

Workers' fight

5p

No.114 - October 25th 1975

THE LAST ONE

THIS is the last issue of WORKERS FIGHT in its present weekly format. The National Committee of the WORKERS FIGHT group at its October meeting decided to merge — and rationalise — its two publications, WORKERS FIGHT and the magazine PERMANENT REVOLUTION. We will in future produce a magazine which will be called "WORKERS FIGHT, incorporating PERMANENT REVOLUTION". It will carry more topical material than has the

irregularly appearing PERMANENT REVOLUTION. Eventually we hope to regularise its appearance as a discussion and theoretical monthly. Subscribers to WORKERS FIGHT will have their subscriptions transferred to the new magazine. Members of the WORKERS FIGHT group are planning a drive to get 500 pre-paid subscriptions to the new magazine within the next 6 months. Write for details to John O'Mahony, 98 Gifford St, London N1.

A STAB IN

1936 THEY SAID: 'DON'T HELP THE JARROW MARCH'

1975 THEY SAY: 'DON'T BACK NOVEMBER JOBS MARCH'

THE BACK BY THE TUC

TRADES UNION CONGRESS

GENERAL SECRETARY, LIONEL MURRAY OBE

CONGRESS HOUSE - GREAT RUSSELL STREET - LONDON WC1B 3LS

Telephone 01-436 4030

Telegram TRADUNIC LONDON WC1

IN REPLY, PLEASE QUOTE:
CIRCULAR 17 (1975-76)

DEPT Secretary's
OUR REF: L4/NDM/JH
YOUR REF:
October 16, 1975

TO THE GENERAL SECRETARIES OF ALL
AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS AND
SECRETARIES OF TUC REGIONAL
COUNCILS, TRADES COUNCILS & CAYCS

Dear Colleague

TUC ACTION ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Representatives of the General Council are at present engaged in a series of urgent major discussions with the Government about additional steps which can be taken to reduce unemployment at the earliest possible time.

The fullest possible information will be made available about the progress of these talks.

It has to be made clear, however, that the General Council have neither initiated nor sanctioned any national lobby on unemployment, and that the holding of such a lobby at this time would undoubtedly detract from the efforts the General Council are making which, by the decision of the recent Congress, are being undertaken in close consultation and discussion with the Government.

It is necessary to draw this to your attention because the name of the North West Regional Council of the TUC has been referred to in connection with a national lobby on unemployment. This follows upon a decision of that Council to make its views on unemployment known to Members of Parliament from the North-West. Not because of any wish or invitation on the part of that Council, this action has been escalated by other groups, including political groups, into a national lobby and demonstration which will undoubtedly have an anti-Government character.

Affiliated organisations are asked to draw the attention of members to the position as now outlined in this circular.

Yours sincerely

LIONEL MURRAY

General Secretary

ONE in twenty workers is on the dole. Outside the Midland and the South East, the figure is more like one in twelve. And what is the TUC doing about it? It's doing its best to STOP a major mobilisation against unemployment!

The North West Regional Council of the TUC has called for a mass lobby of Parliament on November 26th. But the TUC has had the brass to send out a circular to Trades Councils trying to put a block on this lobby.

The call initially came from the Greater Manchester Association of Trades Councils and the Lancashire Association. With unemployment running at 6.2% of the working population in the North West, trade unionists responded enthusiastically to the call. Now the TUC's circular seeks to disrupt this action.

What is the TUC afraid of? In general, it is afraid of the rank and file of the trade union movement upsetting the apple-cart of miserable compromises. Its circular is at pains to draw attention to "the efforts of the TUC" to fawn before the Government. It fears that "this action has been escalated by other groups, including political groups, into a national lobby and demonstration which will undoubtedly have an anti-Government character."

NATIONAL

Too true! What demonstration on unemployment right now could fail to have an "anti-Government character"?

More particularly, the TUC is afraid of the efforts of the Communist Party to turn the demonstration into a national one. It no doubt learned a lesson from the

'education cuts' demonstration on October 21st. The major union in teaching, the NUT, backed out of it, but the Communist Party, which dominates the S.E. Regional Council of the TUC, took it up and made it a 10,000-strong protest against government policy.

Labour movement bodies all across the country have been pledging support for the unemployment lobby. 250 delegates at a conference called by Liverpool Trades Council. 700 shop stewards at a conference in Glasgow. A meeting in Leeds of STC, Plessey and GEC shop stewards. National Union of Mineworkers Executives in Scotland and South Wales. Trades Councils in Blackburn and Nottingham and many other cities...

The North West Regional TUC itself held a special meeting after receiving the TUC circular. They 'noted' the circular but insisted they would still go ahead with the lobby. Even right-wingers in the area are indignant at the TUC's 'don't rock the boat' prohibition.

In newspapers this week, Jack Jones appears in Government advertisements alongside Boots boss Gordon Hobday. He claims that "the main Trade Union objective these days must be to fight unemployment... That's why we're observing the £6 a week policy..."

They might as well observe the Sabbath and say a prayer for full employment. The £6 policy does not serve the interests of the unemployed, but the interests of the bosses and the profiteers. In fact, as any O-level economics student will tell

you, cutting back wages means cutting back jobs.

And when trade unionists start doing anything about unemployment, the TUC leaders hastily wipe away their crocodile tears and cry out against any move to disturb their discussions with the Labour Government.

Every effort must be made now to ensure that the TUC's shameful circular has a rebound effect, fuelling a massive demonstration against the Government's worker-bashing policies and the TUC's abject support for these policies.

YOUTH

If the Communist Party have their way, the lobby will be focused on the reactionary nationalistic nonsense of demanding the government impose import controls, thus trying to alleviate unemployment in Britain at the expense of our brothers in other countries. (But that isn't what the TUC objects to: it has just adopted the same policies itself.)

Unemployment must be fought with socialist policies, or the bosses will really have us at each other's throats. And the mobilisation for the 26th November lobby must also be linked in with the Labour Party Young Socialists campaign to organise unemployed youth.

We should demand:

*A 30-hour working week with no loss of pay;

*Support for factory seizures and nationalisation without compensation where bosses declare large scale redundancies or closures;

*Break the £6 limit!

LABOUR HITS AT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

HEALTH MINISTER Barbara Castle has announced that the government will carry out all the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the abortion law.

Anti-abortion campaigners James White and Leo Abse warmly congratulated the government. Though James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill has fallen, it looks like he will get much of what he wants anyway.

Without any excuses about 'the state of the economy', or any motive other than conciliating public opinion whipped up by Church campaigning and

press sensationalism, the government has gone along with the right wing. In contrast, the Lane Report, which came out against further restrictions on abortion, was ignored.

BANNING

The Select Committee recommendations include: a 'white list' of advice bureaux; registration of foreign women getting abortions; that the General Medical Council should investigate doctors who they think are 'abusing' the abortion laws; and that abortions after the 20th week be carried on only where there is equipment for

resuscitating a foetus should it show signs of life.

This last point has been reported in the press simply as 'abortions after the 20th week only where there are adequate facilities'. In fact it means banning abortions after 20 weeks in all but the best equipped hospitals. And that again is more restrictive than at first appears, since anyone trying to get an abortion on the NHS often has no choice but to wait until well past 20 weeks.

Most of these restrictions can be carried out by the government under powers it already has under the 1967 Act, without any need for further legislation. This

underlines the importance of fighting for free abortion on demand, instead of limiting the struggle to protests against particular new projects of restrictive legislation, as was sometimes done in relation to the James White Bill.

In addition, the government has said that the Select Committee may be reconstituted by free vote of Parliament. The National Abortion Campaign steering committee is meeting this Saturday, 25th October, to plan action in the new situation after Castle's announcement.

NAC conference. p5

THE RIGHT wing press can't wait for the William Tyndale inquiry. Instead, it has gone barging ahead in a full-scale onslaught on the school, taking the leaked interim report of the inspectors, based on their attempts to teach through the Tyndale staff's strike, as gospel. The more raucous papers have it that anyone they want to dub ignorant "must have gone to school at William Tyndale", whilst Joe Rogaly (tipped as front-runner for the Observer top-job) casually damns it in the Financial Times as a "non-school".

Last week's Sunday Times evidently took the same view, for it was at pains to show that Tyndale 'isn't typical' of progressive education, giving over a two page spread to show how "progressive" education was "succeeding" at another school — Prior Weston at the Barbican.

What precisely is meant by "Progressive" education? Fundamentally, it is a system based on self-activity and discovery in a structured environment. It is aimed to stimulate an enquiring and critical mind. As such we should defend it as against the blind acceptance of teacher authority which has usually been the norm in the past, and is even now in many schools.

Assets

But in order to work, such education demands above all time from the teachers, a rich supply of resources, and small class sizes.

How does Prior Weston gain these assets?

Firstly, by a "dedicated" staff willing to immerse themselves totally in the school. In practice at Prior Weston this means a staff willing to come in early, go home late, give up their lunch hours to staff meetings, and go without having a staff room.

Secondly it means that ILEA resources for the school, already enlarged by the efforts of a pushy careerist Head, are being augmented by donations from the



ONSLAUGHT ON 'STRIKE SCHOOL' AS SCHOOLING IS AXED

richer parents. The fact that, at a time of unprecedented cutbacks in education spending, Prior Weston is having an extension built, is indicative of the effect the Head, Henry Pluckrose, is having.

Thirdly, having got itself into a position of being a "show" school, Prior Weston has had its class size effectively reduced by the constant stream of visitors stopping to "help out". One report indicates that this "helping out" often reduces the actual class size at Prior Weston to 12.

Should we perhaps favour such sacrifices by teachers acting as latter-day Florence Nightingales if their missionary zeal produces results? The trouble is that it produces no results at all for teachers or children as a whole if a few teachers in a tiny handful of schools do good work whilst all around them conditions deteriorate. The real improvements will come only if teachers fight collectively for a better education, and better teaching conditions, in every school, not just in one school.

Moreover, a young teacher entering a situation like that at Prior Weston has little choice but to go along with the regime imposed on him. And the immersion of teachers in their own little world (especially as their whole experience is likely to be limited to their own school, then college, then back to school again as teachers) must produce an unhealthy narrowing of outlook. Certainly, the local NUT branch sees little of its members at Prior Weston.

By contrast with conditions at Prior Weston, teachers at William Tyndale have tried to carry on a programme of liberal education without any of Prior Weston's artificial assets and with a host of its own extra problems.

The richer parents, far from supporting the school have been panicked into getting their children out, or have been so stirred up against the staff by the Managers' whispering campaign that even the ILEA had to advise the Tyndale staff against setting up

a Parent Teacher Association for fear of disruption by hostile parents.

Visitors to the school have been antagonistic rather than helpful to the staff, with Managers snooping round and wandering into classrooms uninvited, and constant inspections even though an initial inspection was favourable. And the staff themselves, although they are dedicated teachers (or they wouldn't be putting up a fight for the school) do quite rightly demand an independent social life away from the school, and are regular attenders at NUT meetings.

The unprecedented witchhunt against these teachers shouldn't go unanswered. Nor should the inquiry, loaded against the staff, take place unchallenged. Socialists should back the Tyndale staff against any victimisation. If you can get along, join the lobby of the inquiry on Monday 27th October, and bring placards. Starts at 9.30am at County Hall (nearest tube Waterloo.)

SAM DEEDES

in brief

OFFICIAL figures published this week highlight the gross unfairness of the means test system where the onus is on the claimant to claim benefits such as free milk and school meals or dental treatment. The figures show that more than 1,500,000 families are not claiming social security benefits they are entitled to. Moreover, since many of these families are entitled to more than one benefit, a total of nearly three million benefits are not being claimed.

Both lack of knowledge of the complicated system of benefits, and not wishing to be subjected to the humiliating means test, are two main reasons. At present, at least a fifth of the families entitled to free school meals are not receiving them: little wonder, when all the weight of humiliation falls on the kids who have to produce special tickets or eat at separate tables. Many thousands are not claiming free welfare milk; 875,000 people are not claiming rate rebates and one million rate rebates are going unclaimed.

These people, the poorest families or struggling pensioners, are being cheated by a system which quite probably budgets on the basis of a proportion of benefits not being claimed.

Warwickshire County Council has prepared a contingency plan for possible future use. The plan, which would mean two thousand redundancies, envisages the closure of 30 schools, the scrapping of adult education, the closing of old peoples homes and a cutback in social services. And here's a new one: parents would be asked to contribute to school finances. (Haven't they heard of taxation?) The plan, which would cut staff by an eighth, has been prepared by a team of chief officers, who presumably don't figure prominently in the list for staff sackings.

THE Post Office, with 'extreme moderate' union leader Tom Jackson's assent, is to compulsorily retire 19,000 workers of over 60 years of age but under retiring age. The Post Office claims that effectively the retiring age will now become sixty within the industry — which would be something of a gain if starvation pensions didn't mean that most over-60s need to work as long as possible.

THE Sheriff of Nottingham, Tory councillor Mr. Gerald Elliott, was found guilty last Friday of assaulting an elderly couple in a late night brawl outside his home in a rather exclusive part of the city. He was fined £20 with £128 costs.

He attacked the couple, both in their seventies, because on arrival at his home in his civic Rolls Royce "I heard someone say words to the effect that this was all on the rates and I was living out of the rates and associated statements like that".

IT is expected that the Government will shortly announce a further cut in the number of places for full time students of some 18,000 in 1981. The new target will be 625,000 students — as compared to the Conservative Government's target for that year of 750,000.

DEPARTMENT of Flummery, October 13th 1975:

"The Queen arrived at Buckingham Palace this morning.

"The Queen received the Bishop of Portsmouth (the Right Reverend Archibald Gordon) who was introduced into Her Majesty's presence by the Right Honourable Roy Jenkins MP (Secretary of State for the Home Department) and did homage upon his appointment. The Secretary of State for the Home Department administered the Oath.

"The Right Reverend Roger Wilson DD (Clerk of the Closet to the Queen) and the Gentleman of the Household in Waiting were in attendance.

"The Right Reverend Roger Wilson DD had the honour of being received by Her Majesty upon relinquishing his appointment as Clerk of the Closet to the Queen.

"Her Majesty received His Most Eminent Highness Fra Angelo de Monjana (the Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta).

"Mr. Quentin Gwyn (Grand Chancellor), the Venerable Bailiff Fra Hubert Pallavicini (Master of Ceremonies), Major General the Viscount Monckton of Benchley (President of the British Association of the Order) and Sir Peter Hope had the honour of being received by the Queen."

Etcetera. Ad nauseam.

'FREE PRESS': UNDER THE BOSSES' THUMB, IN THE ADVERTISERS' POCKETS

Lord Goodman



"FREEDOM of the press is not an abstraction; it is the right of the man who controls that newspaper to say what he wants to say. There is no other way to secure the freedom of the press."

If you are at all confused about the great press freedom debate now raging in both houses of Parliament, the above quotation should clear your mind wonderfully.

It was said recently by Lord Goodman, Chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association (the press barons' 'union'), the man who in the interests of press freedom is trying to limit the right of a particular trade union — the National Union of Journalists.

The NUJ has been singled out for attack as a result of Michael Foot's Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill which will make the closed shop legal again after the Industrial Relations Act took away that right.

The very thought that workers in the news media, especially journalists, might be able to influence editorial policy through their trade union strength naturally threw all right thinking newspaper proprietors and editors into a terrible panic.

VERY RICH

Lord Goodman rushed to their defence, proposing an amendment to the Bill which would have provided for a charter to be agreed by 'both sides of industry' and made legally binding, enshrining "the right of the man who controlled that newspaper to say what he wants to say." Considering that control of a newspaper (at any rate, the type of newspaper they have in mind) is restricted to a very small number of very, very rich people, such a charter is of course a very valuable one for the ruling class to have.

But these freedom-loving ideals were actually defeated two weeks ago in the House of Commons, because the Government favours a more subtle way of curtailing the struggle of workers in the media through a voluntary charter to be agreed between the unions and the newspaper proprietors.

The champion of this method is a Labour peer, Lord Houghton, who moved separate amendments to that effect. This was also supported by the NEC of the NUJ itself. The NEC policy of participating in negotiations on a charter has just been endorsed by a 2-1 majority of the 30% of the membership which voted in a ballot on the question, though this year's Annual Delegate Meeting voted to repudiate the union leadership's proposed capitulation on the closed shop.

TORY LORDS

Now, the predominantly Tory and Liberal Lords are not even satisfied with Houghton's suggested solution. And Goodman has come up with more amendments, accepted by the Lords on October 20th although the Commons had thrown out his previous package.

These would, firstly, prevent "improper pressure to distort or suppress news comment or opinion". (Pressure from journalists, that is: such pressure is deemed to be part of 'press freedom' when it comes from editors or proprietors; moreover, the judgment on what is distortion and what isn't is left to them, too.) Secondly, Goodman's new amendments would "ensure the right of journalists not to be unreasonably excluded from trade unions and to belong to the union of their choice, and for the right of editors to discharge their duties free from any obligation to join a trade union." Thirdly they would

protect "the right of editors to commission and publish or refuse to publish any material."

Clearly in the view of the Lords, pressure on editors is only improper if it comes from working people, not if it comes from wealthy advertisers and proprietors. And obviously, scabs must not be excluded from a union; nor should editors, who in most local newspapers are capable single-handedly of sabotaging industrial action by journalists, be forced to join a union.

It seems to be clear to the entire ruling class that Goodman's 3 amendments are "the only way to secure the freedom of the press". Which gives a good idea of their concept of freedom.

The NUJ's formula for the 'not-quite-closed' shop where editors can continue 'normal working' (ie scabbing) in a dispute is a recipe for disaster. And the Houghton 'Highway Code' plan is simply a convenient channel for the sort of pressure that the millionaire press barons can conjure up at the drop of a hat.

PAY CLAIM

In the coming months, journalists will be facing crucial battles over redundancies and over the next pay claim. The policy which the NUJ has adopted (using a postal ballot in which inactive union members reversed a previous democratic decision of the Annual Delegate Meeting) will dangerously weaken journalists and strengthen the hand of the proprietors and managers.

The meeting this weekend in Birmingham of the left wing Journalists Charter, the rank and file grouping in the NUJ, will urgently have to consider ways of getting this lesson over to the mass of the members in an attempt to force the union to act in its members' interests.

SALLY ALEXANDER EXPLAINS THE 'PRESS FREEDOM' ROW

THROUGHOUT Portugal. Popular Assemblies are springing up, particularly in the industrial areas of Lisbon, Oporto and Setubal, to coordinate and link tenants and neighbourhood committee, soldiers committees, workers committees and village councils. In and around Lisbon new assemblies are being formed almost daily and they are now so widespread that plans are going ahead to create an all-Lisbon delegate assembly.

The assemblies vary widely from area to area depending on whether they are in an industrial or rural area, and on the relative strength of the various local committees. At Quinta da Anjou, Palmela, a village about 25 miles south of Lisbon, we were present as a new Popular Assembly, called by the Neighbourhood Committee, met for the first time at the end of August.

The local people are mainly peasants, but there are a fair number of building workers and many work in the nearby car assembly plant. About 400 people, men, women and children, came to this first meeting in the open air, which had been publicised well in advance with a circular distributed door to door, with posters, and with several advance notices in the paper Republica.

Agenda

It was already half past nine in the evening when the meeting got under way, with a long agenda including elections and resignations, children's playground, vaccination centre, housing, sewers, roadworks, report of a meeting with the Borough Council, a telegram of support to be sent to the workers at Radio Renascenca — and a discussion on the present political situation and the question of giving support to the COPCON document.

But first, introductory proceedings. The chairman asked people to voice their own opinions, and to vote for people in whom they had confidence. He said it was fine for people to discuss in coffee bars, but it was not enough, they must come and voice their opinions openly at the meetings. The committee would be non-partisan, but political and open to criticism.

Then more preliminaries, as a representative of the MFA was asked to give an opinion as to what a popular assembly should be.

This man rambled on at great length, feeling the need to survey the effects of fascism, the colonial wars, the problems of the relationships between workers committees and neighbourhood committees, the 'alliance of the people and the MFA' and the 'unity of the people', the divisiveness of political parties, and a good many other things besides. Until finally a young woman went to the front and took over the microphone: "Are we here to listen to speakers? We came here to follow a certain agenda..."

THOUSANDS FORCE RE OPENING OF RADIO RENASCENCA

RADIO Renascenca is on the air again! The former Catholic radio station has been run under workers' control for several months. Troops sent to take it over at the end of September sided with the workers, but the station was finally silenced when commandos shut down the transmitting plant on the outskirts of Lisbon. They left last week, leaving it locked and sealed.

A massive demonstration was held last Tuesday to demand that the station be reopened. With an estimated 100,000 workers and soldiers surrounding the station an ultimatum was sent to President Costa Gomes, giving him one and a half hours to order its unsealing. He did not reply. A message was also sent to General Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho, the COPCON commander, who refused to become involved.

In session: one of Portugal's Popular Assemblies

An eye-witness report by Nan Rice

Someone tried to shout her down, and in his turn got shouted down by the rest of the meeting. The young woman continued "Please don't interrupt. We must conduct ourselves calmly and objectively. In a small village such as ours there are many problems. People came here tonight to discuss problems and their lives. We have an 18-point agenda and everyone has to work tomorrow. I think you have gone on too long — it is already 10.30 and the meeting is due to close at midnight."

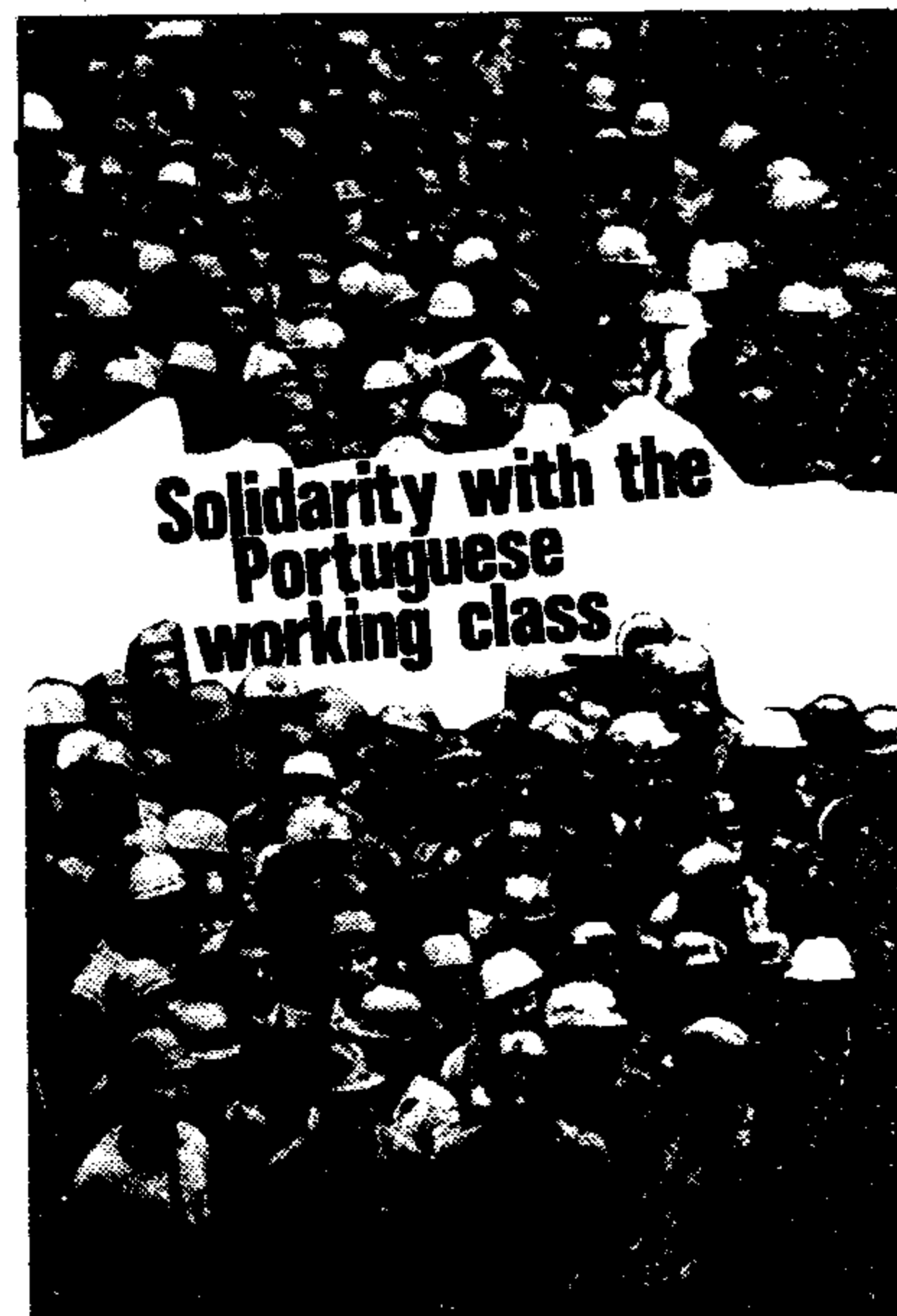
So after a quick apology from the MFA man, the meeting finally started with a vote to go straight to point 2 on the agenda — a proposal for the resignation of some members of the Neighbourhood Committee.

One man had resigned because, he said, his 'political ideology' was

After a majority had voted to suspend him, he dramatically produced a huge board on which he had a number of war medals displayed, and he protested that he had been a hard worker. The chairman spoke up, saying that "we must ask this man to work with us and to rehabilitate himself so that he is worthy of his place on the committee again."

Resist

The next case was of a man who had only attended 2 out of the last ten meetings. But he protested strongly when asked to resign, jumping up to the front, red in the face, waving his arms wildly in the air and shouting 'I have 13 animals and must care for them morning and night. I am a worker, a good



up and put her views to the meeting.

Next, the question of a Health Centre. The committee had looked into the matter, and reported that in order to provide a centre, they had to prove there was a need.



not in accordance with the rest of the committee.

This was passed over, but the next case was felt to be more serious. A member had 'behaved badly to members of the village'. The case turned out to involve incest, and the decision about his suspension was put to the meeting. Some felt it was a private matter to be dealt with privately; others responded 'This is not fascism, things must be discussed publicly'.

man, friend to all men and to all women' (at this the meeting fell about laughing) 'I want to participate in the meetings and solve problems one after the other.'

The chairman finally managed to calm him down enough to put the matter to the vote — and he was overwhelmingly asked to stay. But a man who disagreed with the policy of occupations, saying they should only be done with the owners' consent, was quickly voted off.

Now it came to elections for new members for the committee, and a particular appeal was made for more women to join 'as there were many problems which concerned women'. Four women stood for election, two with babies in their arms. One failed to get elected, and it seems she was unpopular: many of the other women were saying she did not care for her children.

Item four, and discussion of a children's play park. £3,000 had been spent on equipment, and the meeting was asked for volunteers to make the area safe and enclosed. There was an appeal for lorries and a steam roller, and many men from the building sites volunteered to help.

Needed

Near us, a woman complained to the man sitting next to her that what she really needed was a creche, not a playpark. She was paying £40 a month for someone to mind her child while she worked, and pointed out to him that this was equal to the rent for a whole house. But despite encouragement, she wasn't prepared to get

Now the meeting started to consider housing problems. It turned out that the majority of the houses had no bathrooms and were in a bad state of repair. Many spoke of the high rents they were paying for what amounted to little more than 4 walls and a roof.

There were many complaints against landlords and their failure to carry out repairs. Someone informed the meeting of a new law to oblige landlords to carry out essential repairs and to provide bathrooms where possible. The law also allowed for local councils to make a loan to any landlord who could not afford repairs, and for the council to be paid the rent until the loan was paid off.

Discussion followed on action to be taken on the empty houses in the area. It was decided to pick on three which had been empty for

They explained that they proposed to do a survey, to provide the information for the Health Authorities. They had converted a garage into an office, which would be open every evening for people to come and tell them their health needs.

Bad state

By now it was past midnight, and the meeting was asked if it wished to continue a bit longer. This was overwhelmingly agreed and only a handful of people left — including the man with 13 animals.

more than a year and to move three families in the following week. A group of volunteers was formed to clean up the houses and help the families move in.

Now the meeting really had to close, with a guarantee that it would be reconvened within 8 days.

Even though very few of the points on the agenda had been discussed, and the more interesting ones were probably still to come, the concentration of these villagers and their avid participation in questions which affected their own lives which made this meeting in Palmela a very exciting one to witness.

Sowing the seeds of intervention?

GOING in to save 'one's nationals' is one of the oldest ruses in the book for an imperialist aggressor. Could the fuss over the British farmer in Portugal whose land had been occupied be a preliminary to such an action? We will be well advised to keep a sharp lookout for more such incidents. Certainly ultra-right Monday Club Tory John Biggs Davidson came in quick enough on cue, and Roy Hattersley (one of Callaghan's underlings at the Foreign Office) played his part in the traditional manner, promising to 'stand by' our kith and kin in Portugal.

Perhaps more dangerous, though, are the activities of another of the poisonous fraternity of the "Socialist International", the Zionist state of Israel. It has apparently sent a great number of Kibbutz members to Portugal, ostensibly to 'encourage cooperative ventures in that country'. Considering that the Israeli government gave considerable aid to Caetano and Salazar in their pursuit of the African wars of suppression, that's a pretty unlikely story!

These Israelis are all of course men of military experience (what Israeli isn't?) mostly instructors in NAHAL, the military/'pioneer' force. It was from this force that Dayan sent his 'advisers' to help the US army in Vietnam.

S.T.



A SEVENTH MAN

"The migrant worker comes to sell his labour power where there is a labour shortage. He is admitted to do a certain kind of job. He has no rights, claims or reality outside his filling of that job. While he fills it, he is paid and accommodated. If he no longer does so, he is sent back to where he came from. It is not men who immigrate but machine-minders, sweepers, diggers, cement mixers, cleaners, drillers etc. This is the significance of temporary migration. To re-become a man ... a migrant has to return home. The home he left because it had no future for him."

In north west Europe, there are approximately 11 million migrant workers, along with a probable 2 million living and working without proper papers. (This figure excludes Britain.) A UN survey has estimated that by 1980 there will be half as many again.

These people, who are an indispensable slave labour force for the economies of Germany and France, Switzerland and Belgium, are mostly of peasant origin, coming from the poorest parts of

Images of exile...



... and of life back home



A review by J W Harding

Europe like Spain and Portugal, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Italy. A *Seventh Man*, a book made up of a challenging text by John Berger and a riveting set of photographs by Jean Mohr, gives us their tragic experience with a force of committed and imaginative analysis that breaks new ground in political presentation.

Berger's text is neither a learned treatise, nor a conventional piece of socio-political persuasion. Its techniques are intended to make the economic relationships which determine the migrant worker's life into something which can be "grasped and realised as part of his personal destiny". It does use economic, political and historical analysis — but in such a way that it completely interpenetrates with the presentation of the migrants living their lives.

And this presentation is unique-

most parasitic exploitation, in alliance with the native land-owning and capitalist classes:

"The economic surplus appropriated in lavish amounts by monopolistic concerns in backward countries... to the extent that it is not taken abroad by foreign stockholders... supports luxurious living by its recipients, is spent on construction of urban and rural residences, on servants, excess consumption and the like. The remainder is invested in the acquisition of rent-bearing land, in financing mercantile activities of all kinds, in usury and speculation. Last but not least, significant sums are removed abroad where they are held as hedges against the depreciation of the domestic currency or as nest eggs assuring the owners suitable retreats in the case of social and political upheavals at home."

The results can be seen in the

the first taste of frantic impersonality, in the eyes of officials and policemen, taxi-drivers and confidence tricksters, in the dreadful bureaucratic "reception centres" for medical and job tests where the men are graded like chickens for the battery; and in the barracks, lodging houses and shanty towns where the migrants are sent to live. Language and time become directly oppressive forces, and the visual and verbal presentation again combine to convey this powerfully, with direct comments scything in, like "To those who have machines, men are given", and "To live he can sell his life".

Nameless

All the major industrial countries depend on migrant labour. "The majority [of migrants] are prevented or discouraged from settling in the country in which they work. Governments and multi-national corporations plan their policies on a global scale, and the advantages for capitalism of worker-migration being temporary are considerable."

The migrants work in the hardest and most menial jobs, mostly in industry, construction or services. Their accident rate is high: in France, it is 8 times higher than it is for indigenous workers. Over half of all migrant workers live in company lodgings or barracks, the rest in miserable rooms such as the one described where nine men share three beds on a 24-hour rota.

The unskilled labour force required by the vast expansion of technological capitalism in the post war period was supplied by "an unemployed labour force that existed in a state of underdevelopment, created by the development of those countries suffering a labour shortage." Between these two factors are the lives of the migrant workers, reflecting these contradictions in their oppressive sense of being homeless and nameless.

Family

And for capitalism it is all very convenient. Migrant workers accept lower wages. They can be imported when needed and sent home during recession, for they have no political rights. Needing the money and having no social or family life, the migrant is eager to work overtime and do shift-work at night. He has no experience of trade unionism and no political consciousness, and anyone who does become a militant can easily be got rid of, the unions being unlikely to defend him.

Migrants pay taxes and social security contributions, but will not draw many benefits during their temporary residence. It is made difficult for the migrant's family to join him. A large part of the money he sends away is spent on goods manufactured in the country where he works. The employment of migrant workers relieves unemployment in the country of origin — hence, less possibility of social explosions. Doing the most crushingly menial jobs, with little chance of promotion, in a different language, working and living only with his 'own kind', sexually

deprived, the migrant is at the bottom of every scale in society.

And this, too, has its uses for capitalism. For the indigenous worker sees the migrant in his inferior position and it confirms for him that the latter is unknowable and beneath understanding. The racism generated is ruinous. As Berger puts it, "The working class comes to accept the basic bourgeois claim that social inequality is finally an expression of natural inequality... The working class, if it accepts the natural inferiority of the migrants, is likely to reduce its own demands to economic ones, to fragment itself and to lose its own political identity. When the indigenous worker accepts inequality as the principle to sustain his own self-esteem, he reinforces and completes the fragmentation which society is already imposing upon him. That this will continue happening is the calculation of the ruling class."

To reinforce this, the trade unions have taken the attitude that migrants threaten the bargaining power of the native workers. Thus, the unions have never demanded rights of promotion, of political activity, of residence as long as the migrant wishes or the right of entry for his family, and they use as their excuse that this would alienate the union members with their feelings of natural superiority over people who "belong elsewhere".



When the migrant does return to his village, it is likely that he will find there is still no livelihood for him, since the economic stagnation that forced him to leave in the first place still remains. He will still be homeless and nameless, for the experience in the city will have estranged him in many crucial ways from the life of the village. Two of three years after his "final return", he or other members of his family will be compelled to go abroad once again. The dialogue between the man, who has returned from the city, and the boy, anxious to find out about it, reveals the dismal continuity: "...it never happens. There is no final return".

Though it deals primarily with immigrants in Europe and doesn't deal with Britain, *The Seventh Man* should be read and looked at by every thinking worker, as a double insight, both into the immigrant experience and into the experience of the history of our own class. As Berger says "...the full measure of the violence being done to him is revealed by what happens within him. ... He experiences suddenly, as an individual, as a man who believes he is choosing his own life, what the industrial consumer societies have experienced gradually through generations without the effort of choosing. He lives the content of our institutions: they transform him violently. They do not need to transform us. We are already within them."

ly vivid, using documentary techniques, patterns of imagery, analysis and discussion of mental and physical experiences, direct speech and quotations, philosophical abstraction, and above all the marvellous photographs which, as Berger says, "are beyond the reach of words".

At one and the same time we can grasp the economic and political factors which drive the immigrant from his warm village for a term of voluntary slave labour in a hostile and forbidding environment — and also see that environment (which to us is simply the cities and factories we have taken for granted for generations) through his own eyes. And it's a really easy book to read and look at, too.

It begins with the decision of the migrant (any migrant) to leave the unchanging poverty of his village, his family and the rest of the peasants, intending, like all who have left before him, to make some money in the city and return home for good.

While we are, so to speak, watching this 'film', another level of reality cuts in: the economic factors which are dictating that decision of the man to leave home, even while he is making it. We see how monopoly capitalism subjects the underdeveloped countries, extracting vast profits from the

example of Turkey. In 1967, says Berger, 80% of its 34 million population were peasants, 90% of its agriculture entirely unmechanised, 60% of its industry producing only food, wine and tobacco. One million were unemployed and about 4 million in the countryside could find work only at harvest time. Each year, 300,000 more came onto the labour market and nearly 70% of the population could neither read nor write.

These are the conditions — and the photographs make them even clearer — under which people are forced to emigrate. In 1974, there were almost one million Turkish migrants living abroad.

Humiliate

On arrival in the cities of north western Europe, everything conspires to humiliate and bewilder the migrant, deny his humanity, reduce him to something that works, sleeps and owns only a passport. The text and the photographs introduce the reader to the migrant's strangeness in the city so that we, too, can feel the confusion of those coming from a very different culture.

Humiliation is everywhere — in the arrival at railway stations and

WAGE CUTTING... BY ORDER OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT!

STANDARD Telephones and Cables (STC), a subsidiary of the US giant International Telephones and Telecommunications, has told its 4,000 employees in Northern Ireland that the wage rises they won at the beginning of July will be taken away from them... by order of the Labour Government!

Management has claimed that the cuts will only amount to £1 or £2, but Jackie Vance, convenor of the STC plant at Monkstown, near Belfast, insisted that the clawback will really be £7 - £9 per week as from 20th October. This is explained by the fact that the STC management is only counting the amount over and above £6, but, as Jackie Vance pointed out, the entire settlement is in breach of the 12-month rule.

If STC had not given in, management is claiming, thousands of jobs would have been lost through the cancellation of orders placed by the government.

But sackings are on the agenda anyway: STC has announced the closure of its Larne plants with a loss of about 1,200 jobs whatever the outcome of the wages issue. These sackings are being fought with the support of other factories

would cave in in the end. If the full demand were met, Mackie workers would only just have reached the Belfast average, fully £6 under the British average wage!

At the Ulster bus company, workers were told that their pay rise would be cut

by MARTIN FREDERICKS

like the GEC works in Larne.

Similar wage cuts are taking place in other Northern Ireland factories. At Mackie's textile machinery plant in Belfast a majority of the workforce at a mass meeting decided to continue their 9 week strike until management agrees to pay a £6 a week increase back-dated to August 3rd — only 6 months after their last rise. This is after the workers decided to drop their £16 a week rise demand for the present.

Billy Hunter, convenor of the plant, which employs 4,000 workers, said he was confident that management

by £6.85 a week. The rise was won by maintenance workers in a productivity agreement concluded at the end of a six week long strike. The workers are in no mood to give up such hard-won concessions lightly.

Elsewhere there has been almost a complete press blackout on struggles against the £6 ceiling. This situation was inadvertently revealed by the 'Guardian' of October 15th, which, in an article, on hospital workers, mentioned in passing that "In recent weeks the Confederation of British Industry has had inquiries from members

who have been in difficulty over the limit, and are facing or have faced industrial action to force them to concede more".

One of the few reported actions directly challenging the £6 limit is the £15 a week rise demanded by Rolls Royce workers in Scotland.

The claim, tabled last week by 6,000 manual workers, is for a straight 28%, and shop stewards are demanding improved holidays, better sick leave, and compassionate leave arrangements and a 35 hour week.

In reply, management has not only said that any improvements in conditions would have to be offset against the six pounds, but that any improvement in overtime rates to come out of the forthcoming national pay rises in the engineering industry must also be offset against the £6.

NHS: THE 'PLAIN TRUTH' AND BMA LIES

"The plain truth is that we have been getting our health service on the cheap for many years past, compared with other developed countries, and largely at the expense of those who work in the NHS". Who said it? Not us, but the Financial Times.

The demands being put forward by the junior hospital doctors are the clearest evidence of that "plain truth".

They demand no pay cuts. The present government offer will mean a drop in money wages for one third of doctors.

They demand that overtime be paid at the normal hourly rate. According to the government proposals, overtime is to be paid at 30% of normal rate.

They demand time 'on call' be paid at full rate.

That most of the junior hospital doctors are Tories, that many of them aspire to comfortable jobs as consultants, that their attitude to other health workers is often more one of snobbery than of solidarity, is irrelevant. Their demands are elementary from a trade union point of view. They should be fully supported by anyone who wants a civilised health service.

QUESTION: What is it that is only "a logical step" away from "instituting 'permits' to control travel — lest it lead to migration"?

QUESTION: What is it that "ultimately is the justification for the watchtower, the searchlight, and the Berlin Wall"?

QUESTION: What was described in 1946 as "uncommonly like the first step, and a big one, to National Socialism as practised in Germany"?

Give up? The answer to the first two questions in the abolition of pay beds, and the answer to the third is the National Health Service. And now for another question: what body was the author of all three almost clinically stupid statements? Who else but the British Medical Association (BMA).

The BMA's latest gem of information has hit the headlines. "300 specialists may quit", tromboned the fusty 'Telegraph'. Any evidence for these figures? Not a shred!

"IN the London Borough of Bexley, teachers have been asked to accept a 20% cut in staff numbers and a top class size of 49" — just one of the facts on education cuts which came out in the 21st October lobby of Parliament.

The afternoon lobby came at the end of a 10,000 strong march from Hyde Park to Parliament, organised by the South East Regional Council of the Trades Union Congress.

The National Union of Teachers had ratted on the lobby by refusing to call a half day strike — but banners were there from local NUT branches as well as from ATTI, AUT, NUS, and many trades councils and other trade unions.

The meeting with MPs in the Houses of Parliament revealed that "getting across" to MPs wasn't the answer, as one MP after another invented a reason why — although he opposed the cuts — he could not promise to vote against them.

Martin Flannery, whose arrogance as chairman of

Anti-cuts lobby gets little change from-MPs

the meeting caused people to leave the room in droves, explained, "No, I can't give you such an assurance. It is not as simple as that. We would get into trouble with the Labour Party".

Bob Cryer, another Tribune MP, excused himself differently. "We'll probably never even get a chance of voting on the cuts themselves: they'll be in a motion along with something we want to support. And even if we table an amendment it probably won't get discussed." William Roberts MP tried to get out of it by blaming the local authorities rather than the Government. Yet another MP couldn't give any assurance because he was "bound by my constituents, who might want the cuts".

However, many facts about the cuts did come out. One lobbyist from Bedford-

shire revealed that in his area educational expenditure was at a standstill in real terms, although it was the area with the fastest rate of population growth in the country. Inflation would transform this standstill into a swingeing cut.

3-day rule

A teacher from Bexley pointed to the cuts threatened there and the fight back Bexley teachers were organising. "We have asked the NUT to invoke the 3 day ruling by which we would refuse to cover or use supply teachers after three days of a teachers' absence".

As a North London lobbyist summed it up, the cuts will be thwarted, not by relying on MPs, but only by building united trade union based campaigns in every area. Paul Adams

THE GUILDFORD PUB BOMBS TRIAL

A judge speaks for his class

AT THE Old Bailey four young people have been condemned to life imprisonment for their alleged part in bombing a soldiers' pub in Guildford in October 1974.

The judge, Sir John Donaldson, formerly of the National Industrial Relations Court, used the occasion to exercise his moral indignation. The English language, he said, had no word strong enough to express his condemnation.

Donaldson is an eminent representative of a state responsible for atrocities the world over. He has never condemned those atrocities. He would never dream of indicting the British Army for the cold-blooded slaughter of 13 civilians (civilians, not IRA sold-

iers) in Derry in 1972. He would never dream of bringing Nixon, Ford, or Johnson to trial for napalming Vietnamese children.

All Donaldson's judgment tells us is what side he is on in the war which has been fought over the last six years between the British Army and the IRA. For the Guildford bombing was an act of war. It was a military action by one army against another.

It was a guerrilla action because that is the way the Irish Republicans have to fight against a bigger and better-armed enemy.

The bombing was horrifying. So is war in general. So, for example, were many of the actions of the French Resistance during world war 2; and

yet the French Resistance are generally considered heroes.

It all depends which side you are on in the war. When a war is fought for freedom, against oppression, against the exploitative system which breeds violence — then those who really want a society without wars have to take sides. The 'masters of war' will be defeated only in battle.

We support those who are fighting to end the Six County artificial state, to end the British military occupation, and for Ireland to be free and united. For that reason we deny the British state any right to try or sentence Irish Republican militants for the Guildford bombing. Chris Reynolds

'Cowboy' boss sacks UCATT members

STRIKING workers from the Mason-Davies site in Connah's Quay are preparing to call on building workers from all the other sites in the area for solidarity. Pickets are out on the site and the strike is 100% solid, although a large number of the men are still not unionised.

Local UCATT members were surprised when some time ago they learned that Mason Davies, a notorious lump firm, had got a contract to build council houses for the Alun-dee Council. This was a clear breach of the agreement between UCATT and the council to refuse to list such firms for tender.

Because the company was forced to take on local labour, several members of UCATT managed to get jobs on the site and began to organise it. D B "Snowy" Jones was elected steward and David Cadwallader deputy steward.

The site was dirty and dangerous: no toilets, no canteen, no scaffolding — and there were a number of lumpers working on it. So on Friday 18th October the local full-time UCATT official, Albert Prest (not a favourite with the lads!) came onto the site to represent the men in negotiations with the management. The site agent arrived with a member of the company's executive, explaining that the director, Mr Davies, couldn't attend since he was on holiday in Majorca. Consequently, they

said, they could discuss conditions but not pay.

The negotiations seemed to go quite well, with management agreeing to improve the site conditions by the following week and begin bonus negotiations too.

What no-one suspected, though, was that the site manager and the executive member were sitting in the negotiations with the cards, P45s, and made-up money of the steward, deputy steward, and their bricklaying and labouring mates ready in their pockets.

The negotiations started at 2pm and finished apparently amicably at 3.45pm; when Albert Prest left the site. Twenty minutes later "Snowy" Jones, David Cadwallader, and the mates were given their cards and told to go.

At this even the unorganised workers stopped work and walked off the site, which is now being picketed.

Charlie Jones, an official in the local UCATT branch, told Workers Fight that the Regional Panel should be reviewing the case on Monday 27th, but he expected delays.

Connah's Quay is the area most of the Shrewsbury 24 building worker pickets were from. It was then and still is now notorious for the bad conditions on sites and the barbarism of the building trades employers. Jack Price

AUEW STILL INDECISIVE ON £6 LIMIT

The largest union to vote against the £6 limit was the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. But the AUEW has not made any firm declaration of support for its members who go in for claims beyond the £6 limit.

Instead, its first reaction after the TUC vote in favour of the £6 limit was to ask the TUC for clarification on how the limit should be interpreted in relation to the complex pay structure in engineering.

No clarification has come from the TUC. The AUEW has now referred pay policy to a meeting of its national committee in early December. At present the AUEW's claim on behalf of the engineering workers is nothing more precise than "a substantial increase". The national committee — an elected body of 52 lay members — will decide whether or not to claim over the £6 limit.

Last year the AUEW submitted to the Tory Phase 3 pay curbs — in order to help the newly-elected Labour Government which was continuing the curbs. If the AUEW submits again, it will be grossest treachery to its members' interests, to its own proclaimed policy of opposition to statutory wage restraint, and to the whole working class. Unless the £6 limit is broken we all stand to face an average 15% cut in real wages over 12 months.

Steelworkers Protest

A massive march of 3,000 steelworkers led by a thousand from the giant North Wales site of Shotton came to the Houses of Parliament on Tuesday October 21st to protest against the closures which still threaten large sections of the industry.

Despite a review by Lord Beswick of the original Melchett closure plans and a stay of execution in a number of individual cases, there are still no assurances from the government.

The demonstration, which was organised by the National Action Committee, with delegates from Shotton, Ebbw Vale, Sheffield, East Moors, GKN Cardiff, Scunthorpe, Hartlepool, Lanarkshire, Dalzell, Clydebridge, and Tollcross, was an attempt, as one of its leaders put it to a WF reporter, "to underline the case for expansion".

Ken Monti, secretary of the Shotton Steel Works Action

Committee, put it starkly. "We are not prepared to let closure happen. If the decision goes against us, the fight we've put up over the last five years will be nothing compared to what will happen then. Closure would be catastrophic: it would annihilate a whole community".

Dunlop workers on Merseyside held a one day strike on 21st October in solidarity with their brothers and sisters working for the same company in Italy (Pirelli).

When the Italian workers returned from their holidays they found their jobs under threat and occupied the factory.

Anti-Fascists in the Blackburn and Preston areas with support from Manchester and Merseyside held a strong picket of about one hundred socialists and trade unionists outside Blackburn's St George's Hall on 15th October. The picket was organised to oppose the National Front's "Anti-Immigration Act" meeting and to protest at the Blackburn council allowing the fascists to use the hall.

As the fascist meeting was directly next door to the Blackburn police HQ they were well protected by scores of police — some of whom were on horses. The police ejected about 20 anti-fascists from the Front's meeting, and forced the picket onto the opposite side of the street. Because of this the fascists were able to have a meeting attended by about 70 local racists, but throughout the proceedings and at the close a constant barrage of chanting was maintained by the anti-fascist demonstration.

The arrogance of the Washwood Heath, Birmingham, management of British Leyland reveals all the swagger of a capitalist class with a Labour Government firmly and fiercely behind it.

About 600 van assembly workers at the plant were sent home on Monday 20th for the rest of the week because, in the opinion of management, they weren't working hard enough.

Ira Hill, the senior shop steward, disputes this allegation, seeing the problems in conveyor belt breakdowns and material shortages.

In the past workers have complained that nationalisations hardly changed a firm in its ways of treating workers. In this case the government are supporting British Leyland and using the necessity of this support, not to aid the workers, but to blackmail them into working till they drop.

London Workers Fight readers' meeting on Ireland. Speaker: Sean Matgamna. 8pm, Sunday 16th November, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, London N1.

Campaign to Repeal the Immigration Act. National Conference — Saturday November 1st, at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, Holborn, from 10am to 6pm. Creche available. More details from Franco Caprino, 45 Kensington Park Rd, W11 (727 2993) or Pat Brain (674 5775).

Angola Solidarity Committee picket of South AFRICA House in protest against new South African invasion of Angola: 1pm to 2pm, Monday 27th October.

Angola Solidarity Committee public meeting, with a representative from the MPLA: 7.30pm, Thursday 6th November, at the New Theatre, LSE, Houghton St, Aldwych, London WC1.

Irish Relief Conference: Saturday November 1st, at the Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, All Saints, commencing 2.30pm. Details from George O'Doherty, 31 Kings Avenue, Old Trafford, Manchester 16.