster Unionist Council of Craig and Paisley is guaranteed a majority in the proposed 'Constitutional Convention', which is meant to make the proposals for future arrangements. The only conceivable outcome of such a convention is proposals for the establishment of a new Stormont-like protestant ascendancy. Any new 'power sharing' as demanded by the White Paper will be on the basis of this new ascendancy.

But this would require the acquiescence of the catholic minority in their subordinate place. The attempt to enforce this will mean ever greater repression of the catholics and an ever more vigorous effort to smash the Provos. Not only will this be done through the army but also through a greater open participation in repression by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment.

These are extremely dangerous days for the catholic minority. One of their major demands, the downfall of Sunningdale, has indeed been brought about, but by the forces of reaction and not by the Republicans.

The credibility too of the Social Democratic Labour Party has suffered a major body blow. But the pressure from the Southern Government for the SDLP to accept the new situation and participate on loyalist terms in the Constitutional council holds out dangers for the catholics, especially with the lack of any other alternative from the Republicans. In the South possible demoralisation of the Republican forces after the loyalist victory has opened the way for Cosgrave (the Irish Prime Minister) to sweep under the carpet the 'Irish dimension' — which in any event is relegated to a foot-note in the White Paper.

The growing isolation of the Catholic minority in the North puts great responsibility not only on the Republican forces in the South of Ireland but also on the labour movement in Britain. How can we aid the Republicans in their struggle against the loyalist forces and the British army?

We have to expose the lies of the British press, certainly, and warn about the danger to the oppressed minority. But the key task is to increase the pressure for troop withdrawal to the point at which the British Government is forced to pull them out before there is a real threat of the IRA being defeated and the Catholic minority crushed: before the conditions are laid for an 'Ulsterisation' of the war and the loyalists are armed to the teeth to keep the 'peace'.

BARBARA BACKS DOWN WORKERS STEP IN

Barbara Castle's retreat on private patients in the health service shows clearly the complete dead-end reliance on Parliamentary methods leads to. At the moment capitalist sabotage inside and outside Parliament is preventing Labour passing some of its most minor reforms.

First Parliamentary threats were used to force Labour to back down on the legal right to picket. Next Parliamentary sabotage was used to prevent the repayment of £10 million to the unions for tax collected under the Industrial Relations Act. Then Shell forced the Prices Commission to approve price rises for its chemical products by threatening to cut off supplies. Now consultants are threatening to disrupt the health service to defend the privileges of the rich and their own incomes.

On every one of these issues Labour, tied up in its Parliamentary straightjacket, has backed down.

But the working class has shown in practice another way of dealing with ruling class attacks. It was the engineers strike which drove the final nail into the coffin of the NIRC. It was the miners strike which drove the Tories from office. Now the health workers have shown how workers control can drive private practice out. It is this direct action, not the Parliamentary game, which can destroy any sabotaging moves by the ruling class.

The employers know this as well. The *Financial Times*, for example, has gone hysterical about what it called 'an attempt by a militant group to enforce its own view of public policy'—by which it means workers refusing to be tied down by the Parliamentary straightjacket, but taking direct action to carry out their own policies.

A government really acting in the interests of the working class, far from holding back action outside Parliament, would base itself on the direct action of the working class. This would soon put an end to capitalist sabotage of all sorts. Labour instead subordinates direct action to Parliamentary games. On this basis even its present tiny reforms are blocked. Any major policies it undertook would be completely sabotaged.

Labour says it cannot act on important things because it is a minority in Parliament. This is rubbish. If it is not prepared for workers to act outside Parliament its policies will still be sabotaged even if it does win a majority at the next election.

Even now, although a minority, Labour could carry through any policy it wanted if it was prepared to base itself on the direct actions of the working class. A government responsible to the organisations of the working class and not to Parliament is what the working class must demand.



What links is loyalist leader William Craig (left) — seen here in Hyde Park in May 1972 during the first attempt to organise a pro-loyalist demonstration in London — now developing with fascists like Martin Webster of the National Front (right)?



Loyalists & fascists snuggle up close

FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS of Enoch Powell's attempt to make an alliance with 'loyalist' forces in the North of Ireland comes new evidence of the attempts to create links between the fascist National Front and the loyalists. The press release from the NF which we print below gives full details.

Three key things are shown by this release. First, all the most reactionary forces in Britain now see the North of Ireland as the place where they can gain mass support for a strong right wing movement in Britain.

Second, their intervention in the North of Ireland is yet another attempt by the National Front to gain a 'respectable' cover for fascist politics. This is why they stress that they had discussions with 'members of the Westminster Parliament'. It would be very interesting to publicly expose who were those MPs who talked over strategy with the National Front, would-be successors of Hitler and Mussolini.

Third, the report is important

PAY BOARD ELEPHANT

(Continued from Page 8)

But they still juggle the figures so well that they manage to reduce the proposed increase in London allowances to almost nothing. So they stick an arbitrary sum on top as 'sweetener,' creating the magic totals of £400 for 'inner' and £200 for 'outer' London.

Part of this sweetener is supposed to compensate for the extra time involved in travelling to work. Now here is an extra burden of living in London that is quite easily measurable (as the Pay Board figures show, 'inner' London workers lose more than 210 hours a year in travel, those in 'outer' London about 55 hours) and is easily translated into cash terms—just pay for extra travelling time at overtime rates.

This alone would entitle London public sector workers to enough to pay every-one a London Allowance of £500 a year. But if everything else was too complex for the Pay Board, this is too simple. 'We specifically reject any attempt to relate particular factors, like excess travel time, to a monetary allowance.'

The Pay Board's divisions of London into 'inner' and 'outer' is very 'convenient'. As it happens, both Whitehall and the City of London fall within the 'inner' circle. Thus those sectors of greatest importance to the capitalist standpoint—the central Government machinery and the big financial institutions (whose employees will also be covered by the report)—will be given extra leeway to solve their labour problem.

A further bonus is the possibility of splitting London workers along the 'inner' and 'outer' line.

The Pay Board report is a unified effort to pull the wool over the eyes of London's public sector workers. It must be met with a united rejection, and a united campaign to smash the resistance of the Labour Government and the various local and Government authorities to the demand for a uniform and adequate London allowance for all.

because it shows the potential evolution of at least one section of the loyalists. None of the loyalist organisations are at the moment fascist. They are extreme reactionary organisations of the ruling class within the working class, but they do not aim at destroying the organisations of the working class.

Their aim is to preserve the privileged position of the Protestant working class vis a vis the Catholics. But continual involvement with Powellite and National Front forces could undoubtedly lead certain loyalist organisations in the direction of fascism.

TROOPS OUT

Most important of all, however, the National Front link up with the loyalists shows the urgent necessity for the British working class to demand that Britain gets out of Ireland. This is no longer just a question of elementary internationalist duty, or something which would weaken the common enemy—the British ruling class.

The danger now posed is that the North of Ireland could become a

mass base for the most extreme reactionary elements in British society.

Such a development has already occurred once before in Europe since the war. During the French war in Algeria the Algerian settlers organisations became the focus for fascist and extreme rightist organisations in France. Finally, because the French workers' movement did not force France to get out of Algeria, the combination of Algerian forces and reactionary groups in France were able to combine and defeat the working class through the installation of the right-wing semi-dictatorship of de Gaulle.

DANGER SIGNALS

Of course Ireland cannot play exactly the same role here. But when the National Front and Powell call for the loyalists to 'involve themselves in the politics of the whole of Britain' and to 'link themselves to an all British political party dedicated uncompromisingly to their cause' then the danger signals are flashing.

For the sake of the Irish people, and for the sake of the British working class **BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW**, must be a growing demand in the coming months.

Any proposed joint marches by the National Front and the Loyalists must be met with a ban by the Labour Government and a massive mobilisation by the labour movement.

JOHN VARSHALL

above they must become linked to an all-British political party dedicated uncompromisingly to their cause. We believe that the National Front is the only such party.

(c) Ulster Loyalists should resist the very understandable temptation to despair of mainland Britain on account of the betrayals of successive British governments and what appears to be the disinterest of the British public, and to consequently opt for separation from a Great Britain. There is much more sympathy in mainland Britain for the Loyalist cause than reports in the press would suggest, and where there is lack of sympathy this is due mainly to public ignorance fostered by the press and other sections of the mass media.

(d) Ulster Loyalists must on no account relax their determination to oppose Sunningdale, the Council of Ireland and power-sharing. They should, on the contrary, be proud of the success of their recent strike and push home the advantages that it has won for them.

(e) Ulster Loyalists should do everything possible to foster good relations with the armed forces and to unite with the armed forces in opposition to the real enemy: organised republicanism.

Mr Tyndall and Mr Read discussed plans for practical co-operation between Ulster Loyalists and the National Front, and these included mutual exchange of literature and information, mutual exchange of speakers for meetings and rallies, and support by Loyalists of a pro-Loyalist rally in London later this year.

Among the Loyalist representatives to which the NF leaders spoke were several members of both the Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly, as well as local councillors.

Signed
MARTIN WEBSTER
National Front Press Office



PRESS RELEASE

re: Visit to Northern Ireland
— N.F. Chairman

Mr John Tyndall, Chairman of the National Front, has just returned from a five-day visit to Northern Ireland, during which he met local Loyalist leaders as well as the Belfast Group of the National Front...

The Belfast NF Group has grown rapidly in recent months and will shortly be certified as an official branch. Plans were made with the group to co-operate closely with other Loyalist organisations, particularly in the field of Westminster and local elections...

Mr Tyndall and Mr Read [another NF leader] addressed two official meetings. On Monday, June 10th, they spoke at a meeting organised by the Belfast Group of the National Front, and on the following day were guest speakers at the monthly meeting of the Shankill Unionist Association.

In their discussions with Ulster Loyalist leaders Mr Tyndall and Mr Read placed particular emphasis on the following points:

(a) That if Ulster wishes to stay in the United Kingdom on terms compatible with her interests and self-respect, she must begin to play a part in re-shaping the United Kingdom at national level. This means that Ulster Loyalists should begin to involve themselves in the politics of the whole of Britain and not just of their own province.

(b) For Ulster Loyalists to do the

NUM 'lefts' stumped by social contract

"The rejection of all incomes policies under capitalism was an important step. But the arguments used to back up this position failed to answer the specific arguments advanced by supporters of the social contract.

THE RULING CLASS will get little comfort from the recently concluded annual conference of the National Union of Mineworkers.

The highspot of a stormy week was the debate on this year's wage claim. The Yorkshire Area had proposed a resolution calling for pay rates of £65 for face workers, £50 for other underground workers and £45 for surface workers.

These rises were to take effect from 1 November, with industrial action to be taken 'in the event of an unsatisfactory offer'.

There were four other resolutions on pay on the agenda, and the beginning of the week saw a great deal of behind-the-scenes manoeuvring to get all the motions composed into one. The Yorkshire delegates were willing to drop the 1 November deadline but the NUM right-wing (led by Len Clarke, the Nottinghamshire Area president) were adamant that no precise figures should be mentioned.

DEFEAT

In the end the Yorkshire resolution was defeated by 138 to 134. Jack Lally, the Midlands Area president, cast the deciding votes against, even though he had been mandated by his area to vote for. The successful resolution, carried by 138 to 134, called upon the NUM executive only to seek substantial increases in wages and improvements in conditions, which reflect the new relative importance of the mineworkers in the country's economy.

But the debate did not finish with these votes. The next day the conference overwhelmingly approved a resolution opposing 'all forms of incomes policies, whether statutory or voluntary so long as the capitalist private profit-making character of British society remains unaltered.' The capitalist press, only too eager to present the defeat of the Yorkshire resolution on wages as a major victory for 'the social contract', were a little dismayed by this apparent about-face. What they failed to grasp, however, was the precise nature of the right-wing's victory over the wage claim. The ovations from the conference floor were reserved for the pro-Yorkshire speakers and Lawrence Daly, so-called 'left-wing' general secretary of the NUM summing up for the executive in favour of the 'moderate' motion, was obliged to add 'it might be a good idea if both resolutions were accepted... then we'd have to have a marriage of convenience.'

One thing emerged very clearly - whatever the precise amount of the wage claim that is eventually put in, it will not fall in line with whatever 'voluntary norms' the Labour Government seeks to impose at the end of Phase 3. The miners well remember

the days before 1972 when their 'moderation' brought them pay rises of only a few bob and they are not prepared now to throw away the gains of the past two years.

MANOEUVRE

But if the ruling class and the Labour Government can find no real cause for celebration as far as the wage front is concerned, they have been given important room for manoeuvre. Two key problems which face the ruling class are how to stop the miners acting as a spearhead for the rest of the labour movement in defiance of an incomes policy, and how to implement some kind of strategy to try to solve the 'energy crisis'. In both cases they have been given a breathing space, not only by the well-prepared political offensive of the NUM right-wing, but also by the failure of the 'lefts' - Scargill, McGahey and Co - to provide any alternative perspective other than plain 'wages militancy'.

Some of the arguments put forward by the right-wing were the by now familiar sentiments of 'don't rock the boat', but by far the most influential card they had was in the form of an all-round programme for the miners and the mining industry.

The essential points they made were: (a) the Government has approved a £600 million investment programme; (b) the run-down of the pits has ceased and the coal industry has a vital part to play in the country's economy; (c) therefore, if miners were cooperative and prepared to accept certain productivity targets, the industry would benefit and the miners themselves would be generously rewarded. To carry out this programme, so the argument went, it is vital that the Labour Government is kept in power and not jeopardised by the recurrence of a national miners' strike. Len Clarke told the conference that a productivity deal would achieve the pay targets set out in the Yorkshire resolution.

The response from the left to these arguments was extremely militant sounding. The rejection of all incomes policies under capitalism was an important step. But the arguments used to back up this position - 'we never get anything unless we're prepared to fight for it', 'we've got the muscle' - failed to answer the specific arguments advanced by supporters of the 'social contract'. No one pointed out that the ability of the Labour Government to carry out even its limited programme depends on the strength of the working class, not its 'moderation'. Nor did the 'lefts' point out that the Labour Government's programme of meagre nationalisations, token price freezes with massive compensation to the manufacturers would in no way solve the crisis even if implemented. The organisations of the working

class must develop their own programme and begin to fight for certain class-wide demands - a sliding scale of wages, national minimum wage, equal pay etc. No section of the working class is better equipped than the miners to lead a fight on these demands. That is the way they can help the lower paid and solve the huge social problems created by capitalism.

ALTERNATIVE

The failure of the NUM 'lefts' to provide an alternative perspective to that of the 'social contract' beyond simple 'wages militancy' seriously hampered the effectiveness of their case. As a result rank and file militants are now left without precise targets for which they can campaign in the localities in preparation for a militant struggle in the winter. Moreover there was a complete failure to expose the real nature of the productivity deal that is being talked about. The so-called 'new era' for coalmining is just so much wishful thinking. Even the Interim Report (a joint NUM-National Coal Board venture on the whole future of the industry) cannot hide the real problems.

On the domestic use of coal it states that 'higher oil and other fuel prices may decrease the rate of conversion [from coal] to other forms of domestic heating' and on consumption by industry 'the CBI... draws attention to the great importance which industrial users attach to security of supply. Provided they can feel assured of adequate supplies and provided coal maintains a sufficient price advantage over oil and gas, the losses in this sector of the market may be stemmed'. This amounts to little more than blackmail - if the miners can raise productivity and keep wage costs down then the industry may have a future. If not the employers will be quite happy to switch to other forms of fuel, with the familiar results - closures of pits, redundancies and the rest.

The miners, especially the left, have for many decades prided themselves on the fact that they are concerned about the whole of the coal industry and not just 'the rate for the job'. But this has not stopped various governments playing them off against other energy-producing industries. Nationalisation of the mines was a victory for the working class. But it has become increasingly obvious that by itself nationalisation changes little. It is necessary for the miners, along with the workers from the oil refineries, the North Sea gas rigs, gas plants etc, to elaborate a programme of workers' control to put into effect an integrated plan of energy production that serves the interests of the working class and not the oil monopolies, capitalist industrialists, and the old pit-owners who still bleed

openly smash the 'norms' or 'guidelines' laid down by the Labour Government. The Government would even be prepared to grant a substantial pay rise to the miners in return for the productivity targets to prevent them playing such a leadership role.

The hopes of the ruling class are that the political victory of the right-wing will provide some time for the productivity deal to be put into motion. This would be extremely valuable to them both economically (cheap coal for industry is still important while the North Sea oil project is beset with problems), and politically. The prospect of a wages offensive by the working class in the winter or spring would be much less

openly smash the 'norms' or 'guidelines' laid down by the Labour Government. The Government would even be prepared to grant a substantial pay rise to the miners in return for the productivity targets to prevent them playing such a leadership role.

The task now facing militants in the pits is to fight against the implementation of the productivity deal sell-out, and to campaign around demands that can unite the entire working class against the 'social contract' and offer a working class solution to problems like inflation.

The vanguard role that has been thrust upon the miners after the victories of 1972 and 1974 must now be taken up in a conscious and deliberate way. The planned one-day solidarity strike of the Yorkshire NUM with the nurses' struggle is a good example of how this can be done.

NICK ADAMS



Pickets in action at Shell's Ellesmere Port refinery. A few weeks ago, Shell's threats of economic sabotage brought the Price Commission to its knees. But these workers have shown how Shell can be dealt with, forcing the company to offer a 25% pay increase, and knocking a nasty dent in the 'social contract' on the way.

The miners should be forging links with such workers in other energy industries to work out and impose a workers' energy policy based on workers' control.

Troops Out conference a step backwards

The Troops Out Movement met in conference on Saturday 6 July. It had the task of deciding its new policy in the light of the tremendous boost given to the Troops Out sentiment inside the working class with the crisis of imperialist strategy following the loyalist victory. Unfortunately the TOM proved itself unequal to the task.

Sixteen TOM branches from most parts of England attended. Despite the fact that none of the major political tendencies of the left outside of the IMG were there, the representation was clearly a promising beginning.

The TOM had previously chalked up some impressive one-off initiatives. The Troops Out Conference on May 11th had attracted the first significant forces inside the TU movement. And the London rally on July 1st had gathered together the widest forces of the workers movement on the principled platform of troop withdrawal. Joan Maynard spoke from the Labour Party and the Communist Party was there in the guise of the British Peace Committee, as well as the revolutionary left.

But although the TOM had pulled off these events the TOM itself had not increased its members. Because of this the IMG argued in the conference that the TOM should be very flexible as to how the movement should be organised. On all the main initiatives of the TOM, united fronts should be formed which could include the widest possible representation even from quarters that might never play a consistent role in the TOM.

But unfortunately the delegates adopted a constitution for the TOM of an incredibly detailed nature which can only erect barriers to involving other forces. For example, involvement in the TOM had to be in local committees of TOM paper, and simple. There was to be no

national representation of the various national political organisations. All initiatives were seen as being channelled through the structures of the TOM rather than united fronts of the widest possible forces. This is a big mistake. There is no way that the TOM, at its present stage of development, can mobilise enough forces to make a decisive impact on the consciousness of the working class or to force a major shift in British strategy. Neither on its present course will it be able to deepen and take advantage of the incipient split inside the Labour Party on the question of troop withdrawal.

The IMG does not think that the present decisions and structure of the TOM are irreversible. Practice will indicate very soon the wild over-estimation that the TOM has of its credibility and arrest its sectarian development. At a local level and leading up to the next conference, the IMG will attempt to reverse the sectarian decisions of the last conference and fight for the widest possible united front.

In any event some useful initiatives were projected from the conference. An anti-white paper is to be produced by the TOM for wide distribution inside the working class and a rally is projected outside the TUC Conference. A mass picket of Downing Street is being called if the Emergency Powers Act is re-enacted by the Labour Government and a demonstration is being organised to the Labour Party Conference.

The IMG will support these initiatives but will fight for support from the trade union movement and for the participation of other left forces not in the TOM. In particular it will fight for an autumn conference of all those prepared to campaign for Troops Out of Ireland. Hopefully the TOM will halt its sectarianism and agree to sponsoring such a conference.

"No one pointed out that the ability of the Labour Government to carry out even its limited programme depends on the strength of the working class, not its 'moderation'."

IMPERIAL TYPEWRITERS: 'V



Photo: ROY CORNWALL

New militancy of women workers

An important feature of the strike at Imperial Typewriters has been the militancy of the Asian women.

Women have been to the fore on the picket lines. They are an active force on the strike committee and attend in large number the daily mass meetings. As Mrs Doshi and Mrs Ranjen explained to me: "We do not just attend the meetings, we speak up in them and put our point of view."

These two strike committee members, along with Miss Doshi, a younger worker, told me why they were on strike. They explained how being on strike had made them aware of the role they could play and what they intended to do when they have won their strike.

PAID LESS

"We knew that the Asian women in our section were being paid less than the white women workers. This was because we had to do three or four jobs at a time. The white women had only one job to do so it was easier for them to make their bonus."

Mrs Doshi said: "Although I was a member of the union it was something I knew nothing about. Nobody ever came and spoke to us about the union, we were never told about union meetings. The shop stewards who were white workers never came and asked us about our problems."

"I did not want to do three or four different jobs. I kept telling my foreman that I only wanted to do one job. But he always refused to do anything."

"The strike started at Copdale Road. They came to our section and said "we want support from you people". I asked what is the strike about? They told me "We want better conditions in the factory and we want to choose our own shop steward."

"I asked them what is a shop steward and they told me. I had to join the strike. I was in that type of condition. I had to do very hard work for bad pay. So I joined the strike. We were being cheated by the bonus system."

Mrs Ranjen had experience of the union, but said: "When I complained to my shop steward she would say "I will go and see about this"; later she would come back and say "there is nothing that I can do."

"Every three months there was a time-keeper, timing the job. They do not tell us that they are timing the job. They hide behind the bars and time us. There is no shop steward present when the jobs are being timed."

"The management would say if you do 50 machines an hour that is 100 per cent. Anything over, we got bonus. But, when we started to do more than the management re-timed the job. Then they would say: "Seventy or even 80 is the new figure for 100 percent." This meant wages would drop because some ladies could not reach these new high figures."

All three of the women went on the picket line right from the first day. "Our leaders told us: "Everyone must go on the picket line." We

go on every morning, every afternoon and every evening."

FANTASTIC

Mrs Doshi said: "It is fantastic on the picket line. I tell the people who are working that they are scabs and traitors. They are just after money and do not care about their own dignity."

"Every day there is a mass meeting. At this meeting we discuss what we are going to do tomorrow. About 400 people come to the mass meeting and of these about 200 are women."

"The women workers — like myself — speak up at the meetings. Anyone can express their views and put forward their suggestions. They give us control over the strike. We all decide what to do."

"We take our children to the picket with us. When we go on the picket line the children stay in the cafe across the road. Our idea is for everyone to be on the picket line — men and women. But the police stop this. If there are 500 picketers, then there are 1000 police standing there."

"Some of the white women workers have said "you are fools for coming out". We have told them that it is they who are fools for staying in. When we win the strike everybody, men and women, white or black, will get better conditions. This is a fight for all the workers."

"We have to win this strike. I will stay right to the end. I will go on hunger strike before I go back to work unless we get our demands."

STAY OUT

Miss Doshi had only been working at Imperial Typewriters for six weeks before the strike began. She came out at the beginning, and like Mrs Ranjen and Mrs Doshi, she has been an active picketer. Like them she says: "I am prepared to stay out until the end, even though it may mean big sacrifices."

"Before the strike we did not think much about matters like trade unions. Now we have learned a lot. We know about the management, the union, the shop stewards, Bromley, Weaver, everybody. The first time we saw Weaver, our factory convenor, was on television. We learned that Weaver selected the shop stewards who then came and announced they were our representatives."

"The union has not been helping us. They just take our dues from our pay packet." Mrs Doshi says she joined the factory in 1972, but only got her union card five months ago.

"When we have our own shop stewards we can, like we do now, communicate with everyone. I think the way that we have fought our strike has taught us the way we should run the union."

"Now we have a mass meeting every day. When we go back we must have mass meetings, say once a week, to discuss what we should be doing. This is a way to organise ourselves."

"We intend that a number of us women will stand as shop stewards when we go back."

Low wages, grim work conditions and race discrimination lie at the roots of the Imperial Typewriters' strike.

Pay is in the region of £25 for men and £18 for women. These rates are respectively £14 and £9 below the national average.

The wages structure is a piece straight from Alice in Wonderland — without the laughs. In Section 61, where the dispute began, the bonus had been based on producing 200 typewriters a day.

This has meant a loss to the workers of over £500 in two years. The agreement stipulated that the bonus rate would be calculated on producing 168 typewriters a day.

Obviously the management were not too disturbed by this 'little oversight' but how explain the union's neglect? The Asian workers were incensed at the lack of interest shown by the union in their pay and working conditions.

NOMINATED

Seventy per cent of the workforce are Asian — mostly in the TGWU. There were only 16 shop stewards for 1600 workers. The Asian workers had nominated three workers as shop stewards. Their nominations were ruled out of order by factory convenor, Reg Weaver. He said to be a steward they had to be union members for two years. Nobody has yet found 'Weaver's two-year rule'. One nominee had been in the union over two years and H Khetani was two weeks short of two years membership.

Section 61 then downed tools. They put out leaflets and 500 Asian workers joined the strike. The great majority of white workers kept working.

From the beginning the strikers have encountered tremendous obstacles. The role of the union has been deplorable. Bromley the local TGWU official, and Weaver, the convenor at Imperial, are old right-wing hacks. They have a long record of collaboration with the employers. The chaotic and discriminatory bonus structure in the factory shows Weaver's efficiency as a convenor. The shop stewards were Weaver appointees, dependent on him for their positions. Weaver has even refused to talk to the strikers claiming that they have been sacked!

DENOUNCED

Bromley, the junior partner in this duo, is less bright but more loud in the mouth. Firstly, he denounced the strikers for not going through the

official channels. The he arrogantly announced that he was not allowing meetings of TGWU branch 5/221. He has talked about 'minorities dictating to majorities' and people who do not 'understand or respect our institutions' and muttered about the possibility of a 'white backlash'.

The militancy of the Asian workers is seen — and quite correctly so — by Bromley and Weaver as a direct challenge to them. Before the workers started demanding their rights and before they insisted on determining what the union did, these two could live nice cosy lives, uninterrupted by having to come into conflict with management. Weaver's job as convenor — with a management-provided office — kept him away from the drudge of the production line. He kept that job by proving his reliability to management, instead of representing the interests of the workers against management. To defend their positions, Weaver and Bromley have used the racism which so deeply affects many workers — the National Front got 9000 votes in Leicester at the last election.

Despite these tremendous obstacles the strike has been fought by the workers with tremendous courage and tenacity. Forced back on their own resources they have been compelled to build their own organisation to fight the strike.

PICKETED

Each day they have picketed the factory at the beginning and end of each shift. Every striker is expected to be on the picket line. Daily mass meetings are held. All the workers are encouraged to participate. These meetings are taped and the strike committee then translates the recordings into a coherent set of demands.

The workers are learning that trade unionism is not simply a matter of electing 'good' officials to represent them. The experience of the mass meeting has shown them the need to run their own organisations and to be involved in taking their own decisions.

They are now beginning to learn that the state is not some neutral benevolent body watching over the interests of all people regardless of class. The Social Security has claimed that they were sacked and therefore

MASS PICKET — 16 JULY — 11 am

A coach from London will be leaving King's Cross Station for Leicester at about 7.30 am next Tuesday. Details, reservations, from Ann at 01-278 9529.



Part of picket outside Imperial's main London showrooms on Wednesday 3 July

WE STAY OUT TILL THE END!

not entitled to benefit. What money they have screwed out of the DHSS has been because they staged two occupations and refused to move until some payments were made.

They have seen the police operate on the picket line. One policeman stood on a striker's foot then said 'move on' threatening to arrest him if he didn't. As the strikers say: 'The police are always nastier and more brutal when there are only Asians on the picket lines. When the TV came down, the police kept quiet and let us do things that they had stopped the day before.'

by Bob Pennington
and Julian Atkinson

Arrested strikers going to court have had maximum fines doled out for minor offences like obstruction. Prem Singh Chaggar was fined £18, almost the maximum, although it was his first ever offence. Another striker got fines totalling £78.

Although the local TGWU has consistently supported management against the strikers, the Strike Bulletin of the workers keeps pointing out that they are fighting for the principles of trade unionism and a strong democratic union.

Imperial is a fight for trade union principles. If the labour movement cannot come to the support of black workers fighting for improved pay and conditions then it will be unable to defend itself in future battles with the employers.

CORRECT

Unfortunately, some trade union members and even some left-wing socialists turn reality on its head. They see these struggles of black workers as struggles that split the working class. Of course black workers do have to wage strikes on their own. This is because the white workers have refused to join them. The black workers are correct not to sit back and wait. By taking up the fight now they set a real example of how to unify the working class.

Mathers, the area TGWU official, says he is worried about the National Front in Leicester. If he is serious about that then the Imperial strikers have given him an excellent opportunity to deal a real blow at the NF. A victory for this strike would demoralise the NF.

An Inquiry has been ordered by the

TGWU into 'all the circumstances leading up to the dispute.' The Inquiry has been held but its findings still remain unpublished. This means that the strike remains unofficial - no strike pay, no solidarity blacking actions, no use of the union's resources. This delay can only help the employers. It enables them to maintain 50 per cent production and they hope the strikers will be starved back to work.

IMPLICATIONS

The political implications of this strike are immense. The ruling class know that if they are going to solve their problems they must smash the working class. They know that they cannot defeat a united working class - hence they try and use every division inside the working class. In Oxford they tried to use Mrs Miller and her break-a-strike mob. At Leicester they try and use racism. By use of the Immigration Acts and using racism in the factory they are setting out to create a demoralised and intimidated cheap labour force.

Black workers are fighting back against this. The strikes at Crepe-Sizes, Mansfield Hosiery, Standard Telephone, Art Castings, and now Imperial show this. They refuse to be cowed. They are against rotten wages, intolerable conditions and racism. This strike demands the support of every militant who is serious about fighting the capitalist offensive. Members of the TGWU should put resolutions down in their branches insisting that the:

- TGWU make the strike official now.
- The results of the Inquiry be published immediately
- The TGWU give full financial and blacking support
- The TGWU organise mass meetings of its members at all Litton factories and outlets to extend solidarity actions

Supporters of the strike in every area should take the following steps:

- Organise pickets at all Litton factories and show rooms
- Collect finance in union branches, on the job and at meetings
- Arrange local meetings on support for Imperial strikers, in defence of immigrant workers and in defence of pickets.
- Rally support from the unions and all supporters of the strike for the mass picket on 16 July.
- There should also be a national conference organised to support the strike and discuss how to organise on-going solidarity actions to support future disputes. This conference should be organised by immigrant workers' organisations and trade union members.

Racism and the trade unions

Black workers invariably get less pay, work longer hours and suffer more industrial accidents in proportion than white workers.

They have less chance of promotion, get less apprenticeships and often are shunted into jobs involving shift work.

At Crepe Sizes, in Nottingham, Pakistani workers had a standard week of 84 hours - no overtime was paid. At E. Jaffe, in the same town, Asians had to work ten hour shifts with no proper meal breaks. They got half an hour to eat their food while still at their machines.

If factories employing black workers are well organised they are not as bad as this. But good union organisation does not mean that racial discrimination disappears. It still shows in lack of upgrading and promotion, often disguised by anti-dilution agreements and a limited access to the necessary apprenticeships.

What have the unions done to fight racism? Very little, is the answer. Sometimes sections of the trade union movement has behaved in an open and actively racist way.

Dockers and Smithfield porters marched for Powell. Stewards in Yorkshire agreed a 'colour quota' with one bus company. AUEW stewards negotiated a blacks only redundancy clause at a West Midlands factory. A TGWU official in alliance with management tried to oust black, militant stewards at British Celanese by playing on the racist sentiments of white workers.

At Imperial Typewriters, both Bromley (the TGWU official) and Weaver (TGWU works' convenor), have used racistist arguments to attack the strikers.

Nationally, the unions have recently been busy making anti-racist declarations. The EEUPTU - electricians' and plumbers' union - passed a 'magnificent' resolution against racialism at its annual conference. A few short months later the same union played an overtly racist role in the Standard Telephone strike.

In the sixties the Labour Government went to the TUC with a plan to include no-discrimination clauses in government contracts. The TUC said no. They explained that they were opposed to giving privileges to one section of the working class!

Some groups of black workers, despairing at the racism of the union officials, and sections of the membership, have set up separate 'black unions'. This has not solved the problem. Where this has been tried - 'Quick Deal' Bradford, RAAS union at Preston - it has led to debacle and defeat.

ISOLATE

Despite their imperfections the unions give protection to the working class. Splits in the unions would weaken the working class and isolate black workers even more.

What is necessary is that black workers, white militants and revolutionaries should take up the fight against racism inside the unions.

This has to be done, not simply by passing 'general' anti-racist resolutions but by organising campaigns of support for strikes such as Imperial Typewriters.

It is encouraging that the shop stewards at BLMC Longbridge have banned a meeting called by the Inter Trade Union Alliance, a 'trade union' front outfit set up by the National Front. Union anti-racists should certainly demand that trade union journals cease publishing racist and fascist articles. The journal of the Hosiery and Knitwear Union has a deplorable record in this respect.

Again, trade union militants should fight to get contingents from union branches and jobs to the anti-fascist demonstrations, as well as taking up a vigorous struggle against the reactionary immigration laws.

ORGANISED

The fight against racism in the unions has to be organised by militants and revolutionaries organising practical interventions, not waiting until the union leaders decide to act.

In America the Government has introduced 'fair employment' legislation. Marxists are opposed to the capitalist State intervening in the unions. However the unions themselves must take up the fight to guarantee racial equality in employment. They must also insist on equality in promotion and access to employment.

Black workers have often organised their factories and handed over thousands of members to the unions. This has often been done without the assistance of the unions. What is needed is a massive recruitment campaign of black workers and the publication of material explaining the need for trade unions in the language of the immigrant minorities. If the national leaders refuse to do this, then, local branches, shop stewards' committees, trades councils or even ad hoc groups of local unionists must undertake this task.

NO EXCEPTION

Racism totally permeates British society and the unions are no exception to this. Guarantees of no discrimination are not worth the paper that they are written on unless properly policed. Black workers have by hard struggle won important battles against the employers. When they have got back to work they have seen their leaders victimised and the newly won agreements not fully implemented because of the attitudes of the union bureaucrats. This is why the IMG supports the demand for black caucuses in the unions. This is an effective way of ensuring agreements are implemented and the demands of the immigrant workers are taken up and actually fought for.

The working class will pay dearly in the coming period if it does not cleanse its organisations of racism. Racism is the most powerful tool the employers have to divide the working class. And in the coming battles the ruling class will not hesitate to use it.

ANDREW JENKINS

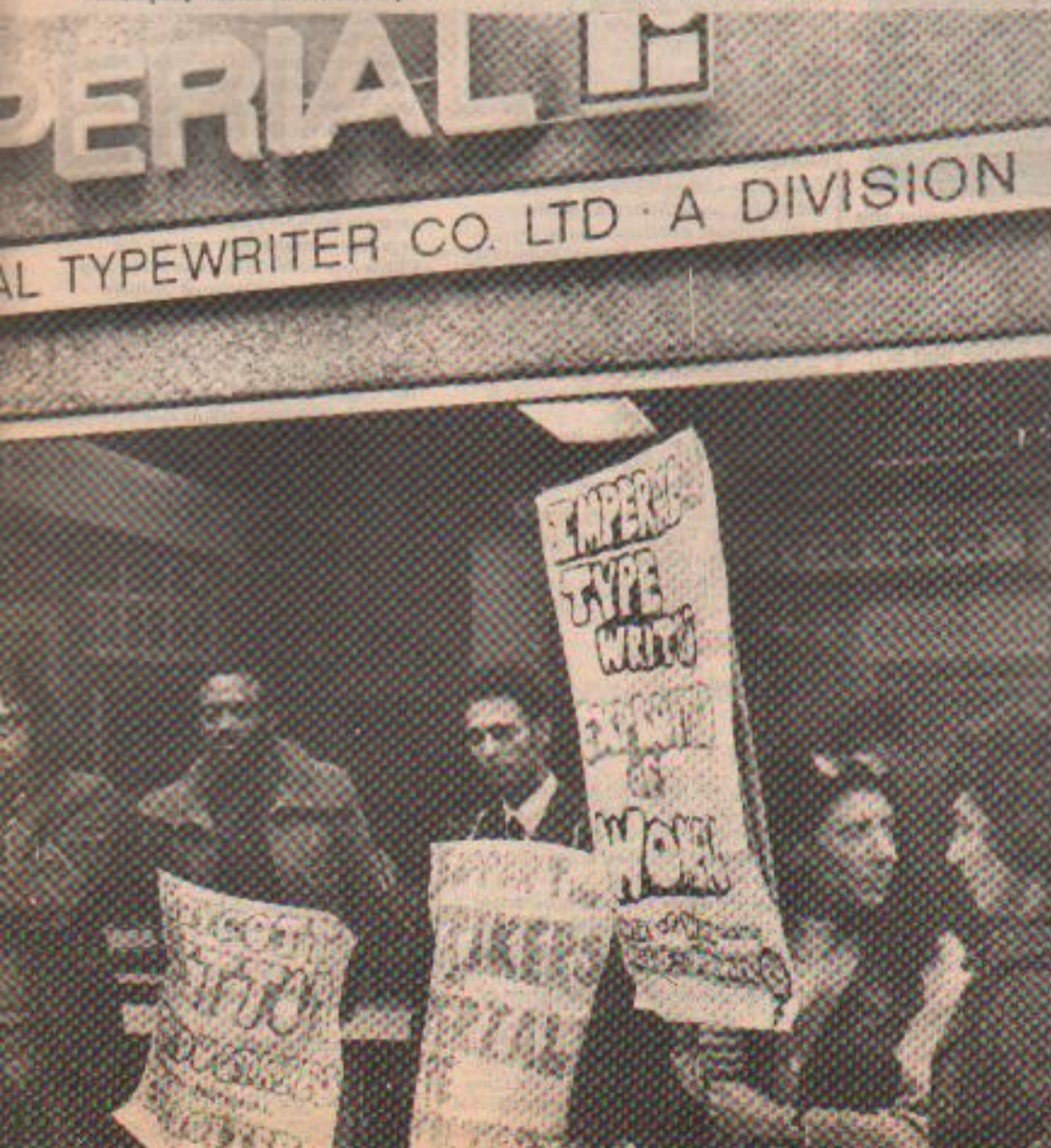


Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Litton Industries- a multi-national at work

Imperial Typewriters is completely owned by the American multi-national corporation Litton Industries. Litton had a turnover of 2,476,632,000 dollars in 1972 and owns over 1660 plants and facilities spread over 32 countries.

Litton also owns Triumph and Adler Typewriters as well as Olympus business machines, Sweda cash registers, Van Nostrand Educational Publishing and the London Office Machinery Company.

Litton moved its typewriter production from Hartford, Connecticut, USA, when it bought out Imperial. It closed down its Hartford Plant, sacked all the workers and justified this on the grounds that labour was cheaper abroad. Aided by training and removal grants from the British Government it moved its machinery into Leicester and Hull.

Since 1968 the workforce in Hull and Leicester has doubled - turnover has trebled, rising from £3,346,000 to £10,762,000. Despite the increase in production Litton claim a loss of £2,938,000 for 1972. The company is now private with its financial head office in Zurich which controls Litton's European financial dealings. This also helps Litton to keep its real information on their overall finance away from researchers.

In 1972 £6.4 million worth of the company's goods were exported and £4.6 million of that went to other companies in the same group. Thus Litton does not pay any tax to the Inland Revenue. It is therefore able to use its 'losses' and ability to move its goods at a cheap price, to a country where its tax position is more favourable, as blackmail against its workforce.

LETTERS



Dear Red Weekly,

While the true facts about the fate of Michael Gaughan — the Republican prisoner who met his death in Parkhurst prison on 3 June after 64 days on hunger strike — were revealed at the coroner's inquest held recently, their subsequent distortion once again confirms the collusion of prison authorities, doctors, Government and the bourgeois press in concealing the real horrors of forcible feeding and treatment of prisoners.

On 2 June, the day before he died, Gaughan was stated to be 'reasonably well' by Dr Cooper, the Prison Medical Officer; and at 10.45 am he was held down by hospital officers and forcibly fed for the nineteenth time. He coughed and spluttered and vomited half a pint of the fat-enriched milk he was given. By mid-day, he was seriously ill, with shivering attacks, a fever of 104 degrees, and a rapid pulse. Examination by two doctors, and chest X-ray showed extensive bilateral pneumonia.

But nearly 24 hours elapsed before treatment was started with antibiotics, and, even later, with

The death of Michael Gaughan — manslaughter due to force-feeding

steroids, and by 7.30 the next evening he was dead. The pathologist's examination revealed widespread inflammation, with fatty material throughout the lungs in all stages of breakdown, showing that not only had milk got into the lungs on that Sunday, but also many times before when he was force-fed.

Throughout the inquest, it was obvious that the authorities were pushing for a verdict of suicide. But evidence from Gaughan's father, the chaplain and others plainly showed that Gaughan was not refusing to eat because he wished to die as such. The coroner's jury therefore conjured up a verdict of 'death by self neglect'. But the medical evidence clearly shows that *death by manslaughter due to force feeding by the prison doctors on the orders of the Home Office* can be the only correct verdict.

Despite strong denials by the British Medical Association and the Home Office, statements made at the inquest confirm without doubt the role of doctors as agents of the State in force feeding. Dr Cooper agreed that he had had to obtain the written approval of the Prison Governor before starting to feed, although this is claimed to be a purely 'medical decision'. He refused to

answer when asked by counsel whether he would still have fed had permission not been forthcoming.

Around the time of the inquest, the BMA central ethical committee were meeting to discuss force-feeding, having been forced to do so by the persistent protest campaign among militant doctors initiated by the IMG. The BMA produced an extremely muddled two-page document for the press which managed to conclude, by confused argument, that prison medical officers should continue to carry out their duties as before.

An example of their contradictory reasoning is the opinion given by the president of the GMC (doctors' official disciplinary body), that a doctor's duty is to protect life and he is not guilty of professional misconduct if he force-feeds in order to save life. But he then says that a doctor who refuses to force feed, (and who therefore fails to save life) is still not guilty of misconduct! They also perpetuate the myth that doctors act with 'clinical independence' at all times, which is clearly seen not to be the case in the force-feeding of prisoners, as in many other medical situations.

A DOCTOR
(name and address supplied)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IS AND IMG

Dear Red Weekly,

Your report of the Working Women's Charter meeting of June 22nd is so distorted as to raise the question whether your 'reporter' was there at all and what your motives in 'reporting' the meeting were.

It is completely untrue (and if it were true, irrelevant) that 'IS were putting in their first appearance of the campaign'. IS members have participated in earlier public meetings of the Charter and indeed in the organisation of the June 22nd meeting. As was made quite clear on June 22nd, IS members have been active in putting the charter to their own union branches.

For instance, as a member of Camden Trades Council, I would never suggest that Trades Councils were the bodies that women should look to primarily. Indeed that proposition hardly tallies with the hammering away of the theme of rank and file movements which I was supposed to have made. What I did maintain was that women who were active politically ought to be putting the Charter through other groups able to take effective action on its demands, particularly the unions. This was down in writing, so shouldn't have been difficult for you to report correctly.

I argued against the affiliation of political groups as such on the grounds that this built in a tendency for sectarian squabbling which could only weaken the Charter. This hardly constitutes being unclear about 'the purpose of having political organisations affiliated', rather a clear appreciation of the reasons why not. (Indeed the only reason given by IMG members for such affiliation was to provide a means of 'judging the left', which bears out my point, if anything.)

It is simply preposterous to report that I said 'In IS it was not the role of women to take decisions on such matters'. Even if this were the case (which it is not) a leading 'spokesperson' for an organisation would hardly proclaim such a situation to a meeting of women workers. What I actually said, in arguing against the affiliation of political groups, was that it was not up to IS to take decisions for a genuine rank and file movement. IS members do of course fight within their unions for their politics.

The most disturbing element of your 'report' was your attack on 'IS policy'. No such attack was made by the IMG at the meeting which was a useful non-sectarian discussion of strategy. The main resolution which was passed was proposed by Dodie Weppler (IMG) but was in effect, identical with the proposal put forward by IS comrades, namely that Trade Union branches, workplace groups and trades councils should form the initial delegate structure around the Charter and that 'any other organisations in a position to effectively mobilise on the demands of the Charter' could subsequently be accepted by that delegate body as an affiliated organisation. IMG and IS were united on this, only the Maoists being opposed. To attack 'IS policy' is then simply disingenuous.

IS members involved in the Charter are interested in building a genuine organisation of working women around the demands of the Charter. This won't be achieved if Red Weekly persists in its sectarian fabrications, which, incidentally, bear little relation to the stance and attitudes of IMG women involved in the Charter.

Fraternally,
Irene Bruegel

REPLY

Readers will have seen an erratum inserted in last week's Red Weekly acknowledging two factual errors in the original report of the meeting which occurred through editing.

There are major differences between the IS and the IMG on how the Women's Charter campaign can be most effectively built. These appeared at the meeting around the question of the affiliation of political organisations.

The IS are opposed to the affiliation of political organisations on the grounds that it would lead to sectarian squabbling. Sheila Robin, an IS member, argued at the meeting that since revolutionaries get their political leadership from their place

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER



of work, delegates from the shop-floor would provide political direction for the campaign.

The IMG far from basing their argument for political affiliations on the grounds that it would allow others to 'judge' the left, emphasised that revolutionary organisations and their members should provide political leadership not only on the shop floor, but also could contribute greatly to the development of the Charter campaign.

For example, do we see the campaign simply as a pressure group to persuade the Labour government to implement the Equal Pay Act now? The IMG thinks not. We believe that any gains made on equal pay, the first demand of the Charter, will be made through the self organisation of the working class, not through relying on the Labour government's good will. Other groups will have different ideas, but these must be thoroughly debated so that we can develop the most effective campaign.

The main criterion set down for allowing any group to affiliate is an assessment of the group's ability to reach and help organise militant women workers. In this respect, we must analyse past struggles women have been involved in: Fakenham, Lancaster Cleaners, London Night Cleaners, etc.

In each of these struggles the mass organisations of the working class — the trade unions and the Labour Party — clearly were not in the leadership. The revolutionary organisations were able to have a significant impact.

For a variety of reasons — including women's historical lack of integration into the traditional organisations of the working class — women are often very open to new forms of struggle and to new political ideas. To overlook the ability of revolutionary organisations to reach militant women is to cut ourselves off from an important source of new support for the Charter.

To place the affiliation question in terms of those groups who are 'part of the broader labour movement', as IS motivates the inclusion of Tenants Associations and Claimants Unions, is to pose a futile debate — whether or not an organisation qualifies for membership into the 'broader labour movement'. More importantly, the IS position implies a reliance on the traditional organisations of the working class to take a lead on the Charter. Clearly the vote, *as of right*, must be given to any group — including political groups — organising consistently around the Charter, in order to draw into the campaign the broadest layer of workers possible.

There are many other questions arising from the differences between the IMG and the IS — the right of women's liberation groups actively campaigning to vote *as of right*, the use of the Charter to provide a basis for negotiations in trade unions, and the affiliation basis for groups such as Tenants Associations and Claimants Unions. Hopefully, readers will write into the Red Weekly on these particular questions.

DODIE WEPPLER

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Photo: RACE TODAY

The demand for the release of the Brockwell 3 — the three black school students who were railroaded to jail earlier this year — was reinforced last Saturday by a further demonstration through Brixton, organised by a number of black organisations and supported by the IMG.

The same weekend, however, the unprecedented school students' strike on 3 April which gave the real impetus to the campaign came under attack from members of the Young Communist League, speaking at the annual conference of the National Union of School Students. They argued that it was 'unofficial', and forced through a motion that in future all such strikes would have to be approved by the Executive Committee.

The NUSS conference did make some progress, though, deciding to launch campaigns amongst school students for grants for over-sixteens, and against the cuts in Government spending on education.

WHAT'S ON

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

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

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 am in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

IMG GAY GROUP: Contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, for further information.

RED MOLES — Internationals: First twenty Red Moles for only 50p plus 30p p&p; Internationals 1969-71, ten consecutive issues, only £1 plus 25p p&p. Limited supplies only. All proceeds to Red Weekly Fund Drive. Orders, with money, to B.E. Adams, 18 Corporation Oaks, Nottingham.

END POLITICAL TRIALS in Chile — Labour break all links with Chilean junta! Picket Cabinet meeting, 10 Downing Street, Tuesday 16 July, 12.30 — 2 pm.

SOUTHALL RED FORUMS: Every Friday evening at 8 pm in 'Featherstone Arms', Featherstone Road, Southall (near Dominion Cinema).

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT: Enfield and Edmonton branch first public meeting. Speakers: Alistair Renwick (TOM), Alan Warris (AUEW), Stephen Allman (ex-Labour councillor). Tuesday 16 July 7.45 pm, Edmonton Green Swimming Baths (lower Edmonton BR station, or bus from Seven Sisters).

FREE IRELAND FORUM: Gerry Lawless on 'The current situation and the Ulster workers' lock-out', Friday 12 July, 8 pm at General Pictou pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings X tube).

LONDON RED FORUMS: A comprehensive political education series, every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Pictou pub, Caledonian Road, N1. 16 July: 'The Strong State, Fascism and Racism', 23 July: 'Chile/Portugal—Workers' Power or Reformist Road?'

PORTUGAL LESSONS OF THE STRIKE MOVEMENT

THE RECENT repressive moves made by Portugal's Provisional Government are designed to strengthen the position of the ruling class in preparation for a new workers' offensive in the autumn.

The latest development has been the prosecution of two Lisbon newspapers for daring to publish news reports about the recent arrest of two army officers. The officers were charged with refusing to obey their orders to strike-break during the recent postal workers' strike.

Will may the bourgeoisie hasten to make such preparations. For the wave of struggle that swept the country after the coup revealed the immense creativity and fighting determination of the Portuguese workers.

STRIKE MOVEMENT

The strike movement became generalised throughout the country only after the massive working class May Day demonstration had made clear the powerful position of the workers.

Among the first workers to act were those in communications. As early as 30 April workers in one Lisbon radio station had struck over management's refusal to broadcast interviews with political exiles.

The CP's 'close collaboration' with the capitalists

In an interview published on 4 June Portugal's Minister of Labour, 'Communist' Pacheco Goncalves, made some very telling statements.

When asked about the 'points of tension' between his ministry and the Ministry of Economic Coordination, Goncalves answered:

'It would not be correct to speak of points of tension among the ministries. There does exist a serious contradiction between the level of the just demands of the workers and the degree to which it is possible to satisfy them. To overcome this contradiction a close collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Economic Coordination is necessary. This collaboration must be tied to a clear unity of objectives among the ministries and to a strong popular support. I would say that if "tensions" exist, they are the road along which a common effort at national recovery must pass.'

Who is this minister of the economy with whom a 'close collaboration' is necessary within a 'clear unity of objectives' and with whom 'a common effort at national recovery' is to be made?

He is Dr Vasco Vieira de Almeida, who has successively been undirector, general director, and administrator of the Portuguese Bank of the Atlantic, administrator of the Portuguese Petroleum Refining Corporation, Inc., vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce; head of commercial missions to Japan and Brazil; author of various articles published in the *Financial Times*, the *American Banker*, etc.; administrator of the National Association of Petroleum; vice-president of the administrative council of the Franco-Portuguese Overseas Bank; administrator of the Lisbon Bank, Inc.; and president of the Portuguese Real Estate Credit Association.

As is clear, this gentleman did not do so badly during the previous regime. But now he is serving his class better from the Ministry of Economic Coordination.

Goncalves, who was a bank employee and union leader during the previous regime, is now serving his bosses' interests better.

To the question of whether the new labour law would prohibit firings without justifiable cause, he answered:

'I would not be able to give any categorical guarantees on that. To prohibit firings without justifiable cause is a beautiful aspiration of the workers. But we ought to distinguish punitive firings from simple unjustified firings. Any law that is not adapted to the social realities always runs the risk of not being carried out.'

On 9 May the workers at Lisbon's leading daily newspaper struck to demand publication of a statement from the workers on the front page. They were supported by workers at another major daily paper.

The movement extended into the construction industry, where immigrant workers — most of them from the African Cape Verde Islands — fought side by side with Portuguese workers in every militant struggle.

On 15 May the workers of various construction companies went on strike and organised flying squads to protect their struggle. On 13 May immigrant workers (400 from Cape Verde) and Portuguese workers (1,200) in the Panassqueire iron mines launched a movement that lasted until 20 May when all their demands were met (guaranteed minimum wage of 6,000 escudos (£100) a month, an extra month's pay every year, free medical assistance, one month vacation). The workers' commission that led the strike was composed of four Portuguese and four Cape Verde workers.

The chemical industry, the automobile and related industries, the food industry, the banks and insurance companies, were all hit by workers' mobilisations.

The demands that were raised in nearly all these mobilisations were: a minimum monthly wage of 6,000 escudos, forty-hour workweek, thirteen and fourteen months' pay a year, one month vacation, guaranteed wages in case of illness or accident. Demands directed against the capitalist organisation of labour were rare, but those concerning security of employment (rehiring of fired workers, no layoffs) became more and more numerous as the mobilisations went on. This is obviously important, for the fight against unemployment may well be one of the main axes of the mobilisations in the autumn.

The process of conscious unification of the movement was very limited, being restricted to the textile industry, where the MES (Movement of the Socialist Left) has an important trade-union influence. On 12 May some 6,000 workers in the wool industry initiated a struggle demanding a 1,000 escudo (£17) increase for all. By 14 May more than 20,000 workers in the textile industry were engaged in struggle.

DEMOCRATIC FORMS

In many factories, democratic forms of organisation of the strikes emerged. Workers' commissions were elected in order to work out a platform of demands and organise the fight. This was the case, for example, in the Lisnave shipyards (where 8,400 workers went on strike on 13 May) and in the Messa metal factory (on strike since 16 May), in which a workers' commission composed of nine members organised the occupation of the factory and the formation of picket squads.

These workers' commissions were somewhere between strike committees and factory committees. They united the workers' vanguard in the leadership of the strike and also organised general assemblies of workers



Mass meeting of postal workers during the strike

to make essential decisions. At Messa and Timex these workers' commissions rejected the intervention of the Union Federation (controlled by the Communist Party), which tried to interfere in the strike to take over its leadership and destroy the democratic forms of organisation that had developed in the struggle.

The wave of mobilisation has receded since 30-31 May. But it would be completely wrong to interpret the decline in struggles either as a defeat or as evidence of the CP's or the Union Federation's ability to control the situation.

As far as wages are concerned, although the CP supported the minimum wage of 3,300 escudos (£55) a month that had been 'granted' by the Provisional Government (before 25 April the CP was demanding 6,000 escudos), the increases won in struggle were generally of the order of 1,000 to 1,500 escudos and the minimum wages most often exceeded by several hundred escudos the national minimum 'offered' by the Provisional Government.

As far as the workweek is concerned, victories were less numerous. But vacations were won. And the decline of the struggles is not so strange considering that in a few days thousands of Portuguese workers will be able to go on paid vacations for the first time. The crucial question remains what kind of reaction the masses will mount to a worsening of the economic situation and to a counter-offensive by the employers.

ADVANCED

Some strikes have arisen whose goals and organisation indicate the deeper process of radicalisation that is affecting advanced sectors of the working class. The strikes at Timex and Messa presage what could develop

more widely during a new rise of struggles.

It must first of all be understood that such strikes immediately confront the whole anti-strike campaign the CP has been waging, a campaign that has been taken up by the junta. The continuation of these strikes therefore involves a process of politicization — breaking with the line of the CP and opposing the manoeuvres of the Union Federation, which is seeking to get a tight grip on these struggles in order to be able to strangle them.

This confrontation and this break with the CP line involves a strengthening both of the forms of self-organisation and of the support campaigns for the struggles. On 27 May, after having waged a strike from 9 May to 15 May and after having put the forty-hour work-week into effect themselves, the Timex workers occupied the factory. The workers' commission that was leading the strike organised strike pickets, gained control over the company's stocks, prevented any watches from being shipped out, and planned on occupying the company offices and on establishing a 'war chest' to make sure that the workers would be paid for the time they were on strike. The struggle at Lip in France had developed an influence that spread as far as Lisbon!

In addition, the working men and women of Timex, like those of Messa, published a newspaper in order to publicise their struggle, a newspaper which more and more consciously expressed their opposition to the strategy of the CP and the Union Federation. Finally, they organised demonstrations in conjunction with the Timex Support Committee, in which the militants of the LCI (Internationalist Communist League, Portuguese sympathising organisa-

tion of the Fourth International) played a decisive role.

The elements at work in these strikes (demands like integration of bonuses into basic wages, the initiatives tending toward workers' control, the democratic organisation of the struggle and the factory occupations, the opposition to the policy of the CP) have allowed revolutionary Marxists to develop agitation and propaganda that is winning a significant hearing among the young workers who, after having successfully led strikes and having fought for democratic management of the struggle, find themselves facing a Communist Party that is actually opposing their struggle.

Even in relation to the most immediate problems it appears that the CP is totally disarming the workers in face of the policy of the employers, who can only be expected to try and maintain the 'wage advantages' they hold over their European competitors in the Common Market and who will try to win back what they have been forced to yield under the 'pressure of events'.

It is not likely — and there are already various indications of this — that the CP will be able to continue this policy and still maintain its present influence over the working masses. The demonstration to support the policy of the Ministry of Labour, at the head of which marched the 'Communist' Pacheco Goncalves, was a failure. On 30 May, the day of the march, no more than 5,000 or 6,000 demonstrators expressed their support of the policy of 'national union' and of the 'anti-strike struggle'. The national anthem was sung in this demonstration, and portraits of Spinoza were carried. The Union of Communist Students swell the ranks of the workers favouring 'social peace'.

Portuguese Fund Appeal

One of the most concrete ways in which militants in Britain can aid their Portuguese comrades is by contributing to our fund in aid of the LCI, Portuguese sympathising section of the Fourth International.

Recent contributors include:
J.U. £9 Harrow IMG £2
Watford IMG £2 J.A. Taylor £6

After a successful public meeting on the situation in Portugal, the Birmingham IMG collected £12, bringing our fund to a current total of:

£83.70

Send your contribution now to:
Red Weekly, (LCI), 97 Caledonian Rd., London, N.1.

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Teachers' Red Weekly Action Committee shows way

UNOFFICIAL STRIKE action by teachers in London has forced the Executive of the National Union of Teachers to call an official strike for Thursday 11 July in opposition to the Pay Board's recommendations for a two-tier London Allowance.

The unofficial strikes, organised by the London Teachers Action Committee, began on 23 May and were followed by extended action at the beginning of June. Striking teachers visited schools warning of the danger of a two-tier proposal and a summer holiday sell-out by the Executive.

So successful were they in alerting teachers to the likely nature of the Pay Board report that a lobby of the NUT Executive on Thursday 4 July was attended by over 300 teachers. The next day 600 striking teachers lobbied the Burnham negotiating committee.

EXECUTIVE

Proof of the correctness of the Action Committee's strategy has come with the Executive's decision to call strike action for the same day that the unofficial strikers had already decided upon. Far from being 'adventurist', as the Workers' Revolutionary Party termed them, or 'pointless', as the Communist Party and NUT Executive member Max Morris said, the strikes have been fully vindicated.

No-one should be disarmed by the sudden about turn of the Executive. They are past masters at the art of selling out. They sold out the London Allowance fight last year and are still trying to discipline three Wandsworth militants who opposed them at that time. The Executive's manoeuvre is simply an attempt to regain control of the situation.

For the moment, however, the boot is on the other foot. The task is to make sure it stays there. The best means of preventing a sell-out and preparing for the autumn is to develop a strategy which can overcome the isolation of London from the rest of the country.

This will involve taking up the national claim and maintaining the Action Committee as a central co-ordinating body. It is the Action Committee which has called and organised the strikes and has succeeded in breaking down the isolation of teachers which had previously demoralised many schools.

The fight for the London Allowance is a fight to improve teachers' low pay. This affects all teachers across the country. Strikers in London recognise this and have demanded the immediate opening of negotiations on the national claim for a £2000 a year starting salary. Teachers in the rest of the country should take up this demand right away.

The 8% pay rise teachers won at the beginning of the year meant a cut in living standards, because the cost of living had already risen by 12.5%. Teachers therefore need to

protect all future gains against further inflation.

Central to a push for the national claim, therefore, is the retention of the threshold agreement. But instead of teachers waiting until there has been a 7% increase in the cost of living before they get any additions, their wages should go up pound for pound with the cost of living.

CUTS

But pay is only one aspect of the crisis in education. Before Christmas 1973 the Tory Government cut £180 million off the education budget. This attack on the education system has been upheld by the Labour Government. London alone has had to hold up plans for 31 new primary schools.

What is needed is a national fight to defend the education system. This fight is as urgent as that to defend the National Health Service, and, like that, needs and deserves the active support of all sections of the working class.

The Labour Government should restore the cuts and immediately endorse the confiscation of land and buildings to replace dilapidated schools, and do away with overcrowded classrooms, bad sanitation and poor facilities.

The education system, like its buildings, is falling apart. Instead of being rebuilt it is simply being patched up.

London teachers have struck the first blow in the vital fight to reverse this trend. Winning the struggle for a London Allowance of £350 for all London teachers would be a major step forward in this fight.

A fighting unity with local government workers and the nurses is an urgent objective. None of these sections in isolation is noted for its industrial muscle, but their united struggles would be an important political example to the rest of the working class on how to deal with the continuing crisis of capitalism.

JIM DONOGHUE

RED TEACHERS' FORUM

'Unofficial action works!'

Bernard Reagan (Action Committee)

Monday 15 July, 7.30 pm, in University of London Union, Malet Street, W.C.1.

Interview with Bernard Reagan, chairman of the Action Committee

What is the London Teachers Action Committee?

It is a body made up of representatives or delegates from schools. The numbers involved have varied from 40 to 60 at any time. During the strikes, meetings have been held of 300-400, even 600 on the Burnham lobby of 5 July. All decisions are taken by an open vote of all representatives and delegates to the committee. The democratic nature of the action committee is one of the cornerstones of its credibility among teachers.

When and how did it come into existence?

At the mass lobby of the union's Action Committee on 23 May. Some schools took strike action that day and that gave people the confidence that we could take action ourselves. About 400 people were on that lobby and were very angry that the executive had not called out some of the 800 schools who had voted for extended strike action. Half term was about to follow and many of us had a picture of an executive sell-out.

I think this sense of urgency made people keen that the militancy should not be wasted. Some people argued against setting up the Action Committee and wanted us to rely on resolution-passing in local Associations and so on. Fortunately they were defeated.

What has the action committee done?

First and most important, it has broken the isolation felt by the militant schools and provided a means of pooling our resources. This meant we were able to have a much bigger impact than each school acting individually.

From the beginning of the year there have been many schools taking militant stands but huge problems existed even naming dates and collecting and distributing information as to who would strike, where, and when. No matter how militant people are, when action is completely uncoordinated and disorganised there is a big danger of demoralisation. The Action Committee played a decisive role in overcoming these problems.

We started with only four schools and began with a call for extended action on 11 June. Of course the forces involved were small and the action only lasted one week, but people saw that we came out together and went back together. They saw that although we were small we meant what we said and we did what we

said. People saw too that we came out of that having learnt a lot of things and that we intended to apply these lessons. Most of all they saw that the action committee was a democratic organisation capable of taking real decisions.

From then on we were able to build up rapidly to mobilise several hundreds. Our call for strike action next Thursday was going to reach the widest layers yet. That is no doubt one of the key reasons why the executive made the call for a half-day official strike on the same day. We count this as a big victory—not many people even in militant unions can have got an unofficial strike made official even before it has taken place. Of course we welcome what the executive has done—they will bring in far wider forces—but we also see the need to go beyond a simple half-day strike. We are calling for further action on Thursday and hope to have the support of up to 60 schools.

What are the lessons?

Basically if you want to win you have to organise yourself. Use the officials, of course, but don't rely on anyone. There is no room for self-appointed leaders in struggle and the decisive people are those who are engaged in the fight. In this respect all of the people who struck from 11-14 June were the leaders because they did what they said they would. They have also started a big ball

rolling.

What's next?

This fight isn't over by a long shot. But two other things are important. First we want the £180 million Tory education cuts restored. Second we want the immediate opening of negotiations on the national claim. Pay is a problem that faces teachers nationally.

I think we need a conference at the beginning of September to thrash out the next steps and to broaden the scope of the Action Committee. The more people who understand why we did what we did, the better our chance of bringing democracy into the NUT.

Finally, on the London claim itself, we have to overcome one real weakness we have had in the past. We haven't built real links with other workers in struggle for an increased London allowance. One of the reasons this hasn't been achieved is because their struggles haven't reached the same level of self-organisation which ours have—but we must attempt to link up with all the other workers, in particular in NALGO, who are involved in the London Allowance fight. We think the experience of the Teachers Action Committee holds lessons which go outside just the NUT, and a joint fight will strengthen everybody.



Six hundred striking teachers lobbied the Burnham meeting on 5 July

London Weighting

WHEN IS A PAY BOARD LIKE AN ELEPHANT?

WHEN IS A PAY BOARD like an elephant? When it comes to giving birth, it would appear.

For almost nine months the Board has been toiling away over its London Weighting Allowance report, yet the end product is a very feeble creature indeed.

The Pay Board had an impossible job: to work out proposals that could stave off the rising tide of discontent among London's public service workers, and alleviate chronic staff shortages, but without offering wage rises that would overturn the applicart by giving a hefty boost to the national wages bill and driving the London boroughs to the wall. The Board argues that it is not setting

out to solve the problems of labour shortage in London, but simply to provide 'cost compensation' to London workers—to make up for the fact that the same wage buys less in London than elsewhere.

As the Board says: '...London Weighting on this basis will help to solve those labour supply problems arising from differences in real earnings...'. In other words, what they are offering is only a fraction of the wage increases that would be needed to really meet London's labour problems.

But should 'cost compensation' be based on how much extra the same standard of living costs in London as compared with elsewhere (the 'cost approach')? Or on how much extra

WHEN IS A PAY BOARD LIKE AN ELEPHANT?

Londoners spend on the various items in their budget compared with workers elsewhere (the 'expenditure approach')?

On most questions (including the key one of housing) the Pay Board concedes the correctness of the former, accepting the argument that: '...people have to cut their coat according to their cloth and their compensation should not be based on such factors as the poorer standard of accommodation enforced by higher prices in London.'

Unfortunately, the Board explains, it is really impossible to measure exactly what 'equivalent' housing is. So London weighting must be based on the 'expenditure approach'!

It may be worthwhile to look at the logic of this approach. Since the London workers under scrutiny are all on 'national pay structures,' they earn, on average, the same as workers elsewhere, with the addition of their meagre current London allowances. The extra they spend (excluding part-time alchemists and forgers) compared with workers elsewhere must be equivalent to their extra income—the present London allowance.

Thus the 'expenditure' approach offers definitive proof that the present allowances are exactly sufficient, and London workers don't need a penny more! Only the prospect of London collapsing under the impact of deserting workers and revolting trade unionists can have prevented the Pay Board following this logic to its conclusion.

continued on page 2

FUND DRIVE

Last month's final total for our Fund Drive of £365.59 was excellent. But it's not enough to raise that amount once. We need to get within striking distance of £400 every month if we're to seriously plan the expansion of our paper to 12 pages in the autumn.

That's why it's so disappointing to record that only £29.90 arrived in this week's post towards our July total. We know it's holiday time; but we also know that

many of our student readers will now be getting jobs, and so can perhaps afford to dig a little deeper in their pockets to help out their paper. Come on now—let's see that money rolling in this week.

Our thanks for contributions this week go to: London IMG—£13.10; K. Dovaston—£5; Reading IMG—£5; J. Taylor—£3; Leeds IMG—£1.30; E. Simpson—£1; W. Petryshn—£1; 'Sympathiser'—50p.

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