

RED WEEKLY

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Picketing — 'another nail in the coffin'



Photo: PETER HARRAP (Report)

Supporters of the campaign against property speculators Prebble's picket the court last Friday. The judge ruled that *all* pickets not directly part of a trade union dispute are *illegal*, no matter how peaceful and orderly they may be. So what will happen on Saturday, when supporters of the campaign intend to mount another picket on Prebble's offices at 108/109 Upper Street, Islington, between 9.30 am and 12.30 pm?

Inside - 4 page special

THE HOUSING GAME

Yet another nail in the coffin of whatever was left of the right to picket — that is how one group of lawyers described a ruling of the High Court last Friday.

The Court had decided that the picketing of the property developers, Prebbles, by the Islington Tenants Crusade was 'unlawful' and a 'criminal conspiracy'.

What this decision means is that *all* pickets not directly part of a trade union dispute, no matter how orderly and peaceful, are *illegal*. The judge bent over backwards to make this clear: 'There is no such thing in law as unfettered freedom of speech...the right to be on the highway is subject to the laws relating to highways', he said.

In other words we have the freedom to speak our minds and protest as long as no one can dig up a law that makes it illegal. And the ruling class have been digging up those laws with great enthusiasm over the past few months.

First, the Shrewsbury workers and the trade union movement got kneed in the groin with the 1875 Conspiracy Act and the conspiracy laws. Now working people who try to protest about the rotten conditions or political problems they face outside the workplace have been kicked in the teeth with another string of laws and precedents.

In case anyone had doubts about the political meaning of this ruling the judge hammered home the point: 'Just because action may not have been taken against some of these demonstrators, perhaps, for instance, because the occupants of 10 Downing Street or the Soviet Embassy feel it politically inexpedient to do so, it is quite wrong to argue that such conduct becomes clothed with a legality...'

So watch your step next time you plan a demo outside Downing Street or some other building — you'll be acting 'unlawfully' and be part of a 'criminal conspiracy', just like the Shrewsbury workers.

And what has the Labour Government done about this? Nothing at all. It continues to defend every dot and comma of the capitalists' laws, even when they are being used to deprive the working class of their most hard-won rights.

One Labour MP — Arthur Latham — has taken up this case, and is calling for the repeal of the 1875 Conspiracy Act and other anti-picket laws. This demand must be taken up by the entire labour movement and must be wedded to the demand for the immediate release of the jailed Shrewsbury pickets.

Only a massive campaign of action by the labour movement, including all-out strike action, can *force* Labour to act against these threats, and safeguard the right to picket for *all* working people.

'£30 IS NOT ENOUGH!'

— say hospital workers

ANCILLARY WORKERS in the Portsmouth and district group of hospitals have rejected the claim being made by the joint union negotiating body for a £30 minimum wage.

Instead they have called for £40 for 35 hours, together with a nil norm threshold in the form of a guaranteed 60p increase for every one per cent rise in the cost of living.

Ron Pearson, NUPE spokesperson for the branch, explained: 'I suggested £35 for a 35-hour week. But the members threw this out and unanimously voted for the £40 claim.'

called for a delegate conference to discuss the pay claim in mid-November.

Intent on not letting discussions on the claim simply become a matter between the union leaders and the hospital management, Portsmouth NUPE have demanded that all branches be informed of the answer to their claim *immediately*. This will allow it to be fully discussed and permit the membership to mandate delegates attending the conference to discuss acceptance or otherwise of the offer.

The claim and the resolution will now be taken to the unofficial regional joint shop stewards' committee which meets on 13 November. The stewards are seeking a regional mandate for their resolution, and want to thrash out a



Hospital ancillary workers demonstrate outside the Department of Health in London

The ancillary workers have also called for immediate equal pay, and free 24-hour nursery facilities at all places of work. Where such facilities are not provided then they insist a payment must be made by the hospital management equal to the charges made by child minders. They recognise that without such provisions the ability of the women to achieve even a modicum of equality at work is virtually nil.

The workers also want shift allowances to be based on a percentage of the basic rate and the abolition of the present grading structure. They have

plan of action to fight for the claim and the other demands.

NUPE members in the Brook Hospital, London, have also rejected the official £30 claim. They have decided to push for £35 for 35 hours.

The shop stewards say that this will now be taken to the NUPE divisional council which meets on 12 November.

The actions of the Portsmouth and Brook workers set the way forward for ancillary workers nationally. The next step is to ensure that the rank and file coordinate their action at both local and national level.

New mass protests - North of Ireland

The report we print below from our Irish comrades of the Revolutionary Marxist Group describes the second series of mass actions by the anti-Unionist forces during the course of the past three weeks.

These actions have brought a hysterical response from the British army. The level of repression of the Catholic ghettos is unprecedented as the British army hits out like a wounded beast.

This reaction by the British army has the same aim as the wave of sectarian killings unleashed against the Catholics over the past weeks: to soften up the anti-Unionists in time for the Constitutional Convention due to be called in the spring.

The only relief to the beleaguered minority will be the complete removal of the British troops. Only with the complete discrediting of any idea that the road of imperialist salvation lies through handing over to the Loyalists will the barbaric concentration camp system be terminated.

The mounting opposition inside the workers movement has to be organised and given a focus. The projected 'Troops Out' demo scheduled to commemorate Bloody Sunday on 26 January has to be made a priority. The crisis of imperialist perspectives is now so grave that we can now have a real impact on events.

Following the killing of Hugh Coney, a Republican prisoner, on Wednesday, 6 November, and the wounding of many others at Long Kesh concentration camp in Northern Ireland, protests have taken place all over the North.

The shooting came during an attempted mass break-out from Long Kesh. A tunnel 195 feet long had been dug from one of the camp compounds to the perimeter fence, through which about 30 prisoners escaped. Hugh Coney was shot in the chest from an observation post by troops guarding the area as he ran from the camp; by the next morning the remaining escapers had been rounded up.

In the 24 hours following the shooting, the IRA retaliated by shooting dead two British soldiers and blowing up two more with a booby-trap bomb.

In Coney's home town of Coalisland all factories, pubs and shops closed for the day on Wednesday, and thousands took part in a silent protest march. In Belfast, 3,000 marched through the Falls in a torchlit procession. All over the North, cars, lorries and buses were hijacked and set on fire, and roads blocked by trucks containing bombs.

The Belfast United Workers Group called a one-day protest strike for Friday 8 November, and Belfast University students were stoned by Loyalists as they marched to City Hall.

After the attempted break-out, helicopters with searchlights, troops,

and tracker dogs were thrown into the hunt for the escapers. As the troops moved into the camp, they attacked the prisoners with CS gas, batons and rubber bullets. A priest called in to give the last rites saw 15 men spreadeagled against barbed wire being beaten by soldiers.

The dead man, 24-year-old Hugh Coney, was typical of many of the detainees in Long Kesh. Arrested on suspicion of planting a car bomb, he was held on remand for 11 months. Although acquitted at a jury trial in Belfast, he was rearrested, tortured, interrogated and detained; since then he had been held without trial for 18 months.

The Troops Out Movement National Co-ordinating Committee met last weekend in Birmingham and adopted a vigorous action programme for the next period.

The main project over the next period will be the building of a labour movement conference on the role of the Labour Government in Ireland, and what the British labour movement needs to do in the developing situation in the Six Counties. This conference would be called as a propaganda counterblast to the projected Constitutional Convention.

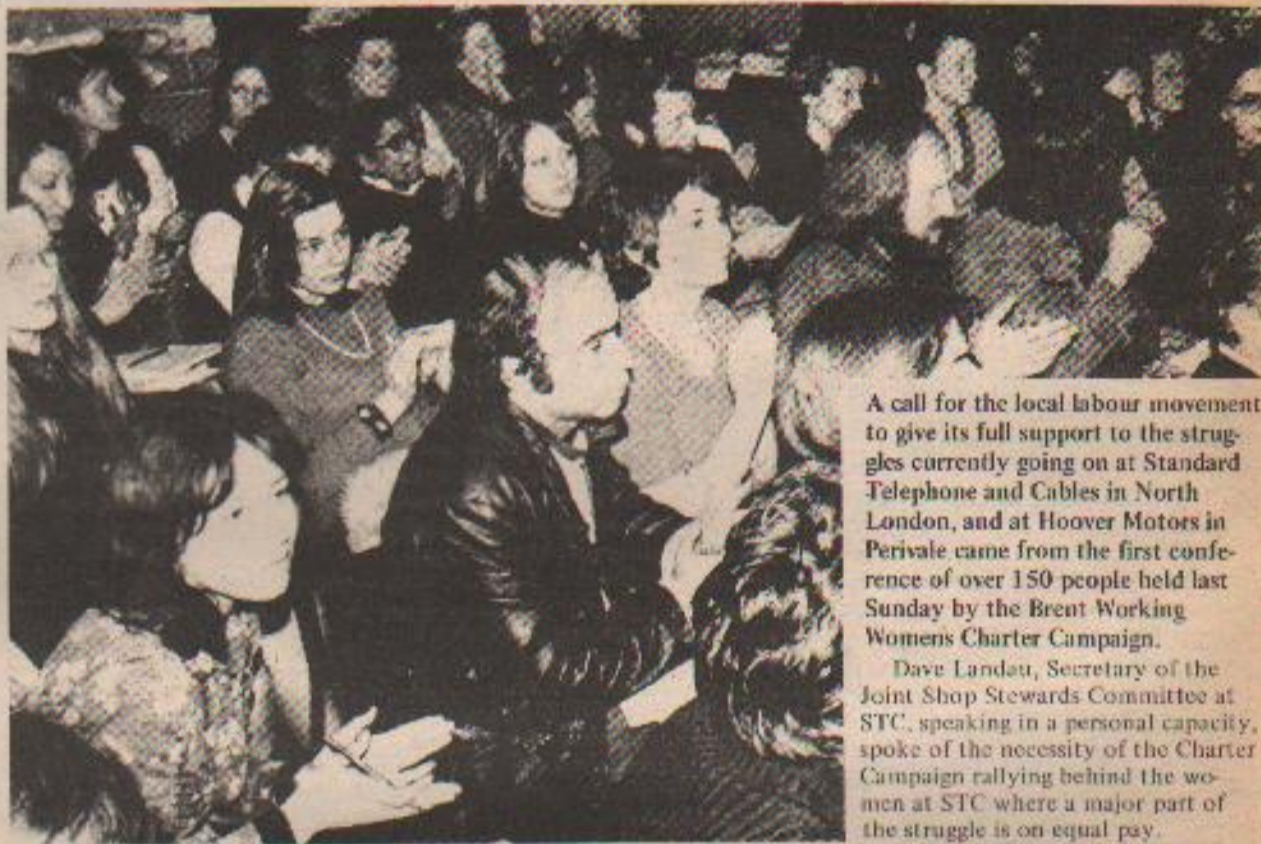
Leading up to this there will be a whole series of local conferences based on the labour movement. Already, it was reported, conferences are projected in Glasgow, Birmingham, and West London.

In the meantime there will be demos called on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday in January. These will be built through ad hoc mobilising committees on the same broad-based basis as the 27 October demo.

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER



150 plan Women's Charter campaign in Brent



Part of the audience at last Sunday's Women's Charter conference in Brent

A call for the local labour movement to give its full support to the struggles currently going on at Standard Telephone and Cables in North London, and at Hoover Motors in Perivale came from the first conference of over 150 people held last Sunday by the Brent Working Women's Charter Campaign.

Dave Landau, Secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee at STC, speaking in a personal capacity, spoke of the necessity of the Charter Campaign rallying behind the women at STC where a major part of the struggle is on equal pay.

Margaret Thompson, G&MWU shop steward asked the Conference and the Charter Campaign to solidarise in an active way with the Hoover workers, 2,500 of whom have been laid off, according to the management, because of 180 men in the toolroom coming out on a pay dispute. Many of the Hoover workers feel that the toolroom dispute is being made an excuse for mass lay-offs some of which may turn out to be permanent.

CALL

The Conference added its voice to the call, which has already been made from the all-London Charter Conference, for a National Charter Conference, and stressed the need for the Brent Campaign to make links with other groups in London working around the demands of the Charter.

At a local level plans have been made to organise a trade union recruitment drive amongst women in the area, this to be coupled with an Equal Pay Campaign. A speaker from Brent Trades Council pointed out that male trade unionists had failed over the years to adequately take up women's struggles, and stressed that the trades council would be asking all trade unions affiliated to it to set up meetings on the Charter with a speaker from the Brent Charter Campaign.

Irene Bannan from the Federation of Tenants Associations spoke of the pressing need for more, better and free nursery facilities both on housing estates and at places of work. Creches at factories however had to be controlled by the women using them to prevent employers treating nurseries in a similar way to the tied cottage, as an excuse to give low pay.

This was echoed by the sister from Hoover Motors, who pointed out that the nurseries must have extended hours to suit working mothers if they were to be of real use to factory workers.

A support sub-committee of the Brent Charter Campaign is to be set up to co-ordinate women's struggles. This will hopefully include wide representation of the local labour movement.

All interested in participating should attend the next meeting of the Charter Campaign Committee next Tuesday, 19 November, at 138 Minet Avenue, London, NW10. Ingrid Falconer

TASS 'token support' for women members?

Over 100 women attended a school—twice as many as last year—organised by AUEW (TASS). In the workshop discussions many of the women felt that although TASS has done more than other unions in taking up some of the issues affecting women, we are still a long way from the situation where women members are able to play an equal part in the activities of the union.

Although TASS is keen to recruit women, it often ignores them or makes no provision for their special problems in getting to meetings or for child care during meetings. Ironically there were no creche facilities provided for women attending the school.

One major question which the school tackled was, given the inadequacy of the Equal Pay Act, how do we get real equal pay? It was clear from experiences quoted that the usefulness of job evaluation is far greater to employers seeking to avoid equal pay, than to women fighting for it. A rule of thumb for assessment was suggested: 'What would a man be paid for this job?', which, it was agreed, is no real answer in jobs mainly occupied by women, as a man's wage would simply be pulled down. General rules of thumb, it was argued, can leave as many loopholes as the Act itself, and the only people who can decide what is equal pay in a given situation are the women involved. It is therefore behind their decisions that a union must put its weight.

The need to link equal pay with the characteristic low pay of women was stressed, which means a fight for a substantial minimum wage for all workers, with an automatic sliding scale of increases to defend real wages against inflation. One sister objected that this interfered with the principle of

free collective bargaining. But what can be more of a principle for the working class than saying: 'So long as we do not rule society, we will not pay for the economic crisis of those who do; and so long as some sections of the labour movement are stronger than others, we want their victories to be applied to the whole of the class.'

If the school had limited itself to the traditional trade union province of wages and conditions, it would not have been particularly useful. What it was able to do instead was to begin to look at women's position in the home and family, which largely determines their position in the rest of society.

TOKENISM

But to what extent is TASS support for the struggles of women mere tokenism? All-out support for the AUEW women who struck for equal pay at Salford Electrical Instruments would have done more good than ten National Schools. The union bureaucracy did not even ask its members if they were prepared to contribute to a financial levy, or engage in blacking and other solidarity activities.

This is not an isolated incident which the union 'overlooked'. Why is it that TASS has made no moves to make that support meaningful by backing the Charter Campaign? The importance of the campaign is that it goes beyond the narrow official channels of trade union activity, yet TASS and other unions try to place it squarely back within that framework, thus blowing up the bridge between the women's liberation movement and militants in all unions whose combined strength is the key to a real fight against the oppression of women.

Fiona Fredenburgh



All over the North vehicles were hijacked and set on fire in protest at Coney's death

SHREWSBURY PICKETS

WHY THEY ARE STILL IN JAIL

AND HOW TO GET THEM OUT

IN THE MINERS' STRIKE OF 1972, FLYING PICKETS WERE USED ON an unprecedented scale. The power stations were choked off, and victory for the strike was assured. The Tory Government's wage policy collapsed like a pack of cards.

Later that year the hated Industrial Relations Act was ground into the dust as thousands of workers rallied to free the *Pentonville Five*. Factories, docks, and building sites ground to a halt. The capitalist law was shrugged aside by a mighty heave from the workers' movement — the imprisoned dockers were released.

After these struggles, the trade union leaders desperately hoped for a return to 'normal'. The employers were more realistic. They knew that a return to 'normal' meant breaking the power of the working class and smashing the mass pickets. If the *IR Act* would not serve that purpose then some law had to be found that would.

by
Bob Pennington

In early 1973, 24 Shrewsbury building workers were charged under the 1875 Conspiracy Act with alleged offences arising out of the building workers' strike which had taken place in the summer of 1972. The ruling class intended to strengthen the power of their courts to deal with striking workers. They also hoped to use the sentences meted out to these workers as a means of intimidating and demoralising other workers faced with having to challenge the law.

The arrests should have aroused a mighty response from the trade union movement. *Pentonville* had shown how to deal with such attacks. No such response was forthcoming.

The leaders of UCATT and the TGWU wanted the men to plead guilty to the 'lesser charges' assault, obstruction, etc. hoping that the prosecution might drop the conspiracy charges. The entire emphasis was on a legal defence and the union leaders stubbornly resisted an open direct challenge to the law.

HESITANT

The Communist Party, a number of whose members were being charged, at first appeared to be strangely hesitant about launching a campaign.

Over the *Pentonville Five*, there was widespread opposition to the *IR Act*. As soon as the dockers were arrested this opposition swelled over into a mass movement pulling in its

chose the latter course.

It was therefore the small forces of the revolutionary left, independent militants and groups of the CP rank and file who had to take up the Shrewsbury case. It was they who organised most of the speaking tours for the Shrewsbury Defence Committee. It was they who organised local



Liverpool building workers on the march during their unofficial strike against the jailing of the Shrewsbury lads. The Communist Party refused to make their action the focus of a national campaign, and instead clung onto the coat-tails of the trade union bureaucrats.

wake whole sections of the trade union bureaucracy. Even the TUC had to announce it was calling a one-day general strike.

The Communist Party could quickly place itself at the head of the rank-and-file movement because even the trade union bureaucracy dare not oppose that struggle.

'NORMAL' LAW

The Shrewsbury arrests were different. It was not the hated *IR Act* under which the workers had been charged, instead it was the 'normal' bourgeois law. The mass of the working class were confused on the issue, which meant that no mass spontaneous opposition to the 1875 Act sprung up.

There was no movement which the CP could ride. It either had to come out in opposition to the trade union bureaucracy and begin the independent organisation of Shrewsbury Defence Committees, or rely on putting pressure on the trade union leaders.

Because the CP sees the building of an alliance between itself and the trade union and Labour Left as its way to power in Britain it naturally

meetings, leafleted factories, put up the posters on the building sites and set up the local Shrewsbury Defence Committees. It was mainly because of the revolutionary left and the Defence Committees that pickets and demonstrations were held outside the courts.

The CP anxious not to cut itself adrift from the union bureaucrats, refused to use its forces and its influence in the building trade to organise all-out strike action on the sites. No one would claim that a ready-made movement existed as it did over the *Pentonville 5*. But the CP refused to fight for the building workers, most of whom were educated over Shrewsbury, as a spearhead for a rolling strike movement when the first of the Shrewsbury lads were imprisoned. In fact they sabotaged the decision of the Birmingham UCATT shop stewards committee to do just that.

BIG INTERVENTION

The CP had only started to make a big intervention in the Shrewsbury Campaign when it began to fear that lack of involvement might mean the loss of influence to the revolutionary left. But its intervention was made

IN FOCUS

ANOTHER BOSSES' BUDGET

Ever since Labour first took office in 1924 the budget of its respective Chancellors of the Exchequer have not held any surprises for the working class—except nasty ones.

Snowden, Cripps, Dalton, Callaghan, etc. have all produced budgets which have had as their aim the shoring up of the capitalist system. Healey's budget is not yet in as we go to press, but it will not be any different. Interestingly enough all the hysteria and innuendo about 'Marxist influence in the Labour Party' which was such a feature of the press reporting during the election campaign has now virtually stopped as the same press awaits Healey's budget.

Given the role of British social-democracy as an important prop of the capitalist system in this country, we can be sure that Healey will offer a number of incentives to the City. Price controls will be relaxed. Money will be doled out for industries tottering on the verge of bankruptcy.

Whether Healey uses the skeleton of a National Enterprise Board (which might soothe the 'left' Tribunitians) or Harold Lever's Bank scheme makes little difference. Some of the more sophisticated industrialists—like the bosses of ICI and British Leyland—don't mind under what flag industry is boosted, provided that the problems of 'cash-flow' are resolved. No matter how Healey tries to cover it up, this is going to be a *bosses' budget*. Tens of thousands of workers who canvassed and worked for the Labour Party in the last elections, and the people they convinced, will react indignantly. The 'social contract' could well be the first casualty.

After all, British capitalism is not going through just any old crisis. It is the most serious in its entire history, and Labour politicians who seek solutions to it at the expense of the working class will not be easily forgotten. The massive cuts in social expenditure (housing, health, education) are being made precisely in order to make resources available for industry.

Nationalisation of the leading industrial monopolies, starting with those that try to throw workers out of jobs, would be a first step towards dealing with the crisis in the interests of the working class—but there won't even be a whisper of that in Healey's budget.

Those who will cringe with pain will not be the capitalists, but the millions of workers already waging an uphill struggle to maintain their living standards. It is they who must start to work out plans for solving the crisis—for Labour's plans are not for them.

for one purpose: to stop any independent action, and to make sure the Shrewsbury Campaign did not come into open conflict with the bureaucrats.

LOST

The end product of this policy is only too easy to see. Warren and Tomlinson went to jail. They lost their appeals and have now gone back to finish their sentences.

The failure of the CP to mount a really systematic campaign of strike action has helped the state to blunt the right of the workers to organise mass pickets. Furthermore it has meant that a real opportunity to educate the working class on the need to oppose all capitalist laws has been by-passed.

At last week's rally George Smith, general secretary of UCATT, made it clear that he and his right-wing executive have no intention of organising any mass movement to force

the Labour Government to free the Shrewsbury 2. Again the CP have restricted the actions to token strikes, as they hang on to the coat tails of the bureaucrats.

And again, the CP isolated a group of workers who did take all-out unofficial strike action—building workers in Liverpool, whose decision was ignored by the *Morning Star* and not made the focus of a national campaign. Their return to work for lack of support outside Liverpool was of course fully reported in the *Star*.

Once again, the initiative falls to those who are prepared to push the struggle forward, no matter what the bureaucrats do. In every possible area committees must be set up to fight for and organise indefinite strike action to free Warren and Tomlinson. It is a hard task, it will involve a hard and difficult slog, but it is necessary if the interests of the working class are to be defended.

STC WORKERS FACE LONG, HARD STRUGGLE?

On Friday, 8 November at Standard Telephone & Cables Ltd, New Southgate, London, the workers came out on strike for a substantial claim, which includes the extension of thresholds, the abolition of special women's grades and total equal pay for women.

When the joint shop stewards committee originally submitted the claim, the management offered £3! In response to this, the unions threatened a sit down until a new offer was made. Before the sit-down was due to begin, the management rapidly came up with a new offer.

This new offer was dressed up to look good. £6.50 for semi-skilled and £5.50 for skilled. However, of course, the management had done nothing on the pay and grading of the women, they had refused to continue thresholds, and provocatively, reneged on a previous agreement, to pay thresholds throughout

At a mass meeting, this offer was unanimously rejected, and the negotiating committee was mandated to ask the management for a better offer by the next morning. The management refused to budge, so the scene for the strike was set. The management had until Tuesday to come up with something better. If they didn't, or if they came up with something which was still inadequate, the workers at STC were to meet again to decide what to do next.

It might seem a foregone conclusion that having struck over the original offer, there would be further action if the management failed to meet the demands of the workers. However, at every stage, the majority of shop stewards have been reluctant to take any action whatsoever. They have only done so because to have done anything else would have discredited them in the eyes of the mass of

stewards are waiting for a few more crumbs from the management in the hope that they can get away with selling out.

Historically, there has been something very rotten in the unions at STC. There has been a long tradition of racism at the factory, and the ETU has consciously been the organising focus for this racism. Little wonder that the same shop stewards who a year ago tried to oppose the upgrading of black workers, are today reluctant to fight against the oppression of women!

In spite of this right wing domination on the shop stewards committee militants have mapped out a course of action to initiate the claim and to take the steps already described.

It is vitally important that this struggle is supported throughout the labour movement.

All messages of support to Dave Landau, Secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) at



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

FRENCH WORKERS GO INTO 'THIRD ROUND'

One of the speakers at the Red Weekly Rally last Friday was ALAIN KRIVINE, who stood as the Trotskyist presidential candidate in the French elections earlier this year. Martin Meteyard interviewed him afterwards about the present situation in France.

After Giscard d'Estaing's victory in the second round of the presidential elections in May, you forecast a 'third round' in which the mass of workers would move into struggle to achieve their demands. It now seems to have begun.

Yes, and there are basically three reasons for it.

First of all, there is the question of price increases. Inflation is now running at a level of 15-20 per cent, one of the highest rates in Europe.

Secondly, there is the question of unemployment. Hundreds of small and medium-sized firms are now closing, partly as a result of credit restrictions imposed by the Government. And in the big firms, more and more workers are now being put on short time. A majority of workers now understand that their jobs are at risk.

Thirdly, the majority of workers now believe that there is a political solution to the present crisis through the coalition between the Communist and Socialist parties. Although this is purely an electoral project, in the consciousness of the workers at the present stage it plays a certain role in pushing forward and raising the level of those mass struggles.

How have the Communist Party and the trade union federation it dominates, the CGT, reacted to these developments?

It is important to recognise that the CP and the CGT have changed their tactics of struggle in recent months. For example, in the present strike of 300,000 postal workers there are three demands, all of which are completely unacceptable to the capitalists.

The postal workers are demanding an across-the-board monthly increase of 200 francs (about £4 a week); a minimum monthly wage of 1700 francs (£35 per week), which is totally impossible for the Government; and the incorporation of 100,000 auxiliary workers into the regular workforce - which the Government can't agree to without being forced to do the same for the teachers and all the other groups in the public sector where this system operates.

The CGT and the CP continue to support these demands and play a leading part in this strike. Only later will they say to the workers: 'You have seen with your own eyes that we have fought as hard as possible, but as you can see the Government won't agree to our demands. However, it is the Government - so we will have to negotiate again with it.' And then they will lower the demands.

But at the same time they will explain that the only solution now is political - that the workers have to defeat this Government, and then prepare for elections. And it is clear that though there will be some discontented elements, the CP won't appear to the masses as having sold-out - because they are able to put forward this political solution at the same time as they betray the economic struggle.

It's likely now that they will put forward the idea of a one-day general strike in France, as a way of showing that they are ready to fight. But when it's only one day, then when the day is over that's that. So if there is a one-day general strike - probably at the end of November - we will fight for its continuation.

There seems to have been increasing tension between the two major parties in the Union of the Left - the Communist Party and the Socialist Party - in recent months. What lies behind this?

The project of the Union of the Left remains the same, but these tensions reflect the different nature of these two parties. Their links with the working class are of a different nature.

The Communist Party is recognised by the working class as a workers' party; it now has to explain to the bourgeoisie that it is not about to make the revolution, that there is no reason to be afraid of letting them into the Government, and so on. That is why they are now making a right turn (if that's possible), trying to link up with the Gaullists with the call for a kind of national union.

For the Socialist Party, however, the problem is the opposite. Their general reliability has long been accepted by the bourgeoisie, but since the war they have never had any real implantation in the working class.

So they've now adopted a 'left' language and programme which serves one immediate aim: to build the party in the working class. Then they will be able to say to the bourgeoisie: 'now we are useful to you as well as reliable, because we have influence in the working class'.

The current dispute between the CP and the SP is really a false one. Since they adhere to the same programme, the CP has to find some other way of taking its distance. But what's very funny is that when the CP talks about the SP possibly betraying the common programme, it's the left and not the right of the SP that they attack. They say: 'Some people in the SP are talking about socialism and so on. We don't agree with this. All that's necessary is to apply the common programme - and no more'.



We've talked quite a bit about the growing strike wave, but we haven't so far mentioned another important development in the class struggle in France - the emergence of a movement in the army.

Of course it's normal for revolutionaries to intervene in the army, especially when it's a conscript army. It's also linked to the present political situation - the experience of Chile shows once again that you have to start work in the army before there is a revolutionary situation or a big upsurge of the masses.

So we launched this petition - which was just about elementary democratic rights, but because even so it was still illegal it had a fantastic subversive impact. This petition has now been signed by 4,000 conscripts and some NCOs, and also some career soldiers.

We also called on the soldiers to organise themselves in underground committees on the basis of this platform. These committees now exist in many barracks. Of course they don't involve

many soldiers because it's very dangerous. But as the demands of these committees are democratic demands, they are able to have a mass influence whenever they organise actions.

That explains what happened in Draguignan, when as a result of the activity of such a committee you had a demonstration of 300 soldiers in the streets.

As for the CP, they have now been forced to launch their own petition in the army, which is for the democratisation of the army, in support of the Union of the Left, and so on.

But they have now been outflanked a bit, because the question that is now raised is the self-organisation of the soldiers in the barracks. This isn't at all acceptable to the CP, which says that all the officers must be persuaded to join the Union of the Left, and accept the common programme, and that we must avoid any divisions between the conscript soldiers and the officers.

But of course there are many young CP members who signed the original petition and are now ready to build underground committees and things like that.

Next month sees the founding congress of a new organisation of the Fourth International in France, the Front Communiste Revolutionnaire (FCR - Revolutionary Communist Front). Could you say why this is so important?

Yes, we have now reached a new stage in building the party. We're no longer a group of students and high schoolers. We are now beginning to get a real implantation in the working class. That's our main aim. So now we have to change our whole method of working to take account of this and transform the organisation into a real workers' organisation.

Secondly, this means we cannot be satisfied with the general political answer

we gave in the past. Now we are forced to give concrete proposals for the struggle in the form of demands, forms of organisation of the struggle etc.

So the discussion we are having turns around two main questions: analysis of the present political situation; and a debate on what kind of organisation we are attempting to build, and the kinds of mass campaigns we should project.

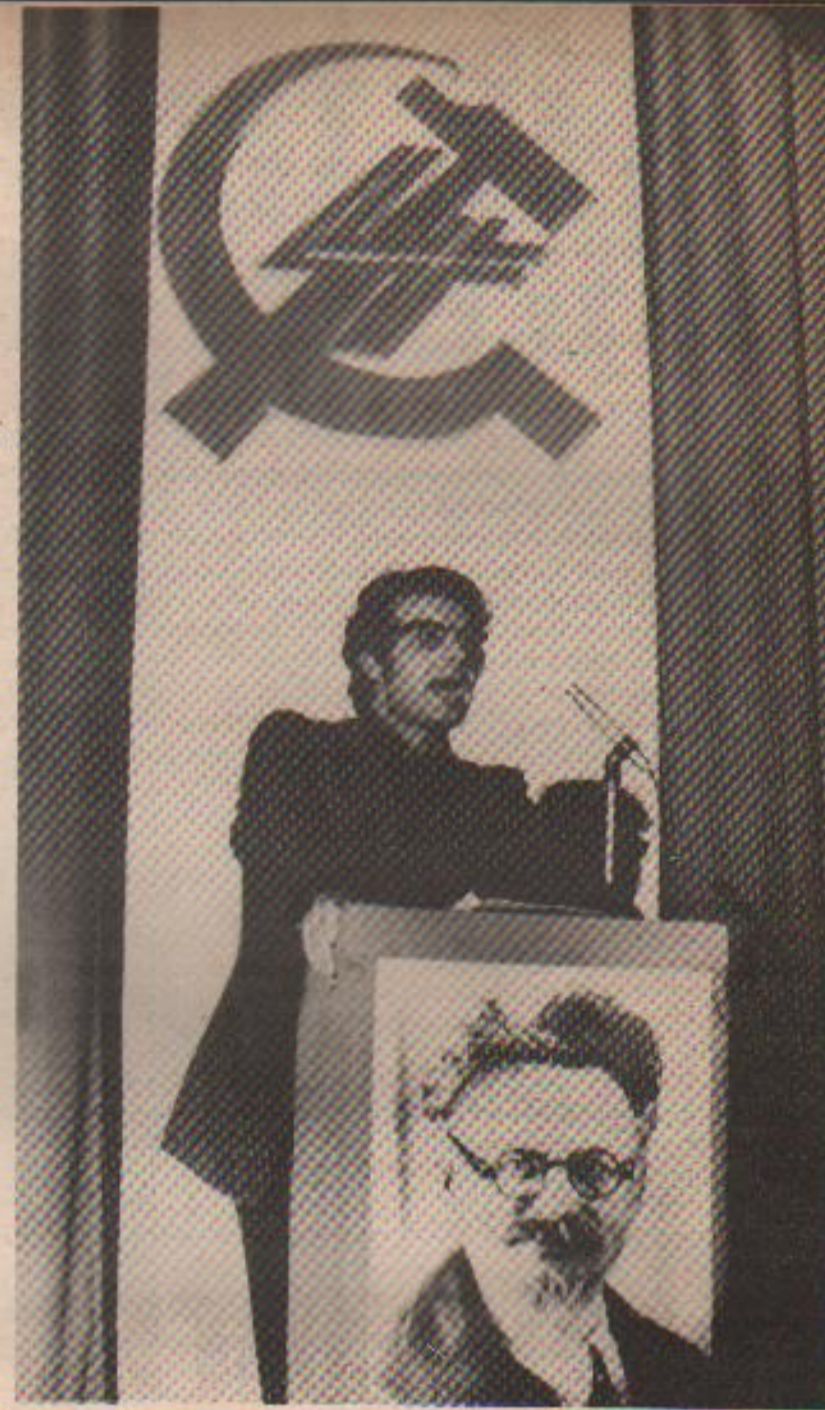
Because the debate is interesting and there is no danger of a split, we have decided for the first time to make it public. Each week in our paper *Range* there are two pages set aside for the tendencies in this discussion where they can explain their positions to the vanguard.

The impact of this has been very good, and the Stalinists are even a little afraid of the consequences. 'You must have a split', they say, 'otherwise you couldn't possibly have such a debate'. So in this way we are giving a real example of how democratic centralism can operate in an organisation, and we think this is very important in educating the working class about the value of workers' democracy.

CFMAG on 2 November, attended by local groups from Keele, Manchester, Oxford, Birmingham and London.

The workshop also discussed the need for continuing medical aid to the former Portuguese territories, and the possibility of holding a lobby of this month's Labour Party Conference to take up Labour's policy towards Southern Africa.

Further details of the conference and applications for delegate credentials can be obtained from: CFMAG, 12, Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ (tel: 01-734-9541).



FASCISTS MURDER ARGENTINIAN MILITANTS

Three members of the Argentinian PST (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) were shot dead by armed fascist gangsters in Buenos Aires last week.

Juan Carlos Nieves, 23, was a rank and file trade union delegate (equivalent of a shop steward) of the Nestle factory, while Ruben Dario Bossas, 20, was a member of the PST youth organisation. The third victim, Cesar Robles Urquiza, was one of the PST's delegates to the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International in February.

The attacks were carried out by the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA), a fascist group with police links who have been operating with impunity for the last year throughout the country. Only recently they killed a well-known left-wing leader, Silvio Frondizi.

Up till now not a single fascist thug has been arrested. On the contrary, the police have been co-ordinating actions designed to create a witchhunt atmosphere in the main industrial centres of the country.

Franco lashes out: Solidarity committee set up

ALL ACROSS SPAIN the bosses have been launching attacks on militant groups of workers, designed to break their new spirit of struggle.

In Barcelona, 18,000 workers in the Seat car factory, and 2000 workers from five textile and machine-tool factories have been locked-out for staging partial strikes.

*In Madrid, 3000 workers who had occupied two airplane factories have been forcibly evicted by armed police.

*Workers from the Fasa-Renault factory in Valladolid, have been fired for launching a one-day strike, as have workers from a machine-tool factory in Biscaia.

*This new offensive by the bosses comes in the wake of the strengthening

of the right-wing in the Government, and makes clear the determination of the Spanish ruling class to ruthlessly repress all workers' struggles.

A Committee of Solidarity with the struggles of the Spanish working class against the repressive Franco regime has been set up in London in response to a call from Spanish militants in Britain. The founding meeting of the Committee was attended by representatives from the International Socialists, International Marxist Group, Solidarity, Association of Communist Workers and the Labour Party Young Socialists.

At the meeting the Spanish militants expressed their concern about the increasing repression in Spain, especially the savage treatment of political prisoners. The Committee discussed the need to build a campaign of solidarity amongst British workers to support and assist the struggles in Spain as they develop, and agreed to produce an information bulletin publicising the latest developments.

The Committee now plans to hold weekly meetings. A permanent venue has not yet been fixed, but anyone wanting details of meetings or further information should contact Sue Fox, (Secretary of the Spanish Solidarity Committee) at 011-749-1408.

CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN LIBERATION

THE Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guine (CFMAG) is organising a national delegate conference in London on 7 December under the title 'Portuguese Africa: Liberation and After'.

The organisers say: 'The conference will be looking at the process of decolonisation and the current situation throughout Southern Africa. There is also a session specifically dealing with the role and strategy of multi-national corporations and British Imperialism... we

hope that delegates from all sections of the labour movement and from all other organisations who have supported the campaign against Portuguese colonialism and the collaborationist

CHRIS BALFOUR

role played by Britain will be present at the conference so as to lead these discussions to a concrete and realistic basis for action.

Plans for building the conference were discussed at a National Workshop of the

THE HOUSING GAME

In 1971 3.1 million or 18.2 per cent of the dwellings in England and Wales were declared sub-standard—a polite euphemism for slums. Over one million families live in dwellings 'unfit for human habitation'.

Each year more houses fall into decay and begin to crumble apart. In 1966 199,787 houses were built in the public sector and 226,068 were built by private builders. By 1973 only 113,547 public sector houses had been built and the private builders only constructed 190,571.

As local authorities have to fork out nearly one-third of their revenue in interest rates more cuts are inevitable in the public sector.

Home ownership is becoming impossible for most working class people and for large sections of the middle class. The average price for a new house has gone up from £5,051 in 1970 to £9,683 in 1973. The price of old houses went up even faster from £4,946 to £10,043.

The astronomical rise in interest rates—they shot up from 8 per cent to 11 per cent between 1971 and 1973—has placed home ownership beyond the means of most workers and large sections of the middle class. At 11 per cent interest, the monthly re-payments on a £10,000 house over a period of 25 years total £99 a month.

In October this year 50,000 houses built for private sale stood empty. They were stuck on the market because people could not afford to buy them. The building firms have enough bricks stockpiled to build another 55,000 homes. Yet people remain homeless and building workers are unemployed because private enterprise cannot make enough profit by building homes.

In London the housing situation is horrifying. The 1971 census shows that five per cent of London's population are living more than 1½ persons to a room—an increase of one per cent since 1966. Over 550,000 Londoners have no fixed bath, 440,061 have no hot water supply and 529,070 have an outside WC.

In Greater London alone the number of empty houses stood at 99,730, mainly dwellings for sale on the market. At the same time that house building is declining, interest rates rocket and the price of land zooms sky high. The median price per acre of land in Inner London went up by 74 per cent between 1971 and 1972.

For millions of people the housing crisis has meant misery, ill health, discomfort and penury. Unless the working class fights for its own solution to the housing crisis the situation will get worse.

The aim of this *Red Weekly* 'Special' is to discuss what steps the working class movement can take now to impose its own solution to the crisis in housing.

'It's like a giant chess game, but none of the pieces ever go off the board — they just get moved around.'

— Housing Action Committee member on the Salford housing policy.



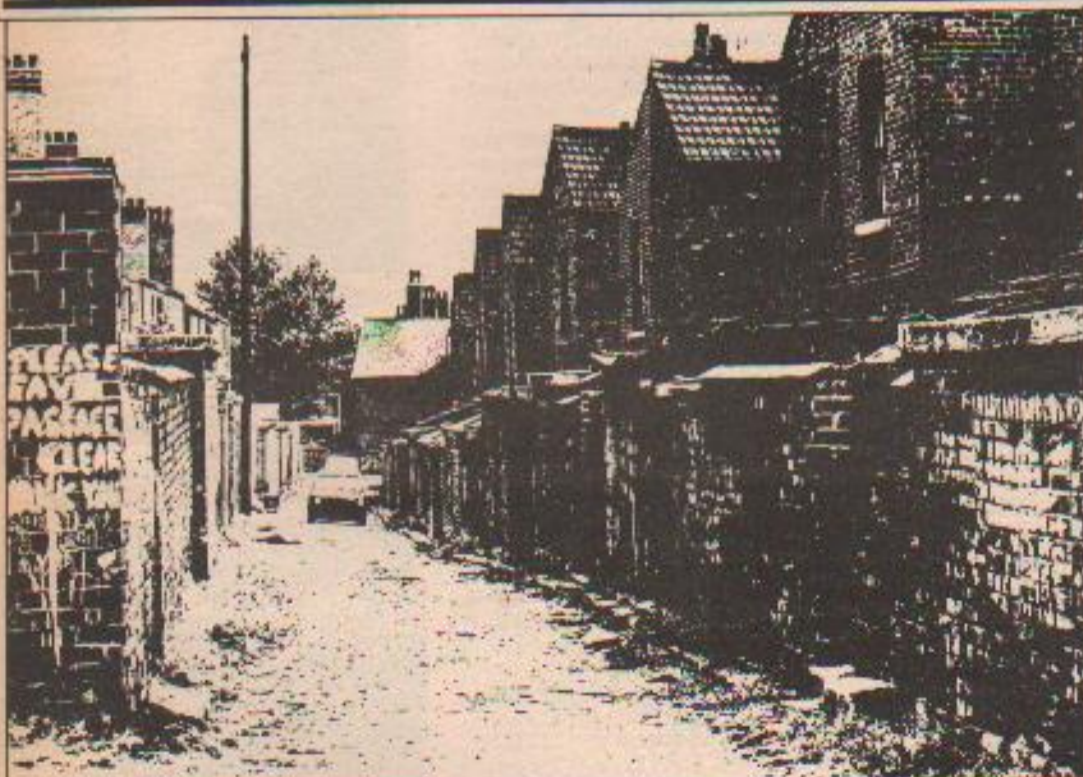
Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

The worst slums in Europe

That's how areas like Salford's Lower Broughton have been described. One third of Salford's housing has been officially condemned as 'unfit for human habitation', as was Lower Broughton almost 10 years ago. Yet 800 families still have to live there!

Last week BBC TV's 'Man Alive' programme gave the Lower Broughton residents a chance to speak out. This is what some of them had to say:

'My sons have to sleep with me: two at the bottom and one at the top with me. They sleep there to keep warm at night time. I can't leave them upstairs in the cold. One is 14, one 12 and one 9. It's not right but it has to be. The Corporation don't have to lie in the bed and worry that my children might be eaten alive by rats.'



'For the last twelve months, every night from 9 o'clock till 11 o'clock bricks are thrown at the door all the time. We can't ever leave the house together. Holidays are nil. We used to go away for 15 days every year, but now we're too frightened to go. We've not had a holiday for three years.'

— Retired railway man, Bill Morrison and his wife Edna. They are the only inhabitants in an otherwise empty terrace.

'You come home and you sit here at night on your own while the kids go out and play in the streets. You look around, and you think "How did I ever come down to things like this?"'

— Margaret Higgins, divorced mother of three. She has lived in Lower Broughton for 5 years, and her electricity has been cut off for the past 6 months. Because of damp only her kitchen and living room are usable.

'We've got to wait until the council decide they are going to move us. If the council said to me: "you can go into standard-property with hot water and a bath" I would definitely pay the rent arrears. But while they say to me: "You'll stay in substandard property", they've got no chance at all. I'm not bringing my kids up to live like this and to know this all their life.'

Lilly Parker, wife of a builders' labourer, and mother of seven. They were moved into Lower Broughton 4 years ago — it was their second slum house.

The Parkers were one of 88 tenants who took Salford council to court and obtained an order requiring them to carry out repairs. The council has appealed the decision.

Last summer one of the Parkers' children was injured when an upstairs window — which they had continually asked to be repaired — fell out of its frame and struck her on the head.

'A lot of lads go in through the rafters and just go in and rob the houses... One night there was some rope hanging down from the ceiling and I was cutting it, because she wanted a skipping rope, and it just blew up — it was electric wire... You got nothing to do, do you, you've got to go into these houses.'

— Lower Broughton kids, whose 'playground' is the maze of condemned houses.

'I knew it would be bad here but I thought "its my own house", I went to use the toilet, and there were no pipes. I've reported that to the council seven times and they've not come to fix it.

'What I'm worried about is the baby. I can hear the rats scratching at night. They've only got to gnaw through that wood, and that'll be it.

'The council think "you're an unmarried mother — we'll shove you where we want to shove you". They give you no choice because you're on your own with a baby. But until they mend the toilet, I've no intentions of paying my rent'.

— Pat Cook, an unmarried mother recently moved into a rat-infested Lower Broughton house.



They call it 'Alcatraz'

MOSS SIDE is a brand new housing estate in Manchester. When it was built three years ago it was supposed to be a 'planners dream'. But instead it has turned out to be a tenants' nightmare.

Local residents have a nick name for one of the blocks of flats that pretty much sums up how they feel about the place. They call it 'Alcatraz'.

Perhaps as many as three-quarters of the women who live on the estate have been driven to dependence on 'tranquilliser' drugs.

And it's no wonder. Having to spend their days among the vermin, disrepair and poor social facilities of these 'concrete bug huts', as one Moss Side Neighbourhood Council placard describes them, would be enough to drive anyone to despair.

Perhaps that's the reason why Corporation officials can't believe that these people have any fight left in them, and why the old cry of 'outside agitators' was raised when Moss Side tenants started to fight back.

Certainly, the Corporation didn't hesitate to resort to the classic trick of 'blaming the victim'. According to the Housing Manager, the plague

of bugs on the estate has nothing to do with the construction of the houses, but is caused by the purchase of second-hand furniture—and thus entirely the fault of the tenants themselves! Similarly, if one of the local Labour councillors is to be believed, it is not the houses themselves that are a fire-risk (even though two lorry-loads of straw were taken from the walls of a house which an official Corporation report admitted had been 80% gutted in just seven minutes) but the polystyrene that is used in modern furniture.

When these 'subtle' methods of trying to prevent any organised resistance by the tenants to bad housing fail, the authorities have no qualms about falling back on open

repression. The latest case was when a peaceful 'pramcade' of women and children was viciously set upon by the police.

The Neighbourhood Council then sponsored a meeting between Moss Side's tenants and their 'representatives' on the Manchester Council. Labour councillors Padgett (vice-chairperson of the housing committee) and Talbot faced 60 irate tenants who spelt out their message loud and clear: 'We want rehousing now'.

The tenants told them that the Moss Side flats are dangerous (a fire protection officer has described them as a 'fire hazard'), vermin-infested (Padgett admitted that flats usually had to be fumigated two or three times—in fact one woman has had her flat sprayed 12 times!), and unhealthy (tenants described how flooding in one flat seeped down through the walls and light sockets through all the flats below, right down to the ground floor).

Faced with such overwhelming evidence, councillor Padgett confessed: 'The flats on the whole are not suitable, due to their construction, for a family'. (In other words, 95% of Moss Side's tenants are inadequately housed—single people, presumably, being fireproof, waterproof, immune to vermin.)

But the councillors refused to support the demand for immediate rehousing. The best they could offer was that they would think about it...in four years' time!

By this time the tenants were fed up to the teeth, and the following resolution was adopted:

'If the elected representatives of the Moss Side councillors do not support the demand, and press for immediate rehousing for the Moss Side tenants, then in the next council elections the tenants will not vote for the Labour councillors but will, instead, stand their own candidates.'

They also resolved to fight any attempts at victimisations (through arrests or attempts at eviction) and to step up the fight until victory is achieved.

Some support has already been forthcoming from outside the estate especially from local students, who have also been engaged in struggles over accommodation.

Moves are also under way to make contact with other tenants and residents groups. There is a precedent for this. At the time of the Housing Finance Act, when the Labour-controlled Corporation showed 'great responsibility' and capitulated to the Tory law, the Greater Manchester Tenants' Federation came into being, and extensive rent strikes took place throughout the city.

The capitalist system is unable to meet the simplest needs of working people. Instead it is creating 'Moss Sides' and 'Lower Broughtons' from one end of the country to the other.

But it is also creating millions of discontented tenants and workers who, if they stand up and stand united, can forcibly wring their rights out of the capitalists' pockets.

Islington and Clay Cross are both Labour controlled councils. The Islington councillors were so devoted to capitalism that they decided to implement the Tories' Housing Finance Act. Now they are dumping the burdens of London's housing crisis onto the backs of the workers and tenants. Clay Cross Council, in contrast, was devoted to the working people who elected it. They have earned the hatred of every capitalist, every ruling class hack, and every traitor to the workers' movement for their courageous stand. As the social problems thrown up by the capitalist crisis mount higher and higher this is the choice that every elected representative of the worker's movement will face: to follow the road of Clay Cross or the road of Islington.

A tale of two councils

ISLINGTON

Islington has more homeless people than any other borough in London. And it treats them like dirt.

Most councils—even Labour-controlled ones like Islington—expect the homeless to crawl on their bellies and be grateful for any miserable hole-in-the-wall that the authorities are prepared to give them.

That is why they hate squatters so much—because squatters act on the 'subversive' idea that people are entitled to decent housing as a right.

Islington is one of many boroughs that have declared war on squatters. As part of this policy, perfectly good houses and flats which have been taken over by the council and are awaiting 'redevelopment' are 'gatted'. Floor boards are ripped up, toilets smashed, and windows and doors sealed with corrugated iron. The aim of these orgies of destruction is to prevent squatters occupying the properties.

In many cases attempts have been made to 'gut' properties which are actually inhabited by squatters. But recently the Islington Council has reached an all-time low: they have taken to gutting houses which are occupied by homeless families placed there by the council and paying rent to it.

'TERRIFYING'

The *Guardian* reported a typical case of this last week. Susan Williams is a 23-year-old unmarried mother who has a hip disorder, and requires the use of crutches to walk. Two years ago she was evicted from a squat, and moved by Islington council into an unoccupied flat, for which she pays £1.50 a week.

On Monday 4 November, Islington's gutting squad paid a visit to the house in which her flat is situated. She told the *Guardian*: 'The first I knew of the gutting was when I saw a demolition van outside. I heard the smashing of glass as one of them got in through a basement window and then I heard them ripping up floor boards. They thought I was a squatter and took the door off the only toilet. It was terrifying.'

These gutting operations are carried out by lump labour building contractors who are notorious for their thuggish methods. Just recently a member of the Islington law centre who dared to get in their way was punched in the face.

This is the sort of barbarity that a local council has to stoop to once it decides to try and foist capitalism's housing crisis on to the backs of the working class.



CLAY CROSS

Of all the councils which opposed the Housing Finance Act the place of honour clearly goes to Clay Cross.

The Clay Cross councillors fought a campaign which lasted just over two years. And what a contrast it provides with the actions of other Labour-control-





led councils!

In Clay Cross the councillors took their responsibilities to the working people who elected them (for the Labour Party bureaucrats, too seriously). Clay Cross decided that it was not going to implement the provisions of the Housing and Finance Act no matter what pressures were brought to bear and it resisted right till the very end.

If Labour councils up and down the country had followed their example, the Act would have been a dead letter and the Tories compelled to retreat from their onslaught on tenants.

The Clay Cross council, apart from refusing to charge increased rents, carried out other measures in the same vein.

This council, in startling contrast to most Labour councils, dished out free milk to school-children, employed examiners or workers sacked after participating in strikes, distributed free TV sets to old-age pensioners, and increased the money available for old people's wardens. It regularly organised meetings where it discussed and defended its actions, and thus gained the support of the entire town.

RIGHT WING

That is why the Labour party right-wing has been so hostile to the actions of the Clay Cross 11.

While not daring to launch a frontal assault on the council, Environment Secretary Anthony Crosland has nonetheless refused to lift the surcharges levied against the councillors.

Instead he has argued that the Labour Party and trade unions should launch a special fund drive. Why? Because if the example of the Clay Cross councillors caught on, it would seriously embarrass the Labour Government, and all those who are trying to make the workers pay for capitalism's crisis.

Peter Heathfield, the Derbyshire Area secretary of the NUM, told *Red Weekly*:

"I am extremely concerned at this backpeddling by the Labour Government. They are openly flouting the decision taken by the 1973 Labour Party conference. Are they now saying that the Housing Finance Act should have been accepted by the Labour Government?"

Former Clay Cross councillor David Skinner has appealed to constituency Labour Parties and trade unions not to put a single penny into the coffers of the State.

The fight over Clay Cross is not over, and further explosions can be expected at the Labour Party conference in a few weeks' time.

SINCE FEBRUARY the Labour Government has forked out abouted £850million to try to 'stimulate' more housebuilding.

It certainly needs it! Despite an increase in homelessness — there were over 15,000 homeless families in London last year, a third more than the year previous — private housebuilding is at its *all-time low for the past 10 years*.

This is because it is not housing need that decides whether the property boys are going to build or not, but *profitability*. As recent figures show, profits in the building industry have been falling off, and it is this which explains the total failure of the industry to meet the country's housing needs.

London Brick Company's profits fell from £5.6 million in the first half of last year to £1 million in the same half of this year. British Land made a loss of £398,000; Stock Conversion and Investment Trust's profits were down from £1,784,000 net to £1,289,000;

Wimpey's cut down their house building by 25 per cent on last year's total, and *increased* their profit by investing their cash elsewhere.

BRIBING PARASITES

This makes clear the meaning of Labour's loan of £500 million to the building societies and £350 million grant to local authorities to stimulate more building. It amounts to little more than using the taxpayers' money to bribe these anti-social parasites of the private building industry to increase their output!

The homeless aren't the only ones to suffer from these cutbacks by the building tycoons. Building workers now expect unemployment in the industry to go up to 100,000 this winter.

The solution is not to hand out more cash to these moneybags, but is to be found in the opposite direction. The building industry must be taken out of private hands (and let's not talk about compensation — 150 years of profit making is more than enough compensation), and placed under the control of the working class.

All new building should be planned by the organisations of working people themselves — the people who have the most to gain by abolishing homelessness and unemployment. That's the way to set about solving the housing crisis.

RENTS

Labour's 'freeze' on rents is also totally inadequate for the big job that needs doing on the housing problem. This 'freeze' comes after a period during which rents rose even faster than other elements in the cost of living. *Rent reductions are needed, never mind a 'freeze'*.

But how can rents be reduced to a level that working people can afford, when even a temporary rent 'freeze' has landlords closing down their rented property and selling to more

LABOUR'S HOUSING POLICY

How can council rents (now scandalously high in some areas — £30 weekly for four bedrooms in 'caring' Camden) be brought down, when this sum hardly covers the interest on the money the council borrowed to build the dwelling?

LAND

Labour's election manifesto promised to nationalise development land and end 'the expensive disgrace of land speculation'.

But, as the recent Government white paper *Land* makes clear, the fine print in this pledge reads rather differently.

Basically, Labour's scheme is to have local councils buying up land that the present owners want to sell at 'existing use value' (i.e. not what it might be worth if plans for development — building offices or homes on it — are allowed for).

The councils would then sell this land to the developers at *market value*.

The Labour proposals would thus close the door to the private property racketeer, only to open it again to the capitalist state.

Land will continue to change hands at market prices, and tenants will continue to pay rents based on those prices. Home buyers will also have to pay the market price for the land on which their house has been built.

Nor is there any reason to believe that the profits made by the state-turried-speculator will accrue to the benefit of the working class. Like all 'public' economic operations of the capitalist state, this one will be used to subsidise the capitalists.

FINANCE HOUSES

Apart from the expropriation of all rented housing, together with land needed for development, the working class will have to turn its attention to the financial institutions. The banks, mortgage companies, and building societies hold both private and council building in a stranglehold.

One of the reasons that rent is so high is because of the enormous amounts of interest that are exacted by the finance houses on capital made available for building.

These institutions must be brought under the control of workers organisations, so that their accumulated wealth can be put to good use.

Their money should be invested by

working people, according to a democratically decided plan, in essential building such as housing, schools and hospitals.

PARLIAMENT

How can such sweeping and necessary measures be carried through? The nature of those measures that the Labour Government is able to legislate in Parliament for implementation by the state machine already give some indication of the uselessness of depending on Parliament and the state apparatus to solve the problem.

These bodies were created by capitalism in order to *protect* private property. To solve its housing problems the working class has to attack private property and privilege, not collaborate with it.

No wonder, then, that the Labour measures described above, such as Labour's claim to be taking development land into 'public' ownership, are not at all what they may at first appear to be.

So what is the purpose of Labour's proposals? In part, of course, they reflect the impact inside the Labour Party of the struggle against the Tories' Housing Finance Act — particularly around Clay Cross — as well as a host of local housing struggles in Britain's decaying cities.

But their main significance is as part of Labour's answer to the growing militancy of recent years — the social contract.

In an effort to dampen down wages militancy, and so take the heat off the capitalist class, the Labour leaders have been forced to pro-

mise a wide variety of social reforms — relating to housing, education, the health service, equal opportunities for women, and so on — in return for 'voluntary' wage restraint.

This has some short-term advantages for them. It enables them, instance, to portray those striking for pay increases as selfish and greedy — 'We are fighting for socialism, but all you want is more money'.

But in the longer term it can only backfire in their faces. This emphasis on the 'social' side of the contract will tend to open up a debate on such questions in the broad ranks of the labour movement. And the utter inadequacy of the Labour Government's proposals here make it possible to begin very quickly the fight for an alternative programme.

EVICCTIONS

The way ahead lies in developing those struggles that workers themselves have already begun to take up — for instance, the struggle against all evictions, such as those being planned by the Labour-controlled Greater London Council against 250 squatters and tenants in Maida Hill.

If successful, these evictions will involve the wanton destructions of dwellings and other amenities to make way for 'redevelopment' schemes which have never been discussed or agreed to by the local working class or tenants.

This also means taking up vigorously the defence of those attacked by the property speculators, such as the Islington tenants who have been hauled before the courts for picketing the premises of estate agents Prebble & Co. And it must include solidarity with homeless people and students who occupy for their own use, good houses left shamefully empty in all our major cities.

WAY FORWARD

Some trade union members are already beginning to associate themselves with tenants and squatters. Recently, local firemen refused to collaborate with the police in an eviction in Camden town, London.

However there is much campaigning and organising to be done before there will be sufficient unity and agreement on the necessary measures put forward in this article.



PHOTO: PETER HARRAP (REPORT)

PHOTO: PETER HARRAP (REPORT)



Pickets and barricades at St Pancras

In August 1959 the United Tenants Association in the London borough of St. Pancras set in motion the biggest mass rents struggle since the end of the war.

On 29 July the new Tory majority on the Council introduced a differential rents scheme which would have doubled or in some cases even trebled existing rents.

WILDFIRE

Opposition and resentment to the Tory rent scheme spread like wildfire. Committees of tenants were set up in every block. More than 25 tenants' associations were formed, and all affiliated to the UTA.

On 1 September, 4,000 tenants thronged the streets of St. Pancras in a mile-long procession from Kentish Town to the Assembly Rooms at St Pancras Town Hall.

Masses of people were involved on a day-to-day basis. At one time the UTA were sending out as many as 60 women every night banging on the councillors' doors. They also put out leaflets up to three times a week.

The rent scheme was supposed to start on 4 January 1960. In the early stages 80 per cent of the 4,200 tenants affected withheld their increases. The chief Tory spokesman, Councillor Prior, went frantic and warned that... 'unless there are special circumstances a tenant who gets in arrears is liable to be evicted.'

As January went on the number of tenants withholding the increases slumped. Some of the local Labour Party leaders amongst the tenants crawled along to the rent office and paid their rents—a move given maximum publicity by the press and the Tories.

FIGHT

The tenants decided to fight the eviction threat by concentrating the struggle around two tenants. Other rent strikers paid up their rents and everything was built around defending Don Cook and Arthur Rowe, who faced eviction.

Barricades were thrown up around the flats. Plans were made for a 24-hour picket of both flats...workers all over the borough pledged support.

At five o'clock one morning 800 police and the bailiffs swooped. A desperate two-hour defence was mounted. Oil was poured over the advancing police and bailiffs.

But the mass of the pickets could not reach the beleaguered Don Cook and his family, as the police blocked off the approaches to his flat in lines three deep. Cook and Rowe were evicted.

From then on the opposition began to crumble. The State had stepped up the violence. The working class movement had only two alternatives: either it could work for a victory for Labour at the next elections or turn to the broad working class movement for solidarity strike actions.

The Communist Party, scared of the consequences of an open confrontation with the State, opted for the position of returning a Labour majority in the London County Council elections.

CAPITULATED

From the streets to the ballot boxes became the new line. A Labour Council was elected. But the law relating to council rents was interpreted and enforceable by the District Auditor with authority to enforce surcharges on councillors. The new majority meant nothing as Labour capitulated to the Auditor and enforced the increases.

The tenants of St. Pancras waged an heroic struggle. But heroism is not enough. In these struggles it is vital to place no reliance in the constitutional machinery and those Labour leaders who so fervently believe in it.

By proposing such a situation, the tenants' leaders dug their own graves.

Even during the post-war boom of British capitalism, the housing crisis was not solved. Property speculators waxed fat, the banks and insurance companies grew richer, the building companies raked in the cash, and the big owners of land enjoyed a bonanza. The slums festered, rents rocketed and the numbers of the homeless continued to grow.

Now, in a period of decline for capitalism, the housing situation must inevitably grow worse.

The working class is faced with a stark choice. Either it can patiently wait until Labour has helped British capitalism to perform its 'miracle of recovery'. In the meantime homelessness will increase, property will fall apart, and the slums will spread like a cancer.

Alternatively, the working class can reject the 'solutions' of capitalism and fight for its own solution to the housing problem.

In the localities strong tenants' associations must be formed which seek to get affiliations from the trade union movement, women's groups, student unions etc.

Where evictions are threatened the example of Elgin Avenue should be followed and anti-eviction patrols set up. At every stage, attempts must be made to get trade union action to support housing struggles and physically resist evictions — including mass strikes.

In the areas Housing Committees should be formed consisting of all the local tenants' associations, squatters' groups, trade union bodies, etc. These Committees must organise occupations of all empty private property with the aim of forcing the local authorities to immediately municipalise these dwellings.

The Housing Committees should fight for the local authorities to peg all rents at pre-Housing Finance Act level; end all interest payments to the money-lenders — the records of the councils should be made available for public inspection; and extend the public works departments to carry out a rapid programme of repairs and building.

If local firms try to sabotage building programmes by withholding materials or trying to charge high prices for them, then the Councils should encourage the workers to occupy the factories and purchase the materials directly from the workers' committees.

A campaign must be organised right through the working class movement for the nationalisation of the building industry; the building supply industry; all the land — except that owned by owner occupiers; and all the building societies and insurance companies.

All people displaced by re-development must be adequately re-housed. Councils must be forced to submit all re-development plans to conferences of the labour and housing movement.

Housing must be provided for all, based on people's needs at rents related to their incomes.



'The houses belong to us - the whole city belongs to us'



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Italian workers have been in struggle almost continually for five years now — and housing has been one of the major issues involved.

In response to increased rents, tenants have formed their own committees on the estates, democratically elected by mass meetings. These committees have organised their own rent collection — instead of paying the latest increases, the committees collect rent on the basis of 10 per cent of the tenants' incomes and then pay the whole lot in.

Such a struggle is particularly important in Italy, where many workers — like those at Fiat in Turin, for example — live in property owned by the Fiat employers. It foils a regular tactic of the employers, which is to jack up rents immediately following a successful wages struggle.

In Britain, there has tended to be a sharp dividing line between rent strikers and squatters. But in Italy, mass squats, or 'occupations', have often been organised by the same estate committees, with close ties to factory workers nearby.

In 1973, in Taranto, 182 families occupied council flats. The police came to throw them out, but were forced to leave when hundreds of workers from Italsider, the nearby steel plant, joined the squatters.

Many of these struggles have been organised to ensure that as many people as possible are involved. Rent strikes have been organised block by block, and landing by landing, with regular mass meetings, newsletters, leaflets and demonstrations.

Anti-eviction squads have been

1915 - The war at home

'There's nothing we can do - you can't fight town hall'. That's the reaction of many tenants to suggestions that they should fight back against the rotten housing they have been saddled with.

But in 1915 the working class tenants of Clydeside did fight back, not just against 'town hall', but against Parliament as well - and they won hands down.

By 1915 the slaughter of the European trenches had provided British capitalism with a booming economy. More and more workers were pouring into areas like Scotland's Clydeside to join the mushrooming war industries.

Accommodation was scarce and the landlords tried to take advantage of the situation to jack up rents.

In May 1915 a body called the Women's Housing Association responded by calling for a rent strike against rent increases. This movement had its strongest support among the working class areas around the shipyards, and by June it had forced the withdrawal of rent increases in the Govan area of Glasgow.

The movement then spread throughout the city.

Rent collectors found themselves being regularly plastered with flour, and physically ejected from tenements. Altogether some 20,000 tenants took part in the rent strikes.

A network of committees, and regular mass meetings in tenements back courts and the streets kept the strikers solid and prevented eviction threats being carried out.

In October a mass demonstration against the rises was held in the city centre. By this time rent strikes had broken out in Northampton, Birmingham, and areas of London - including a thousand tenants in Edmonton.

The Clydeside landlords replied by launching a legal offensive to have rent arrears deducted from workers' wages. On 17 November 18 munitions workers were hauled up in court for rent arrears. But they didn't have to sit in the dock and face the 'majesty of the law' alone - they were joined by 10,000 fellow workers, who walked off the job and demonstrated outside the court house.

Under the chairmanship of the great Scottish revolutionary, John MacLean, the workers held a mass meeting and unanimously resolved: 'That this meeting of Clyde munitions workers request the Government to definitely state not later than Saturday first, that it forbids any increase of rent during the period of war and that, this failing, a general strike will be declared on Monday first, 22 November.'

The Government didn't quite meet the Clyde workers' deadline - it took them until 25 November to introduce a bill into Parliament. But the combination of a militant and solid rent strike, backed up by mass industrial solidarity action, forced from the Government a law which froze rents across the country at their pre-war level.

The Clyde workers had thus won an important victory for the workers of the entire country.

formed and workers in nearby factories alerted to thwart the intentions of the rent-collector and bailiff. Women played a particularly important role, guarding the estates with their kids during the day.

Such struggles are not waged by just a handful of people. In Milan, during one series of occupations, the tenants launched a demonstration of over 30,000.

In the battles to come this winter, the links forged between tenants and the organised workers' movement — and the action they have taken — will be invaluable in forging a united movement of the whole working class.

The discreet charm of bourgeois democracy



The Discreet Charm of Bourgeois Democracy is the title of a film produced by the Agitprop department of the FCR (Revolutionary Communist Front - French Section of the Fourth International) to explain the nature of fascism and of bourgeois democracy.

The film, whose dubbed English version was first shown at the Red Weekly Rally in London last Friday, has been shown in France to tens of thousands of workers and students.

IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Two themes are taken up and illustrated throughout the film. The first is the special character of fascism as a capitalist tendency.

The French fascists, like the National Front in this country, concentrate their fire on the immigrant workers (predominantly from Northern Africa), organising mass attacks on their homes and shops. Several dozen immigrant workers were killed in France in 1973 by

fascist commando groups.

The decline of French imperialism, to whose former 'heights' French fascism would like to return, is attributed to the immigrant workers who are 'responsible for the decline of living standards'.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Together with this goes the strong streak of anti-semitism which has always characterised the French Right. An amusing sidelight in the film is an interview with a French fascist 'intellectual', who denies that he is an anti-semitic in one sentence only to reaffirm his fears that 'there are too many Jews holding high office in France' in the next.

The anti-semitic strain is further stressed by a leader of Ordre Nouveau (New Order) at the rally on 21 June 1973.

Thus modern French fascism is able to unite its old themes with its new preoccupations.

SMASH IT NOW

The French comrades of the Fourth International argued that

these tendencies had to be smashed and destroyed before they had a chance to grow. The struggle which they waged on this question on the night of 21 June led to their banning by the French Government.

This in turn saw the entire working class movement in France united to demand that the ban be lifted. The tradition of the Resistance meant that the Ligue Communiste's actions found a very deep echo inside the French workers' movement. Fearing even more vigorous responses from a broader coalition, the Government decided to ban a whole series of fascist meetings, including one which had been planned to celebrate the victory of the Chilean coup.

The film also shows that in Italy too, the fascists of the MSI draw on their old traditions. They speak quite openly of their aims, which are 'to destroy materialism, communism and marxism and defend the nation'. In case the faithful still entertain some doubts, the MSI gangster spells out his perspective: 'We would like to physically exter-

minate every member of the Italian CP'.

STATE APPARATUS

The second theme stressed by the film is the absurdity of the idea that the state apparatus can be 'democratised' and 'neutralised'. Footage from Chile demonstrates the bloody result when such a view is taken to its logical conclusion.

The project of the Union of the Left in France, which is based on a similar model, would run into exactly the same sort of problems. But just as the late Allende used to say that 'Chile is not Brazil... we have different traditions' so today the French CP leader Marchais declares that 'France is not Chile... we have different traditions'.

To the strengthening of the capitalist state - as shown in the very detailed training given to groups such as the CRS (a more sophisticated version of the SPG in this country) - the reformists' reply is to make more concessions and as this process continues it demobilises the working class.



The fascists of Ordre Nouveau prepare to 'defend the nation' on 21 June 1973

In contrast to this approach, the sections of the Fourth International in France and in Spain are making propaganda for workers' self-defence as the best safeguard against both legal and extra-legal repression. In so doing they are carrying out the line adopted by the 10th World Congress of the Fourth International.

'The most effective response to this danger is to revive the reflexes of self-defence and preparation for workers' militias on the basis of worker and student strike pickets. But it has already proved indispensable in Spain and France for the revolutionary organisations themselves to take initiatives in self-defence. This may be the case tomorrow in other European countries.'

'Such initiatives must be conceived and executed in such a way that they will be understood and endorsed by the workers, link up with the workers' organisations traditions of self-defence against fascists, and serve as exemplary strongpoints to encourage more massive forms of self-defence on the part of the working class'.

C. Howard



Basingstoke ...

The Basingstoke Anti-Fascist Committee (AFC) has waged one of the most effective campaigns in the country over the last year.

During the recent elections, the AFC picketed a last-minute press conference arranged by the National Front for John Tyndall, who was then Chairman of the NF.

Anti-fascist militant, Peter O'Sullivan was arrested in the course of this and charged with 'threatening behaviour' and 'possessing an offensive weapon'. The 'offensive weapon' was a 1 lb. bag of flour.



The trial of comrade O'Sullivan takes place in the Basingstoke Magistrates Court on 25 November, at 10.30am.

A second attempt at harassment of the Basingstoke AFC is, however, more serious. A leaflet produced by the AFC has been forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions following a complaint from the National Front to the returning officer at the election.

The NF complain that the leaflet had no address (a mere oversight); and that the NF candidate, Goodall, was being libelled by innuendo because the leaflet implied that he was a nasty fascist like Tyndall and Webster. In fact Goodall is a typically third-rate populist-racist like many other NF members.

The police have also sent a dossier they have compiled on the AFC to the DPP.

Furthermore, the NF have lodged a further complaint claiming that they were assaulted by eight youths, that NF agent Barnes had his spectacles broken, and that various missiles (including road lamps) were thrown at them. The AFC denies charges of assault, but says that three of its members 'vigorously heckled' five fascists as the latter were returning to their car.

The AFC's activities undoubtedly played a part in the bad NF results in Basingstoke, and the Committee feels that the NF's recourse to law is to 'get even' for the effective anti-fascist work carried out during the elections.

The investigations by the police and the DPP into the affairs of the AFC are likely to last several months, and in the event of a prosecution, the charges will be laid before Winchester Crown Court.

... and Bolton

The Bolton AFC also organised a picket of a meeting in the pre-election period where fascist leader, Tyndall, was speaking. Fourteen arrests were made and the fines total over £200. An appeal to all trade unionists, socialists and anti-fascists has been launched to help pay the fine. Readers wishing to contribute (cheques payable to Bolton Anti-Fascist Committee) should send

Fascism: the dilemma of British Jewry

In a previous article Tom Cameron looked at the relationship between Fascism and anti-semitism. This week Bob Slansky assesses the various reactions to Fascism, both past and present, which have developed within the Jewish community.

In the 1930s, most notably at Cable Street and Ridley Street, mass working class action drove Mosley's British Union of Fascists out of the East End of London. In these anti-fascist mobilisations—whose scale and militancy left the police powerless—the local Jewish community played an important role.

The militant spirit of the 1930s, however, stands in stark contrast to the conservative response of the Jewish community to the new fascists of the National Front. On the day before the 7 September NF march, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported an appeal by the Chairman of the Defence Committee of the British Board of Jewish Deputies to 'stay away' from the march and its anti-fascist counterpart.

THREAT TO BIGWIGS

Nothing, it would seem, haunts the bigwigs of the Board of Deputies more than the spectre of Jewish involvement

National Front, and the powerful traditions of anti-fascism among British Jews, the need for an alliance with the socialist left is becoming an increasingly serious threat to the positions of these bourgeois community leaders.

Their position today is almost the same as it was in the 1930s, when they issued similar appeals to the Jewish population of the East End to stay at home and avoid trouble. Then, fortunately, their appeals fell of deaf ears; today they reflect the attitude of a whole generation.

What has changed?

POLITICISED

The vast majority of Britain's 450,000 Jews are descended from East European immigrants who fled from anti-semitic persecution in Russia and Poland at the turn of the century. These Jewish immigrants formed proletarian and semi-proletarian communities employed mainly in labour-intensive industries (such as textiles) and heavily concentrated in certain parts of the major urban centres (like the East End of London).

From the beginning of the century, Jews played a prominent role in the British working class movement, but it was above all the events of the 1930s—Hitler's

which gave rise to a deep politicisation inside the Jewish ghettos.

Since the 1930s, a combination of events has had a deep de-politicising effect on the Jewish community. The mass extermination of European Jewry by the Nazis and the cynical indifference of the Western ruling classes to their fate allowed Zionism to become a powerful force in Jewish life. Stunned by the chilling details of the concentration camps and shaken by the wretched fate of the survivors of Dachau and Auschwitz, Jews almost everywhere turned towards Zionism, seeing in the establishment of the Israeli state a guarantee against future persecution.

Israel's alignment with imperialism against the Arab peoples has led to a steady rightward drift in Jewish opinion—a drift which has accelerated since the 1967 war, after which it was increasingly difficult to square support for Zionism with socialist principles.

ILLUSION

Today the absolute failure of the Israeli state to solve the Jewish problem, combined with the re-emergence of fascist groups in countries where sizable Jewish communities exist, is beginning again to challenge the stranglehold of Zionism.

Particularly amongst the Jewish youth there is an inclination to join with the left in the fight against fascism. This could potentially tear apart the official conservative institutions that were built up during the post-war years, when the Jews could enjoy an illusion of indefinite security in the West with Israel as a sort of insurance policy.

Building united action against the fascists with sections of the Jewish community will thus depend on a real fight against the ideological hold of Zionism. This, in turn, makes it vital to expose all attempts to equate the anti-Zionism of the revolutionary left with the anti-semitism of the right.

Only by fighting against every case of racism and anti-semitism will this equation be given the lie. The comparison between our record of consistent anti-fascism and anti-racism and the refusal of the Zionists to face up to and confront anti-semitism

LETTERS

Women and the Russian Revolution

I thought your otherwise excellent article on the Russian Revolution in *Red Weekly* (7 November), omitted to mention one important aspect — the major part women played in the revolutionary upheaval.

Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, attributed the beginning of the February upsurge to the decision of women textile workers to strike on International Women's Day.

In fact, the wave of industrial unrest began five days earlier when workers in a section of the huge Putilov engineering factory (probably then the largest factory in the world) went on strike for a wage rise. Teams of flying pickets sent out by the Putilov workers then brought other engineering factories in Petrograd to a standstill.

But the situation only began to take on a clear-cut political shape when the women textile workers decided to commemorate International Women's Day by solidarity strikes with the Putilov workers and mass demonstrations.

It was this decision that brought the workers out onto the streets, and saw the emergence of political slogans against the Tsarist tyranny, for a revolutionary government, and against the war.

Many women — not just women workers but working-class housewives as well — joined the demonstrations around the slogan 'We Want Bread' and became involved in the revolutionary struggle.

The presence of such large numbers of women among the demonstrators was, in turn, an important factor in causing the troops to hesitate before opening fire on the crowds. This allowed demonstrators to start discussing with rank-and-file soldiers and win them over. One of the most evil effects of the oppression of women is the way in which it cuts them off from the collective actions and political ideas of their class. But when the social crisis of class society begins to break through the well-padded walls of the family and the home, women



The 'Women's Battalion'—among the last-ditch defenders of the Winter Palace in 1917

begin to realise just how deep their need for liberation from capitalism is.

Thus women can rapidly become the most determined and militant of revolutionary fighters. For example, in both the French revolution and the Paris Commune women were in the vanguard of the oppressed masses who rose against their masters.

The Russian Revolution also offers a refutation of those who look at the oppr-

ession of women in 'feminist' terms as a struggle of 'women' against 'men'. For among the last-ditch defenders of the Winter Palace and the capitalist Provisional Government in October was the Women's Battalion.

These middle-class women, arms in hand, certainly broke free from the traditional parts society had them playing — but in order to better serve the forces of counter-revolution. — Eric Geddes, London.

BUREAUCRACY IN THE NCCL

[The following is an excerpt from a letter we have received concerning the dismissal of Martin Loney as General Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) in June this year — ed.]

Under the terms of the constitution a special General Meeting can be called if requested by fifty members. I was one of the people who signed such a request for a meeting to enquire into the circumstances of the General Secretary's removal. This meeting was held in the Conway Hall on 19 October.

One of the first things they did was vote to exclude the press. A set of standing orders had been drawn up expressly for this meeting which none of us had seen previously.

When we arrived the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Henry Hodge and Ben Birnberg were on the platform — both very much involved in the affair and therefore hardly impartial. Hodge then proceeded to tell us he would be chairing the meeting... Amendments to the motion put forward by those who had called the meeting were proposed and there was some desultory discussion, abruptly cut short by the manipulation of a procedural motion from the floor in collusion with the chair. It was becoming apparent that it had been arranged beforehand that everything must be done to prevent the motions coming to a vote....

I considered it a waste of time to remain and left the hall. However, outside I found there were a large number of others indignant at the way they had been deprived of the elementary democratic right they had come to exercise, and we

adjourned to another room to consider if any further action was possible or desirable within NCCL.

During the discussion an 'intermediary' came from the main hall and asked us to return. This we refused to do unless we were allowed the chance to vote on the motion...

The outcome was that it was agreed that motions would be taken from the floor. When we returned Hodge had been replaced in the chair by Ben Birnberg who hastily pushed through two of the amendments to the original motion as substantive motions. These were innocuous so far as the Chair and Executive were concerned and really left matters much as they were before, with the same authoritarian set-up, and a mandate to do the same again whenever it pleases.

I am sending this because I am angry, disillusioned and think that it might be a good idea for *Red Weekly* to take a closer look at the NCCL and some of its executive. — Keith Burdon, London

RED WEEKLY GETS THE BOOT

Several weeks ago three comrades selling *Red Weekly* on a pedestrian precinct in Sheffield were cautioned for obstruction. At the same time a group of Morris dancers completely blocked the precinct — and were ignored.

Sheffield branch of the IMG decided that they were not going to allow such intimidation, and began a campaign to establish their right to sell the newspaper.

A petition was started to get the Trades Council to take up the issue and a mass sale was organised. At the same time a formal complaint was lodged with the police alleging harass-

ment.

This has caused them some embarrassment and led to elaborate white-washings of the coppers on the beat by the superintendent. During the course of an interview with one comrade (over a formal complaint) the investigating superintendent suddenly produced a new concept. Apparently the police can decide that the 'public' will not mind being obstructed — for instance by Morris dancers and sellers of the capitalist press — but might object to other obstructions.

The *Red Weekly* has been sold in the same place for more than a year with no complaints. The implications of an extension of this practice should be obvious to anyone.

On Saturday 19 October, two *Red Weekly* sellers were arrested and charged with obstruction (one developed a bruise after the arrest). Just before the arrests another comrade had been told to move on.

The Sheffield IMG are leafletting and petitioning trade unionists, students, and people in the streets, etc. They are also asking trade union branches to pass resolutions demanding an end to this harassment. — Sheffield I.M.G.



Scotland - 'oppressed nation'?

Norman Easton's letter in *Red Weekly* (23 October) raises a central problem for revolutionaries — what role can the Scottish working class play in the present rise of the European (and world) workers' movement?

From the very start he operates from a wrong political basis, i.e. that Scotland is an 'oppressed nationality' and that revolutionaries must integrate the national question into the class struggle.

This fails to distinguish between national (political) oppression under an imperialist state, and the disastrous effects of decades of regional underdevelopment, aggravated in the new context of oil exploitation.

The specific problems of the Scottish region — high unemployment, lower wages, high migration, decaying housing, crumbling social facilities — are real material problems which the Scottish working class has to confront. We think that the ideas in recent issues of *Red Weekly* — the idea of a workers' enquiry into social expenditure, of an alliance of public sector workers, of democratically organised struggles, of the nationalisation of the oil and oil related industries, of a Workers' Assembly in Scotland linked to the British trade union movement — do start to pose the possibility of a workers' solution to the problems of Scotland.

But for these problems, comrade Easton substitutes rather more mystical ones — the so-called 'national oppression' of the Scottish people. What exactly is this 'national' that is to say specifically political oppression of Scotland by England?

It is clear enough in the Basque country (Spain) or in Quebec (Canada), not to mention the former colonial countries where the bourgeois revolution has not been accomplished.

What particular aspects of their 'national' oppression should the Scottish working class take up? Should they take up the fight for freedom of 'national culture' (supposedly suppressed by English imperialism)? Should they lead a fight against the suppression of the Scottish language? Should they argue against the brutal suppression of Scottish political institutions (147 years ago)?

In other words, what exactly are those democratic tasks which the Scottish land, of course, the British working class movement must take up as 'an integral part of the class struggle'?

It may well be that comrade Easton, like the Scottish Nationalist Party, actually thinks that a bourgeois Parliament in Edinburgh would be a huge step towards solving the problems facing the Scottish working class (sorry, 'people'). Certainly, his confusion between the specific social and economic problems in Scotland in relation to world capitalism, and some supposed 'national oppression', leads him to a bizarre conclusion: that the SNP 'oppose imperialism'!

In fact the SNP is a thoroughly reactionary petty-bourgeois formation, which actually wants to form an alliance with world imperialism, especially the oil monopolies. As yet we have not noticed the SNP leading any 'anti-imperialist' struggles against BP, Shell or Marathon. However, in the romantic dreamland of comrade Easton, presumably all is possible.

Comrade Easton calls for the 'progressive nationalisation' (By whom? Presumably he is opposed to nationalisation by the British state) of industries... including 'Scotts workers' oil.

Potentially, the oil off the Scottish coast could play a significant role in terms of energy needs for the world working class movement, which is the starting point of our politics, at least.

In trying to encourage inside the working class, belief in the reactionary nonsense of the SNP, that the oil is 'ours' not 'theirs', comrade Easton adopts the positions of confused petty-bourgeois nationalism. — Colin McPherson, Glasgow.



New from Red Books

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain — Felix Morrow (Pathfinder £1.25).

A new paperback edition of the most authoritative analysis of the Spanish Revolution and Civil War yet to emerge from the Trotskyist movement. As a bonus, this edition also includes Morrow's brilliant pamphlet, *The Civil War in Spain*.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels David Riazanov (Monthly Review Press £1.50).

Another book which has been out of print for years, Riazanov's political biography of Marx and Engels remains a masterpiece of popular writing. Written while he was director of the Marx Engels Institute as a series of lectures for Soviet working class audiences it is still probably the best introduction to Marxism available.

The General Strike — Christopher Farman (Panther £1)

Packed with information and quotations from those involved, this book is essential reading. Although the author tries to remain 'impartial', the real lessons of the General Strike are plain for all to discover.

Arabia Without Sultans — Fred Halliday (Penguin Books £1)

A Marxist analysis of the role of imperialism in the Arab Middle East and the dynamics of popular resistance. A bit long, and lacking sufficient

analysis of the role of the workers' states, but essential reading for anyone interested in the Arab revolution.

Women's Rights: A Practical Guide — Anna Coote and Tess Gill (Penguin 60p)

Penguin Books have finally seen fit to reprint this excellent catalogue of the ways in which women are oppressed under capitalism and how they can fight back. Snap it up before they let it go out of print again.

The Economics of Imperialism Michael Barratt Brown (Penguin Educational £1.25)

Concentrating mainly upon Marxist theories, but also considering the approaches of classical and Keynesian economics, Barratt Brown has produced a useful guide (if heavy going) to historical and present-day debates on Imperialism.

The Union Makes Us Strong — Tony Lane (Arrow Books 70p)

A rather weak analysis of British trade unionism which manages, however, to draw together quite a lot of material and contains some interesting interviews with trade union bureaucrats. While he correctly sees that their role in capitalist society flows from their social position rather than innate 'treachery' he stops just where his analysis should begin. (An analysis which develops from this point is to be found in Mandel's *On Bureaucracy* - IMG Pubs, 25p.)

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Solidarity wins out at Llanwern

A mass meeting of craftsmen at the Llanwern steel works decided last Sunday to end their official strike. Although they voted to accept the British Steel Corporation offer, the craftsmen have still not returned to work.

The craftsmen have decided that they are not prepared to cross the picket line set up by members of TASS who have been on strike for five weeks. The TASS workers are out after two year's negotiations over job evaluation and pay had come to naught.

The decision of the craftsmen to accept the new BSC offer made at a mass meeting of 1600 workers was only carried on a 60-40 vote.

OFFER

BSC have made a new offer which includes a £5 a week temporary payment in order to enable negotiations to open on a measured incentive scheme. This is similar to the scheme rejected by the NUM executive.

When work study has been completed and the incentive scheme introduced - or rejected - the £5 will be withdrawn. BSC claim that a payment of £5 to £7 a week will then be substituted which is based on the new incentive scheme. Many workers are very sceptical about these figures.

Despite the acceptance of the incentive scheme the craftsmen have got a limited victory in cash terms.

More importantly they have taken the trade union solidarity position of refusing to cross the TASS picket line. The effect of the craftsmen's show of solidarity made the BSC management make their first moves to come to terms with the TASS strikers. On Sunday 10 November the management agreed to have a meeting with the TASS officials. However on Monday 11 November - probably at the instigation of the real high-ups - the offer was withdrawn.

Tom Golightly, Newport AUEW district secretary told me: 'We are informing the management that we have accepted their latest offer and are ready to resume work, but not if it means the men passing the TASS picket line. We will not enter the works until the pickets are withdrawn.'

SOLIDARITY

Sharing the same picket line has increased the class consciousness of the workers involved in both disputes. As a TASS official said to me: 'Since the craftsmen's strike the greatest solidarity has developed between the two groups of workers and there is more than the usual amount of sympathy amongst the production workers.'

In all sections of workers there is a growing feeling for the removal of what they describe as the 'incompetent BSC management'. As one militant asked: 'If steel is nationalised shouldn't the bosses be responsible to us and not the bloody car industry.'

Llanwern is once again beginning to fight back against BSC. The craftsmen are backing TASS. The TASS workers obviously feel strengthened by this support and are more solid than ever. On Tuesday all the production workers will be laid off and the SIMA - middle management - have started a work-to-rule.

This situation is a prelude to big struggles at Llanwern and the steel industry in general. The way forward is being shown in the need for the setting up of joint TASS-craftsmen and production workers' committees, not just at Llanwern but throughout British Steel.

JOHN CONNOR

High stakes at issue in miners' ballot

The National Coal Board is pulling out all the stops to get the miners to swallow the new productivity deal.

John Cowan, the Scottish area director of the NCB, has warned that if the scheme is not accepted 3,000 jobs will be lost in the Scottish coalfield.

Invoking the social contract, Wilfrid Miron, another member of the Coal Board, has slammed into what he describes as the 'latter-day Lenins'. Miron talks about 'saboteurs of the social contract' wanting to overthrow 'the country's orderly way of life.'

FREE

Coal News, the mouthpiece of the NCB, is being given out free to miners - even those who do not normally get the paper - so as to build up the pressure for a vote of acceptance.

The right wing of the NUM are lending a willing hand in the 'sell the deal' campaign. Len Clarke, the Nottinghamshire NUM president, has sent an open letter to Scargill calling on him to 'give the scheme a trial.'

This is an absolute breach of discipline by Clarke - as a member of the NUM executive he is not supposed to campaign against the executive's decisions. Clarke need have no worries in that respect however. Frank Smith from Leicester, who openly attacked the union majority in the last strike, still sits on the executive and doubtless voted for the new productivity deal.

VENOM

The NUM right wing are so deeply committed to Labour's social contract that their venom is reserved for the left who oppose the deal, not for Clarke who violates the majority decisions of the union.

The NUM paper, *The Miner*, has devoted three of its four pages explaining, in what the *Guardian* describes as 'fairly moderate terms,' what the scheme will mean. Gormley in a front page message strikes a low keynote against the NCB proposals which is clearly designed to dampen down opposition to the deal. No wonder that NCB officials are said to be pleased with the line of the NUM.

Miron's open witch-hunting-intervention has caused Gormley to feel a little uneasy. He has pleaded 'that all outside bodies should get out of our hair and let us get on with our job.' It is one thing for

A word from the Mirror to 250,000 miners...
Daily Mirror GIVE BRITAIN A BREAK!

Gormley to put the case for the employers, but it is rather embarrassing for him to be openly associated with attacks on the Union by Coal Board officials.

DIVIDE

It is the Gormleys and the Clarkes who have opened the way for the Cowans and the Miron. By raising the red bogey they have allowed the NCB and the capitalist press to attack the militants and to try and divide the miners.

In South Wales 20 miners' lodges have called for Miron's resignation. This movement must be stepped up throughout all the coal fields. Members of the NCB who attack the miners must be slung off the Board and if the Labour Government refuses to take such action then the NUM must introduce a policy of non-cooperation with these officials.

Members of the NUM must refuse to attend meetings where people like Miron are present, they must refuse to accept decisions made by Miron and company, and if this fails to force the Government to sack these people then strikes should take place until they are removed.

RIGHT WING

Inside the NUM, Gormley, Clarke and their friends should also be brought to heel.

WORKERS DEFY TOFFEE-NOSED OFFICIALS

For the first time in its history the Rowntree Mackintosh factory in York has been hit by a mass strike of production workers. Thousands of workers voted at a mass meeting last Monday to go on unofficial strike till their demands were met.

The workers, who now receive a basic wage of £21 a week, have treated the management's offer of a £3 increase as an insult. They have demanded a 33 per cent across-the-board increase, with no strings attached.

The union in the factory is the GMWU, not known for its eagerness to defend the living standards of its members. Union officials have argued against shop-floor meetings, and have refused to give the rank-and-file any of the necessary information.

At the mass meeting the officials tried to prevent the strike, but failed. Their plea for 'peaceful negotiations' was answered by a mass walk-out. The workers are demanding that the strike be made official immediately.

The crisis in the sugar industry might provide Rowntree's with the excuse for lay-offs and redundancies in the coming months. To counter this we will have to struggle for: work sharing; no loss of pay and nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control.

D. Beckett

GUARDIAN

Monday November 11 1974

Healey will pep gloomy City with cash lures

The NCB productivity deal is designed to split the unity of the miners. The actions and words of the right wing in defiance of the 14-12 executive vote help the NCB achieve that aim. Pit head meetings of the miners should carry resolutions censuring Gormley and Clarke and insisting that a new ballot be held for their positions in the union.

The NUM is at the centre of the stage in a big battle between the Government, the employers, and the working class. The stakes in this battle are high. Only a determined fight by the left - a fight entailing a struggle against the enemies within their own ranks - can ensure a victory.

Bob Pennington

Scanlon jumps wrong way



Scanlon jumps off the fence, but on the wrong side. The President of the AUEW was fleeing from office workers picketing his own union headquarters.

Two hundred and fifty members of the staff belonging to APEX have been on strike to demand a £400 London allowance per year. The AUEW, which as an employer of junior staff treats its workers no differently from capitalist firms, refused to negotiate seriously with its office staff. Hence the strike.

A picket told *Red Weekly*: 'Most

of the left press have been very friendly, but for some reason the *Morning Star* has been conspicuous in its lack of support.' The reason is simple: when its favourite left trade union bureaucrat crosses the picket line the *Star* has some difficulty in explaining the reasons behind this to rank-and-file militants, especially when Scanlon gave himself and other leaders a 40% wage increase not so long ago.

And it isn't easy to describe the AUEW staff as 'ultra-lefts' when one of the leading militants in the strike is the Labour Party agent for Hornsey!

WHAT'S ON

LONDON RED FORUMS: Every Tuesday at 8pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (Kings X tube). Tuesday 19 November: 'What is a Revolution?'

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

'BRITISH LEYLAND' - An Economic Report', pamphlet on the background to the present crisis inside the BLMC. 10p per copy, send cash with order to: 72 Cambridge Road, King's Heath, Birmingham.

'NATIONALISATION or Expropriation', second edition of pamphlet produced in 1973 by the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. 10p per copy, send cash with order to: 72 Cambridge Road, King's Heath, Birmingham.

SHEFFIELD RED CIRCLES: Every Wednesday, Lion Hotel (corner of The Wicker and Nursery St) at 7.30pm.

S.E. ESSEX RED CIRCLE: 'The Working Women's Charter', Weds 20 November, 8pm, at 39 Kennel Lane, Billericay, Essex.

CHILE SOLIDARITY: Hackney Festival evening of music, film and poetry, Friday 15 November, 8pm at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E.8. Film 'Companeros' with introduction by Chilean speaker. Admission free.

BIRMINGHAM Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting on Inflation. Speaker David Yaffe, Australia Bar (corner of Hurst St and Bromsgrove St), Friday 22 November at 7.30pm.

COMRADES (3 or more) seek cheap self-contained flat/house. South/Central London preferred. Phone Val, 837 6954 (day).

JUMBLE SALE at 'Pavement', 6 Falcon Road, London, S.W.11 on Saturday, 16 November, 10 a.m. All proceeds to Red Weekly Fund Drive.

International Marxist Group



(British section of the Fourth International)

97 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities


NAME

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2 new pamphlets from the IMG


CHILE
LESSONS OF THE COUP
WHICH WAY TO
WORKERS POWER?

Toriz Al
Gerry Hedley



30p (including p&p)

FASCISM
HOW TO SMASH IT



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

15p (including p&p)

from RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

UNION SUPPORT FOR VICTIMIZED STUDENTS

Students at Swansea University, who last week occupied Singleton Abbey, the college's main administration building, have come under a massive attack from the University authorities.

The occupation was decided on by the Students' Union in protest against the victimisation of five philosophy students.

The Association of University Teachers (AUT), which represents some of the lecturing staff and the college management has called for strike action against the students.

OCCUPIED

Last week the Students' Union Action Forum occupied the South Arts Building, which contains the philosophy department. This was in response to the disputed examination results where five out of seven philosophy students were failed when they took their exams. The AUT then threatened to strike because academic life was being disrupted.

The right wing leaders of the AUT are now campaigning amongst the other unions on campus urging that they also take strike action.

The AUEW has however given a sharp rebuff to the scabbing tactics of the 'learned' AUT members. It has rejected the AUT call with a proper trade union response and is supporting the Students' Union.

The college authorities are busily stoking up a backlash against the students. They are refusing to re-register students who have not yet signed up. They also are insisting that students cannot get a pint in the bar unless they produce their new card.

CHANCE

The NUS Week of Action gives students nationally a great chance to show solidarity with the Swansea students. Messages of support and donations should be rushed to the Students' Union (Occupation Fund).

Emergency motions should also be sent to NUS Conference meeting in Margate next week.

The Regional Students Association is also holding a Rally in Swansea on grants. Speakers from the occupation will address the rally and a battle is under way to get the demonstration re-routed to the Swansea campus.

IF THE LEADERSHIP of the National Union of Students had had their way, the present student 'Week of Action' would have died a quick and painless death.

Thankfully students in the colleges do not see it in quite the same light. They cannot escape from the reality of inflation, higher prices and rents, and discretionary awards.

Petitions and token occupations will win students kind words, but kind words don't help if your rent is going up by 30%. Students up and down the country have ignored the polite requests of their leaders and taken action into their own hands. Instead of five-a-side football and eating in other colleges' canteens, they have organised area demonstrations, pickets, full scale occupations, and days of action on issues like the discriminat-

ion against women.

From Newcastle to Newport, where homeless students are squatting empty property, from Swansea to Sussex, students have responded with direct action against the cuts and victimisation. It is these colleges — along with the other fifty which have taken action like refectory boycotts, rents strikes and occupations — that have given the real lead this term.

If the 'Week of Action' is to be a success, it must be as a springboard for a future campaign on the demands of the grants campaign and against the cutbacks.

By demanding the dropping of price and rent increases, the students of Sussex University have most recently shown the way to fight. Below *Red Weekly* interviews REDMOND O'NEILL, chairperson of the Sussex occupation, on the actions and lessons of their grants campaign.



One of the daily mass meetings in the Sussex University occupation

What is striking about this occupation is the mass support which has been generated. What do you put that down to?

Well, there are several reasons. The first — which sparked it all off — was the obstinacy of the authorities in the face of the drop in student living standards.

Sussex students, like all students, have been hit hard by inflation and the cuts in education spending, which mean the administration puts up prices and rents. In four and half months of negotiations, the great white liberal Vice-Chancellor Asa Briggs granted us nothing. He left us with no option, much to the annoyance of the Broad Left executive who thought visits to the benevolent Briggs would solve our problems.

When we proposed direct action at the start of the term, the executive argued against it. A week later they changed their minds. Fifteen weeks of wheeling and dealing in ever smaller circles finally convinced even them.

Having decided to occupy, how have you kept everybody involved?

I think that the two most important lessons to date have been the tactics we have used and the democratic organisation of the struggle itself.

With the cash crisis the colleges have sunk into even at this show-piece university, the old token sit-ins are no use.

Sit-outs would be the right word! But it would be the authorities who would do the sitting, leaving us in here to die of boredom.

Instead we have used the occupation as a base from which to launch other actions. We have taken lightning actions, against various other offices and the telephone exchange. More importantly we extended the occupation to the whole building, with one exception — the offices dealing with the college workers' wages. We have no quarrel with the staff. They face the same problems as we do.

You mentioned the democratic organisation of the struggle — can you explain how that works?

It is the people who are taking this action who have the right to decide the tactics. So every day we have mass meetings. The occupation committee is elected by, and recallable to, these meetings.

We have no self-proclaimed leaders. Every time we elect people to go and

negotiate with Asa or to go to explain our case to trade unionists, they have to give a full report back to the next meeting. If the meetings don't like what they hear, then you can be sure they won't go again.

The striking Scottish teachers have used the same sort of democracy. These are examples not just to students or teachers but for the whole trade union and student movement.

Why do you think you have received such great trade union support?

Well, for a start two campus unions, ASTMS and NALGO, have both had wage agreements broken by the college authorities recently. But relations between students and workers have always been good here. In the past the students have given dustmen, miners, hospital workers, nurses and the Strachan workers any support they wanted.

You only get working class solidarity if you are prepared to do something when they need it. Only the other day the NUPF branch meeting pledged us support and their co-operation. Because of this we can take up the high refectory prices in a practical way. We will set up our own tills and charge the old prices. In that way we will make sure that prices don't go up.

We have also been trying to contact local transport drivers so that then we

can throw a picket line across the university entrances. Now more than ever, trade union support is crucial for students. The authorities have decided to stand and fight; they have no other choice. We cannot win alone — that is the message that comes over loud and clear from this term's struggles.

Why have you called a national conference for 23-24 November?

The date is a week before the NUS conference. The NUS Executive have been found sadly lacking this term. The Sussex conference of rank-and-file delegates can work out a plan of action to take to the NUS to make sure they are committed to a fighting policy and we get real leadership.

We feel that the lessons of our struggle can contribute substantially to this. The authorities will be back next term or next year with similar proposals. The conference offers this opportunity for the student body to start laying plans for a national, co-ordinated response. It is essential that next time we don't have 55 colleges fighting in their own way, but 55 colleges fighting the same way.

So I would urge all student unions that are serious about fighting the cuts in education to send delegates to the conference.

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Red Weekly Rally boosts Fund Drive

Our Fund Drive received a magnificent boost last Friday. Nearly 800 people packed out Conway Hall at the Red Weekly Rally organised by London IMG to mark the 57th anniversary of the Russian Revolution; and our Fund Drive profited by more than £400 as a result.

So now we're well on the way to reaching that magic figure of £2,000. Indeed, if the rest of the country can match London's effort, we should go well over the top. Let's see just how far we can push it — rush donations to: RED WEEKLY FUND DRIVE, 97 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.