

workers' ACTION

No.111 July 15-Aug.12, 1978 10p

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NO PHASE 4!

PHASE 3 wage controls end of July 31st. There is little doubt that the Government will be imposing new 'Phase 4' controls and that the trade union leaders' attitude will be to make a few formal protests [in line with their union conference decisions] and then try to police the controls in practice.

Three years ago, when this Labour government first introduced pay curbs, we were told that it was an emergency measure to avoid economic disaster. Repeatedly the TUC leaders have promised a return to free collective bargaining. But it is clear that what Callaghan, Healey and their allies in the trade union leadership want is

permanent limits on wage increases.

The TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee has approved a document which promises long-term pay agreements between the TUC and a Labour Government.

These pay controls don't stop inflation, they don't stop unemployment, and they don't stop the social service cuts. Their aim and their effect is to boost profits.

That fact was underlined by the recent revelation that many major companies have fixed things so that they pay nothing or almost nothing in profits tax. While wage demands, even from the lowest-paid workers, cause an outcry about wrecking the eco-

nomy, and while armies of bureaucrats check on every meagre penny paid out to social security claimants, this massive tax swindle goes undisturbed.

Public sector bosses, armed forces commanders, and top judges have been given increases going up to 100% plus — no 10% limit for them! And an official report has recommended 40% rises for the bosses' picket-busting boys in blue, the police.

That's the way the system works — using every means possible to pump the wealth created by the working class into the pockets of the bosses and their hangers-on. And the Labour Government has dedicated itself to working the

system.

In the period up to the general election [probably in October] the right wing Labour leaders will be campaigning hard to get the labour movement to approve this policy of working the system. We will be told that a united front between the unions and the Labour Government is necessary against the Tories. We will be told that we should not criticise Callaghan and Healey because Thatcher and Joseph will be even worse.

It is all a swindle. Socialists in the labour movement must say to the Labour leaders: if you want a united front, then you must line up with the interests of the working class, rather than expecting the

working class to back the capitalist interests which you are serving.

Strikes and wage demands must be supported even if the Labour leaders make an outcry about the possible damage to their election chances.

■ No more wage curbs!

■ Full labour movement support for every group of workers fighting to improve its conditions

■ Immediate wage increases to make good the last three years' drop in living standards. Cost of living clauses to guarantee against erosion by inflation in the future.

■ Make the bosses pay!

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

AFTER A campaign for sponsors in Labour Parties and trade unions across the country, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory is holding its Conference on Saturday July 15th, in London.

One constituency Labour Party (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) and four LPYS branches (Basingstoke, Tottenham, Toxteth and Wallasey) have so far sponsored the Campaign, as has an EETPU branch in North West London and an ASTMS branch in Manchester.

Individual sponsors include two MPs (Joan Maynard and Harry Selby), three prospective parliamentary candidates (Ted Knight, Hornsey; Ken Livingstone, Hampstead; and Jane Chapman, Dover & Deal), and numerous Labour councillors, trade union branch secretaries, and shop stewards.

The Campaign's basic idea is that a call for a Labour vote in the coming general election must be coupled with a condemnation of the government's pro-capitalist record and preparation for a socialist fightback against the next government, Tory or Labour.

Undoubtedly the official Labour leaders' line will be that the labour movement should sink its differences for the sake of keeping out the Tories. With the smirking, arrogant faces of Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph appearing more and more often on television, this view will gain some support. But it would be a defeat for the labour movement fully equal to a Tory election victory if the Callaghan team got back on the basis of the labour movement approving its wage-freezing, job-slashing record.

The SCLV aims to have Labour returned — but by a militant, vigilant, critical labour movement.

The SCLV will fight on two fronts at the same time: against the Tories and against the pro-capitalist Labour leadership — but it will conduct that fight from **within** the labour movement.

The policies of the SCLV platform are not the standard policies of the established Labour left: import controls, planning agreements, direction of investment, withdrawal from the Common Market, price controls. Those policies are often nationalist, and thus anti-socialist, in character; moreover, they are oriented towards giving advice on state economic policy, rather than mobilising the rank and file of the labour movement.

For the SCLV, policies which arm the rank and file to start the fightback **themselves**, here and now, are central.

The SCLV platform does not extend as far as the full politics of **Workers' Action**, or those of any of the other tendencies in the campaign. But it sums up our basic fighting demands on crucial current issues with a degree of precision entirely adequate to building a broad class-struggle opposition in the labour movement. The tenden-

cies and individuals in the SCLV still have their own programmes and viewpoints; but the SCLV enables them to come together, to do more than just stating their positions for the record, and to start organising effectively against the right wing.

The SCLV has the support of **Workers' Action** and the **Chartist, Socialist Challenge** and **Workers' Power** have said they will support the Campaign too.

The main organised left-wing tendency in the Labour Party to refuse support is the **Militant**. They prefer to continue their endless, timeless, abstract pontificating about the need for a 'Labour government with a socialist programme of nationalising the 220 monopolies', washing it down with large draughts of demagoguery about the demon Tories.

The most promising thing for the SCLV, however, is the support of many left-wing activists in the Labour Party who up to now have been unorganised and thus without perspectives beyond the routine work in their own constituencies and trade union branches. The SCLV can give these activists the perspective that they lack.

For many shop stewards and trade union activists who are decidedly left-wing but can see no clear political perspective, the SCLV can also provide an entry point into purposeful, systematic political activity.

According to the plans for activity to be presented at the July 15th conference, the SCLV will be fighting to get constituency Labour Parties to run their election campaigns on the basis of SCLV policies and SCLV material. It will be organising local SCLV groups in each constituency, with their own caucus meetings and also their own public meetings. It will seek speaking invitations to trade union branches and organise factory gate meetings and factory SCLV groups.

At the best, the SCLV could be the beginning of a left current in the Labour Party representing a major revival of militant socialism in the British labour movement. At the least, it will provide a militant socialist voice from within the labour movement, and a contribution to the preparation to the necessary fightback, at election time.

Join the Campaign!

MEETINGS

MANCHESTER: 7.30pm, Thursday 27th July, at Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall St. Speaker: John Douglas, secretary USDAW CWS Packing/Hulme 5 tenants' association.

COVENTRY: 7.30pm, Monday 7th August, at the Elastic Inn.

EDINBURGH: 7.30pm, Wednesday 9th August, at the Trades Council, Picardy Place.

SCLV supporters' meeting: 2pm, Sunday 16th July, at Highfields Community Centre, LEICESTER

For details of other meetings, or all further enquiries, contact SCLV, Box 127, 182 Upper St, London N1.

No white wash poll! Left moves into action

JULY 10th: THE SYRIANS have for the moment stopped shelling Ashrafiyah, a Christian quarter of Beirut. But the carnage has not stopped: snipers' fire and isolated incidents still claim their victims in this latest Lebanese flare-up.

The Syrians' attack on the Maronite Christian stronghold follows a round of internecine fighting on the Christian extreme right in Lebanon, which started when the Franjeh clan pulled out of the Maronite alliance, the Lebanese Front.

The Lebanese Front was the alliance of the three great Christian dynastic families that dominate Lebanese politics: the Chamoun clan, (led by former President Camille Chamoun and his sons) represented by the National Liberal Party; the Gemayel clan, (led by Pierre Gemayel and his son) with its organisation the Phalangist or Kata'eb Party; and the Franjeh clan (led by Suleiman Franjeh and his son Tony).

Revenge

Franjeh withdrew from the Lebanese Front in opposition, it seems, to the anti-Syrian line being taken by the other clans. In retaliation, the Gemayels set up an office of their Kata'eb party in the Franjeh stronghold of Sghorta.

After a revenge killing of a Kata'eb official, raiders shot dead Tony Franjeh, his wife, his daughter, his maid, his driver ... and even his dog.

Then, making the alliance between the Franjeh clan and the Syrians even clearer,

SYRIA STIRS THE CLANS TO WARFARE

Syrian armoury gave cover to Franjehists who kidnapped and then machine-gunned 36 Kata'eb militiamen.

Behind the dynastic disputes lie the deadlocked forces — each trying to resolve the Lebanese situation in its own favour — of the Syrians; the Maronite right; the Muslim left and their Palestinian allies; and the Israelis.

When the Syrians first invaded Lebanon they wanted to elbow their way to a place at the negotiating table with the Israelis. It looked as if a separate deal between Israel and Egypt would leave Syria out in the cold.

The Assad regime in Syria also wanted to behead the radical movement which threatened to overthrow the

confessional conservatism of Lebanon.

That radical movement had been partly shaped and was supported by the Palestinian population and its militias, living mainly in the area outside Beirut and in the South of the country. Assad understood that without smashing the Palestinians he could neither halt the left nor impress Israel with his credentials.

The first phase of Syria's intervention was therefore an alliance with the Christian Right and — at one remove — with the Israelis. (They were supplying the Maronites, and independently attacking the Palestinians in the border areas.) The Israelis held the area south of the Litani river and the Syrians the rest.

The Arab League, posturing

as supporters of the Palestinians, in reality lent their approval to the Syrian invasion, which they covered by adding a handful of troops from other Arab countries and renaming the bloody invaders "Arab Deterrent Force".

The broker for this cynical deal was Jaloud, the right-hand man of Libya's President Ghaddafi.

The second phase was an attempt by the Syrians to keep their peace in Lebanon and press their claims internationally on this basis. For this they installed the government headed by their man President Sarkis.

While this situation has lasted for about 18 months, it continually threatened to fall apart as the Christian Right revived its partition schemes.

Some variants of these schemes would divide Lebanon in such a way that the dynastic families could maintain their grip in their own areas rather than be forced to concede to the now more populous Muslims. Other variants would give a large measure of self-government to Christian areas within a federal Lebanon

Israel

In fact, with each new outbreak of civil war comes a further step in the de facto partition of Lebanon as populations shift to safety on 'their own side' of the battle lines.

The Syrians hoped to use a combination of pressure from the Sarkis government and muscle from the Franjehists to check the 'partitionists'. The scuttling of the

Lebanese Front and the escalation of the reprisals has therefore probably been encouraged by the Syrians.

The problem for them is that they cannot deliver the Chamoun-Gemayel bloc a crushing blow — although they have the forces to do that. To defeat this bloc utterly — rather than keep it in check and try to split it — would force Syria into confrontation with Israel.

Israel, whose jets last week buzzed Beirut as a warning to the Syrians, has made it clear that it will invade if its allies, the Maronite right, are smashed.

Left

What of the Palestinian and Muslim Left in all this?

There does not seem to be any evidence of them siding with the Syrians or the Franjehists against their old enemies — though there are reports that some sort of agreement has been made between Franjeh and certain Sunni Muslim leaders.

The policy for the Muslim left must be to step up the demands for a Syrian withdrawal, for an end to confessionalism, and for freedom of action for the Palestinians.

Anything short of this (in itself very limited) 'democratic' programme inevitably gives comfort to the Syrians or to indigenous reactionaries. Such a programme would also serve the interests of the working class whose own perspective must aim at replacing the present political and economic system with a workers' state.

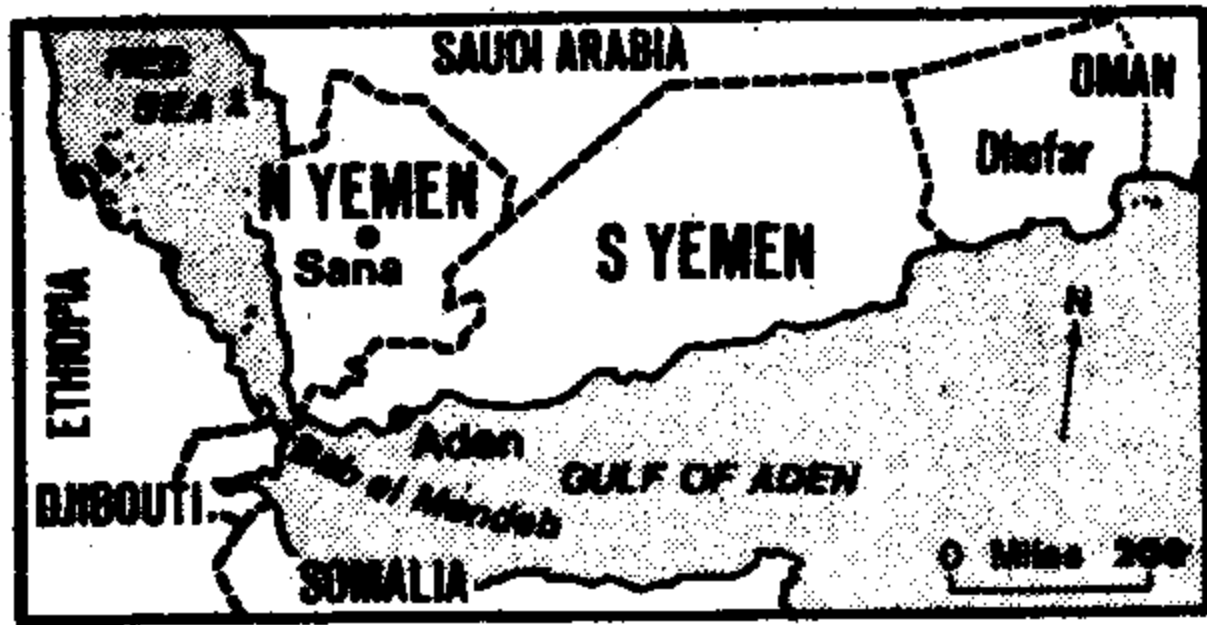
S. YEMEN MOVES TO MOSCOW

The execution of South Yemen's president on 26th June, and the assassination the previous day of North Yemen's president, are likely to lead to an increase in Russian influence in this strategic area.

South Yemen — which, until 1967, was the British colony of Aden — stands at the southern end of the Red Sea.

Until a few years ago Russia had strong links with Egypt. Egypt has turned decisively towards the USA. Russia is seeking other areas of influence in the Middle East.

The South Yemeni government has



FBI sits on \$40m files

THE US Attorney General, Griffin Bell, has for now slipped out of being jailed on a charge of Contempt of Court. The case against him has been postponed.

The charge arose when Bell refused to obey the instructions of the court to hand over FBI files relating to the \$40M suit being brought by the American Socialist Workers Party against the FBI. The SWP need the files to prove that they and the Young Socialist Alliance have been victims of state spying and interference for 40 years.

If Bell is sent to jail — which would be the normal outcome in the case of a refusal to comply with court instructions — he would not be the first Attorney General to be jailed: Nixon's Attorney General, John Mitchell, was jailed for his part in the Watergate affair.

But Bell has the support of the Carter administration, which makes Carter's Freedom of Information legislation look like as hollow as a gas

described itself as 'Marxist-Leninist' ever since independence in 1967. But under president Salem Rubai Ali it was aligning itself more with China than with Russia. With China's foreign policy as it is at present, that also means linking up with the most right wing powers in the area.

Ali had opened relations with Saudi Arabia, accepting aid and making plans for a pipeline to carry Saudi crude oil.

China's alliances in the area go further, including a recent link-up with the medieval British-backed Sultanate of Oman, which meant the dropping of China's previous support for the National Liberation Front of Dhofar.

In place of Salem Rubai Ali, Abdel Fattah Ismail — a known Moscow loyalist — has emerged as the unquestioned head of state.

Russia already has large military facilities in South Yemen, using the port of Aden as a staging post for its shipment of arms to Ethiopia.

According to the SWP's paper Militant: "Over a 16-year period the FBI used 300 informers in the two socialist groups, as well as 1,000 others who — as landlords, bank officials, or in other capacities — provided information about the socialists."

The state's argument is simple: to hand over the files would be to disclose the names of their agents. But that's the best reason to demand they be handed over. Each one of those agents should be exposed for taking part in this crime of the state against the workers' movement.

Meanwhile in Britain the Labour government has gone back on yet another promise: instead of taking apart the Official Secrets Act, it is about to publish a White Paper which will more or less confirm the present secrecy laws. A case like the one the SWP is bringing against the FBI could not even be started here!

Friend of imperialists vs. 'stooge of Social-Imperialism'

THE major conflict now brewing between Vietnam and China shows the chronic incapacity of the nationalist-oriented Stalinist regimes to 'peacefully coexist' among themselves, even while they are seeking the most unprincipled alliances with the world's reactionary regimes.

Over 300,000 Chinese are expected to flee from Vietnam to China this year. China has withdrawn all aid to Vietnam.

The Chinese are describing Vietnam as a stooge of Soviet 'social-imperialism'; while (according to China) Vietnamese Communist Party cadres consider 'China their No.3 enemy, after the USA and Cambodia.

The closed, bureaucratic systems of both countries mean that only the most obviously one-sided accounts of the conflict are made available. But the roots of the matter lie in the development of Chinese foreign policy.

The Chinese Communist Party has never broken from the theory of 'socialism in one country' or pursued an internationalist policy. But in the '50s and '60s China was generally more isolated internationally than the USSR, and backed generally more left-wing policies.

From the early 1970s, prospects of reaching an agreement with the imperialist powers began to open up for China. US President Nixon was welcomed in Peking in 1971, while American bombs continued to rain

down on Vietnam.

Since then China has dumped its former left-wing talk almost completely. Its international allies include the reactionary military dictatorships of Chile, Iran, Pakistan and Oman. It supplied Ceylon with arms the government was putting down the left wing JVP rising in 1971. It supported the South African-backed forces of the FNLA in Angola.

And now the Maoists even support NATO, and right wing forces in Europe like Britain's Tories, Germany's Franz Josef Strauss, and Portugal's General Eanes, in the name of the struggle against 'Soviet social-imperialism'.

With this policy shift by China, the hostility between China and Russia hardened into open hatred.

While the war in Vietnam continued, the needs of the resistance to the enormous US bombardment forced some semblance of a common front on Russia, China and Vietnam. The Vietnamese leaders, for their part, tried to keep out of the quarrel between China and Russia as much as they could.

With the end of the war the common front started to break down. Vietnam has moved much closer to Russia, joining the East-European-based Comecon economic bloc. When the rabidly nationalist regime in Cambodia entered a border war with Vietnam, China supported the Cambodians — although the Chinese in Cambodia have certainly suffered worse than any of the ill-treatment alleged by the Chinese government to have taken place against the Chinese

in Vietnam.

Another factor has been added by China's increased in the overseas Chinese communities, which are very important in commerce and industry all over the East.

During the Cultural Revolution very little interest was shown in these communities. Now the Chinese government is very interested in the boost which these wealthy and industrious communities could give to Chinese trade.

The Chinese government reacted in a hostile fashion when economic reforms in south Vietnam in the spring of this year virtually wiped out the mainly Chinese small-business class. Now the Chinese government claims that the Chinese throughout Vietnam — not just businessmen, but also the workers in the North — are being persecuted.

It is not unlikely that the charge is true, for hostility to the Chinese is a deeply ingrained tradition in Vietnam. Although during the struggle against US imperialism the National Liberation Front pledged itself to do away with all discrimination against the Chinese that pledge has clearly been dropped now that the Vietnamese leadership is convinced that China is engaging in dangerous great-power diplomacy which could help the reactionary powers.

As for the Chinese leadership, they fear the emergence of a strong, independent Vietnam just on their frontiers.

VICTIMS OF MOSCOW'S MONOPOLISTS



Anatoly Shcharansky

"PRISONER", replied Alexander Ginzburg when asked for his nationality by the court in Kaluga, 100 miles south of Moscow.

In a Moscow court, Anatoly Shcharansky declared: "I do not acknowledge any guilt and I consider the charges absurd".

It is another in the Russian bureaucrats' long series of trumped-up trials. Ginzburg is charged with 'anti-Soviet activities'; if found guilty he could face five years in jail, five years in a labour camp, and five years in exile. The accusation against Shcharansky is that "he maintained regular connections in the course of 1974-77 with representatives of foreign intelligence services... supplied them with information which constitutes a state secret of the USSR... He urged the

governments of a number of countries under a pretext of concern for 'human rights' to change [the USSR's] home and foreign policy". He could face a death sentence.

Two other dissidents are being tried at the same time. Viktoras Pyatkus is charged with "anti-Soviet activities" and Alexander Filatov with spying.

All four are members of a group set up to monitor the USSR's observance of the international Helsinki agreements on human rights. And that is their real 'crime'.

According to some reports Shcharansky did in fact have contacts with the CIA — through a KGB man who was a double

agent. But there is no reason to suppose any of the four was in a position to supply information to the USA which would materially harm the military defence against imperialism of the Russian state.

If these four have anti-socialist political views, that is not a crime to be dealt with by labour camps and jails. And if secret contacts with imperialist governments are a crime, then among the first criminals are... the bureaucratic rulers of the USSR. Time and again they have made secret deals with imperialism at the expense of the international working class.

In the days of Lenin and Trotsky, the USSR conducted its negotiations with capitalist powers and the whole business of government openly, in front of

the working class. At the same time even the pro-capitalist Cadet party was suppressed only after it had started actively recruiting for the counter-revolutionary armies striving to overthrow the workers' state.

The present trials have nothing to do with protecting the foundations of the workers' state, and everything to do with protecting the political monopoly of a privileged bureaucracy.

While the Western governments keep quiet about political prisoners in Iran, Chile, Argentina, or Northern Ireland, they are using the Shcharansky case as an excuse to strike a high note on human rights. Yet Rudolf Bahro, the East German economist recently jailed for eight years, gets hardly a mention — because he is a convinced communist as well as an opponent of the bureaucrats.

Only the working class will really defend democratic rights — East or West.

AT THE Anti-Nazi League conference last weekend [8th July], the key issues of struggle against fascism and racism were clearly visible beneath the surface of the smooth-running proceedings.

But a resolution from Wirral Anti-Fascist Committee, calling on the ANL to take a definite stand for no platform for fascists, for no immigration controls, for the expulsion of fascists from the labour movement, and for supporting black self-defence groups, was rejected by the 800 delegates, among whom the Socialist Workers' Party was strongly represented.

The conference did back a call from East London com-

ANL—Grass roots militancy without a clear direction

munity organisations for an attempt to seize Brick Lane from the fascists on Sunday 16th, and for a day of strikes and civil disobedience on Monday 17th, in solidarity with the Asian communities

of East London facing racist attacks.

The ANL in East London is also helping to form defence committees based on local tenants' associations. In Cardiff the ANL has taken up the fight against the deportation under the immigration laws of a Pakistani bakery worker.

If this meant that the ANL was going to follow a policy of driving the fascists off the streets and opposing immigration controls in practice, it might be pedantic to insist on having the right form of words in the policy statement. Yet the ANL's record is one of not confronting the fascists, of not doing anything about the NF's May Day march in Central and East London, of welcoming state bans on marches, and of keeping Syd Bidwell MP, signatory to the Powellite Select Committee report on Immigration, as a sponsor.

At the conference there were many militant speeches. Yet the indications were that the ANL, while responding in a limited way to the needs of the struggle, will continue to try to keep its stance ambiguous enough to retain its star-studded sponsor list of bishops, professors, and Young Tories.

Maurice Ludmer of Birmingham Trades Council and Searchlight magazine pointed out that the National Front are turning to the systematic use of violence. Nigel Harris of the SWP stressed that churning out leaflets about how the NF are Nazis makes no impression at all on their 'cadre' of thugs, the building of which is 'the secret of success' for the NF.

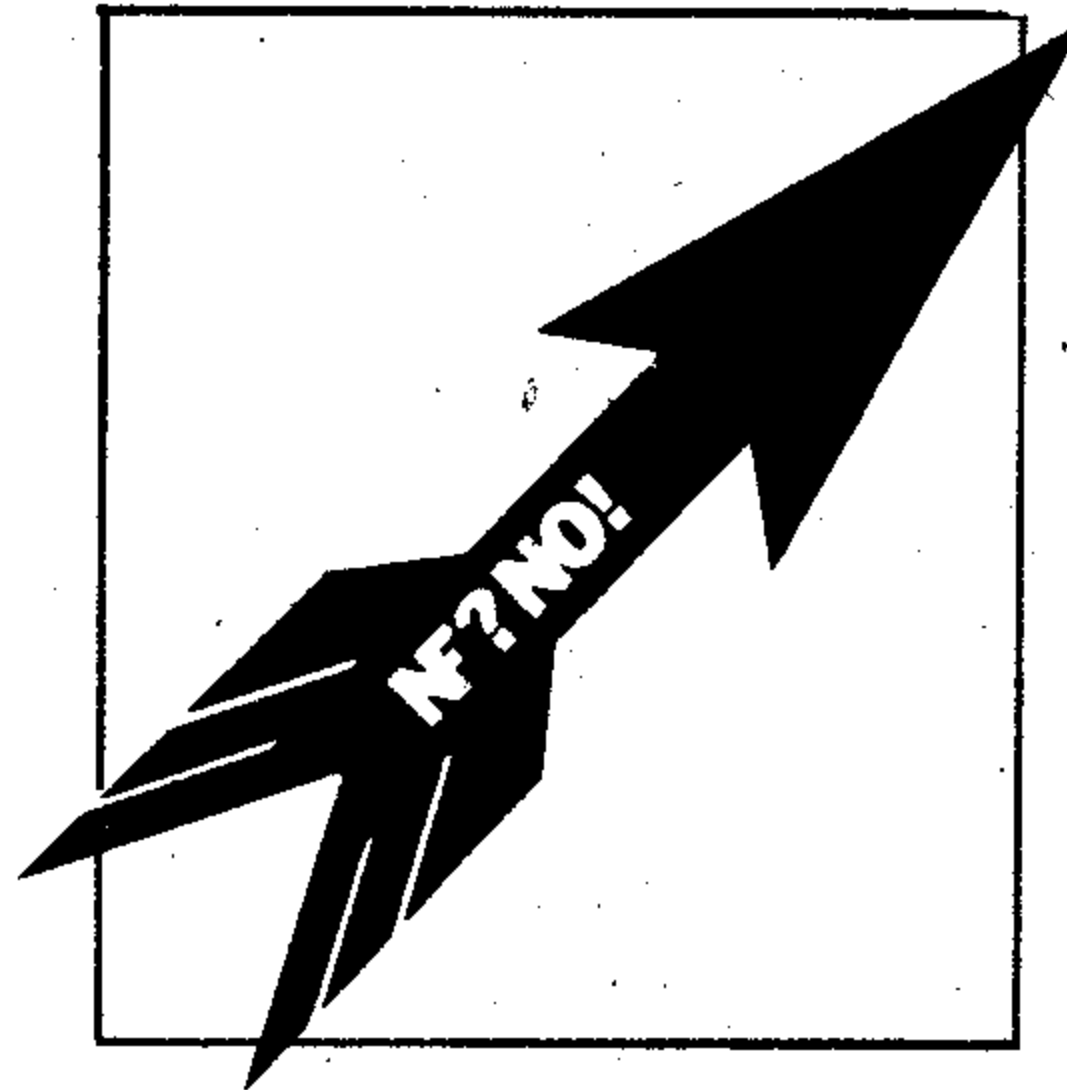
So what is to be done? Ludmer — and his allies in the Communist Party — believe that the answer is to appeal to the Government to stop the NF, but he tactfully refrained from pushing the point...

Ludmer got rapturous applause when he described a new rule to be introduced into the standing orders of

Birmingham Trades Council providing for the expulsion of fascists; Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill declared that no-one should work with a fascist.

But in replying to the Wirral Anti-Fascist Committee resolution, ANL organiser (and SWP member) Paul Holborrow rejected the idea of kicking fascists out of the unions, on the strange grounds that a fascist kicked out and then reinstated would be doubly dangerous. It is not clear whether this was a change in the SWP's policy, or just Holborrow acting as a freelance front-man for the ANL.

On immigration controls, a resolution was put which pointed out that they actively encourage the racism from which the NF grows. "Conference therefore wishes to express its complete opposition to all immigration controls. Conference recognises, however, that this is an ex-



pression of opinion by the Conference majority but it is in no way binding on supporters or sponsoring organisations of the ANL".

Tariq Ali of the IMG spoke on the need to link the fight against fascism with a struggle against racism and in particular the immigration laws; but IMG members voted against the Wirral Anti-Fascist Committee resolution calling for just that.

When the Wirral Anti-Fascist Committee resolution was voted on, there was uproar for the first time in the orderly conference proceedings. Many delegates wanted to take it in parts. That was another indication of the two strong and contradictory pressures bearing on the ANL: the militant drive of its grassroots activists, and its leaders' concern for classless, contentless 'anti-fascist' unity.

Workers' Action supporters will be doing all in their power to strengthen the militant drive of the ANL activists.

JAMES RYAN C. FOSTER

MOSS SIDE — HITTING BACK AT NF ATTACKS

THE NATIONAL Front, according to the Manchester Evening News, are making 'law and order' their main issue in the Moss Side by-election.

Exactly what they mean by this was made abundantly clear, as, sensing their rapidly diminishing support in the community, they launched a campaign of thuggery against local left wingers and left organisations.

On Saturday 24th June, six NF members went into Grassroots, a left-wing bookshop in the centre of Manchester, and destroyed about £50-worth of stock. When staff called the police and told them who had done the damage they showed little interest other than to inquire if the culprits were all white. A week later, the louts were still at liberty.

Four days after that, a Workers' Action supporter and his girlfriend were attacked in the street by about eight Front members because they were wearing anti-racist badges. Luckily for our comrades, this brave band must have had other things on their minds. The comrades got away unhurt after their badges had been wrenched off.

A few days later, a log was thrown through the window of the flat that was used as the Socialist Unity headquarters in the last council elections.

The labour movement must right away start planning the measures necessary to defend itself — and take the fight to the fascists.

Hulme and Moss Side tenants groups have already taken a decision to oppose the NF should they dare to canvass in the area, and the Hulme tenants group have organised a public meeting on the issue. Moss Side Labour Party has voted to take the initiative in setting up an ANL branch in the area.

Grassroots bookshop are also taking steps to make sure the fascists don't have it so easy next time. They are appealing for people to stay in the shop for two-hour periods on Saturdays, and several organisations have agreed to send people along, as has the WA Supporters' Group.

But much more remains to be done. If the fascists choose to operate on the level of physical violence, then we must make sure we can match them blow for blow.

PETE KEENLYSIDE
Moss Side CLP



Blacks attack NF in Moss Side

BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN INSPIRES NO ONE

THE RESULT in the Moss Side by-election is due soon after we go to press. But it can be said already that the Labour campaign was calculated to inspire no-one.

It was run directly from Transport House, with leaflets saying that the government's performance has been "good for families" and that "it all adds up to more people getting the homes they want"; claims which ring very hollow in the constituency's Hulme flats.

The flats are damp and infested with bugs and vermin. There is fungus on the walls and heating bills are huge. The lifts are usually out of order and the stairways are filthy. All this despite the fact that the flats are less than ten years old!

As far as the tenants are concerned, the only answer is to knock Hulme 5 down. Local La-

bour councillors say it can't be done because of the £66 million still outstanding, owed by Manchester corporation to banks and finance houses. Our answer is: nationalise those banks and finance houses, and cancel the debt!

Resentment among working class tenants in Hulme is rising despite the official Labour complacency. On July 11th tenants picketed a ceremony at Manchester University where the chief architect of Hulme 5 was receiving a honorary degree.

The National Front campaign in Moss Side also met militant opposition. When the NF fascists held a public meeting on Saturday 8th, local blacks and anti-fascists held a counter-demonstration and stoned the NF's van.

JOHN DOUGLAS

■ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour!

Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions. Demand immediate wage increases backdated to make up for the drop in our living standards over the last two and a half years.

Since 1975 workers' living standards have dropped by about 12%. Three phases of wage controls have been decreed by the Labour government and policed, openly or shamefacedly, by the TUC leaders.

Back in the 1960s some people argued for a 'socialist incomes policy' as a means of ensuring a fair deal for the lower paid. With NUPE having to organise a series of pre-election rallies to try to get the government and the TUC to pay attention to its demand for a £60-a-week minimum wage, that argument is wearing thinner and thinner.

Did the wage controls stop inflation? No: even after their recent slowdown, prices are still rising at a rate of nearly 10% a year, and a further rise in the rate is now forecast.

Did wage controls stop the cuts? Not at all! Did they stop

unemployment? Even less so!

But one sector of the economy did benefit: profits. Trading profits were up 30% in 1977 compared to 1976, and the Financial Times Index rose 37% over the year.

As more and more trade union conferences are recognising, any 'incomes policy' under capitalism is only a way to make the working class pay the cost of the capitalist crisis.

To restore and maintain living standards is the first step in refusing to pay the cost of their crisis: that means wage increases to make up the loss since 1974-5, and clauses guaranteeing that in future wages rise month by month in line with prices.

While putting forward these general demands, the SCLV must also support all workers fighting for improvements in their living standards.

■ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end to overtime.

■ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.

"Live working or die fighting" was the slogan of one of the first ever distinctively working class uprisings, in the French city of Lyons in 1834.

Nearly 150 years later, capitalism still cannot grant the right to work, the most basic right in capitalist society, without which a worker can be turned into an outcast overnight. More and more now, it is the young who are made outcasts: people under 29 account for nearly half the unemployed total at peak school leaving time.

The Labour government has a direct responsibility. The public sector and nationalised industries like steel and British Leyland have been in the forefront of job-cutting. And in schools, hospitals, town halls and a multitude of local and national public institutions, cuts in services to workers have meant cuts in jobs for workers too.

The bosses' organisation, the

Confederation of British Industry, has put its finger on the answer in its statements opposing the introduction of a 35-hour week. A shorter working week would mean reduced profits, they say.

So it would. Greed for profit is the one obstacle which stands in the way of measures to get rid of unemployment by just cutting the working week to 35, 30 or 25 hours.

The initiative must come from workers facing redundancies who are willing to take control of the organisation of work schedules and impose work-sharing with no loss of pay. The demand for nationalisation without compensation is a necessary response to capitalist threats, lock-outs or shut-downs.

The SCLV backs the fight to force the Labour government to stop toadying to the profiteers and to save jobs by widespread nationalisation and a general cut in the working week.

■ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.

■ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.

■ The black working people of South Africa and Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.

In Opposition, the Labour Party voted against the 1971 Immigration Act. The 1976 Party conference voted for the repeal of the 1971 and 1968 Acts "and all legislation that discriminates against immigrants"; for labour movement support for black self-defence, and for purging racism and racists from the labour movement.

The Government has not carried out Party policy. On the contrary: it has continued to implement the 1971 Act. Thus many workers and trade unionists are liable to being picked up at any time by the police and deported without a hearing, or they are totally dependent on their employer's favour to extend their work permit — just because of the colour of their skin and where they were born!

When Thatcher started beating the racist drum in preparation for the Tory election campaign, Labour ministers replied

that immigration controls were already as strict as they could be. And five Labour MPs — including Syd Bidwell, who was known as a left-winger — put their names, together with the Tories, to the shameful Powellite Commons Select Committee Report on Immigration.

That report hinted at the introduction of a 'pass card' system. Even today, black people going for jobs often have to produce their passports.

Immigration controls are not a way to create harmony for 'those already here'; they are inseparable from racial discrimination and scapegoating within Britain.

Recent weeks have shown that on the streets of East London, fascism and racism are not just political theories; they mean murder. The labour movement can no more allow free speech to the fascists of the National Front than we would to an avowed Murder Party.

What it is fighting

■ Make the bosses pay, not the working class! Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence' Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

■ Freeze rents and rates.

■ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.

The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

■ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads [SPG, Special Branch, MI5 etc], public accountability, etc.

"Back to work with Labour" was the 1974 election slogan. It sounds hollow now there are one and a half million unemployed. In contrast to the 'confrontationist' Heath with his 3-day week designed to beat the miners, the slogan stressed the Labour leaders' line that all should work together for some common interest.

The record on wages and jobs shows that common interest is a myth. The basic economic questions of wages, jobs and profits are questions of class struggle. The so-called 'common interest' championed by Callaghan and Healey is merely a disguise for the interests of the bosses.

It is often said by the Labour right that the left's demands for nationalisations are calculated to push voters into the Tories' arms. That wouldn't be so if the call for nationalisation were taken up, as part of a general fight to make the bosses pay.

That means connecting the

fight, not with the naive idea that any extension of the state's economic role must be socialist, but with a struggle to defeat and break up the present state machine and replace it by a regime based on workers' control at all levels.

The army's strikebreaking against the firemen and their planned strikebreaking against the oil tanker drivers, and the police assaults on the Grunwick picket lines, show how the state is very definitely a bosses' state.

The deportations of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball, and the prosecution of Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, underline the point: here we have a Labour Home Secretary clearly acting on the dictates of secret police and intelligence agencies — many of which are in no way answerable to the Government, let alone to Parliament or any public forum.

Manchester Chief Constable

James Anderton's repeated aid to the National Front shows the reactionary bias of police chiefs who continue to run the state machine whether the government is Tory or Labour.

The SCLV recognises that the Wilson-Callaghan government policy has been to manage, and be managed by, that capitalist state. The Campaign will fight to break the labour movement from its links to the state, and to instil into it a spirit of class struggle rather than class collaboration.

The bosses fight for low wages, high productivity, and minimum labour costs, so as to ensure high profits; the working class fights for decent wages, the right to work, shorter hours and tolerable work conditions and work speeds, thus cutting into profits.

Conflict is unavoidable. The bosses organise and equip themselves for the fight; so must the working class.

Organising the

□□ Despite its apparent strength the Tribune left in the Labour Party hasn't really put up any real opposition to the government's policies. Why do you think this is so?

■ The opposition mounted by the so-called left in the Labour Party, particularly in parliament, has been really ineffective — primarily because they confine the fight to Parliament.

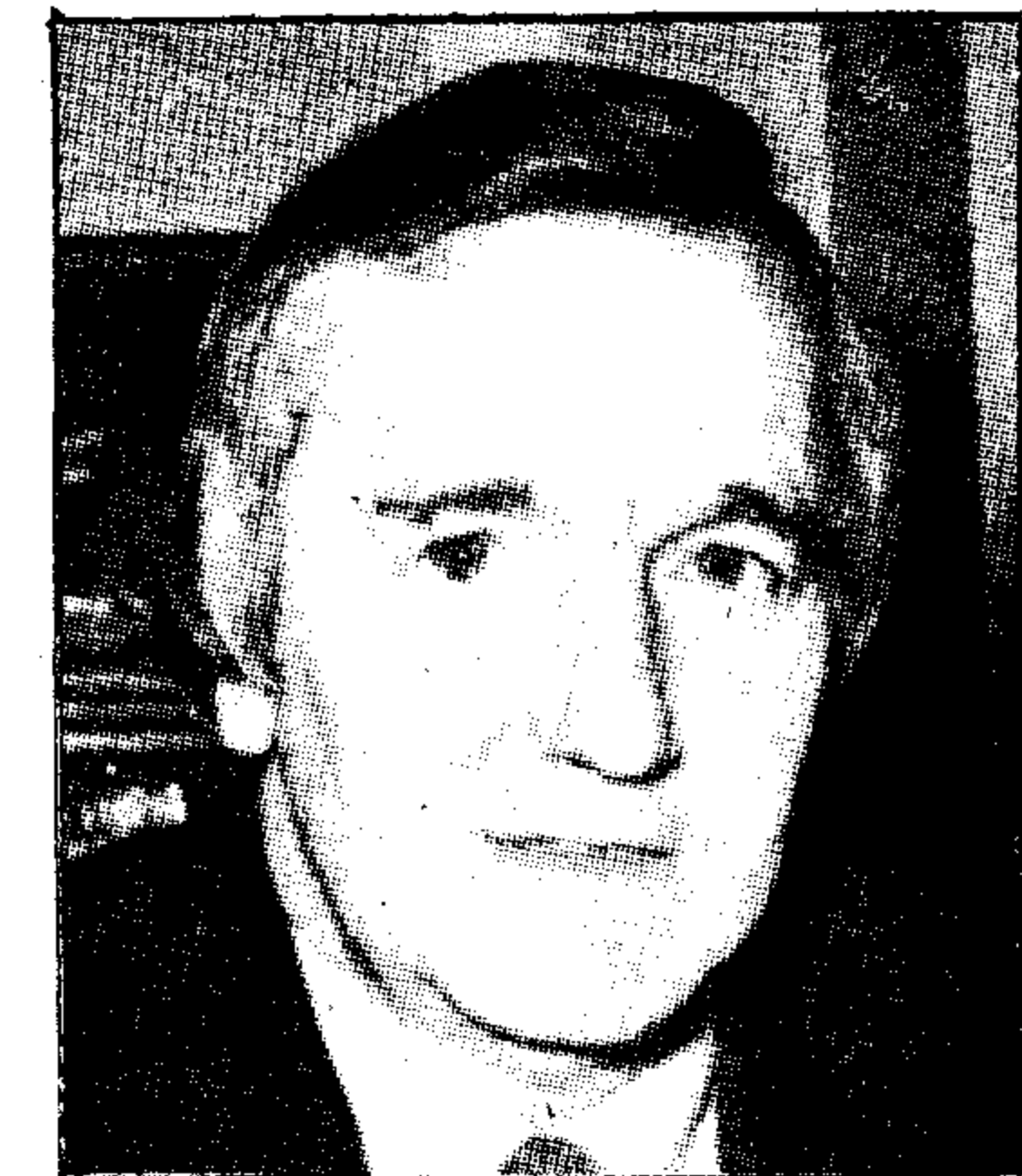
There's been no move by any of the left MPs to go into the constituency parties, to go into the trade union branches, and to start mobilising, in the way that Nye Bevan led the fight against Gaitskill in the '50s.

He spoke at branches of the trade union movement up and down the country and, I should think, for a period of nearly two years, seldom went into the House of Commons.

The only time any fight appears is in staged circumstances at the party conference, but there's been no move by any of the left MPs to go into the constituency parties and trade union branches and mobilise.

□□ What about Labour councils?

NIK BARSTOW talked to TED KNIGHT [right] about the way forward for the left in the Labour Party and the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. Knight, who will be Labour's parliamentary candidate for Hornsey, is to chair the SCLV conference on July 15th



■ Most Labour councils have confined themselves to a fight only in words with the government; many have asked for more resources but accepted the cuts when they came. They have been unwilling or unable to go out to the labour movement and wage a struggle against the government. They've accepted that they shouldn't 'rock the boat'.

But Lambeth council did conduct a fight at the end of last year. By refusing to accept the government's directive to increase rents, we were able to get six Labour councils in London to support us and force the government to retreat.

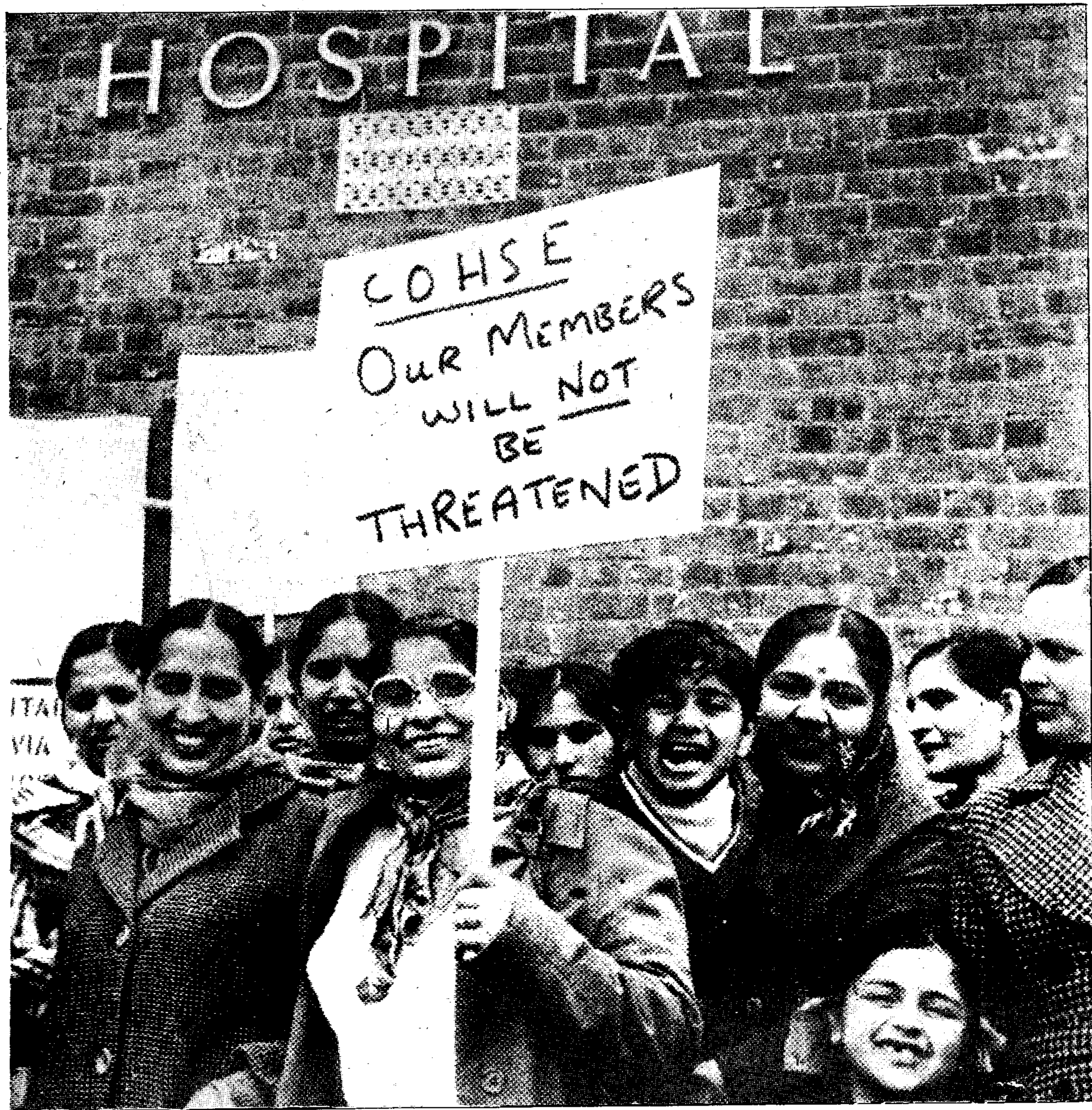
That's the sort of fight that should be going on.

□□ Recently the Area Health Authority covering Lambeth refused to implement govern-

ment cuts. Would you agree that such actions can only be successful if the support of the health workers is drawn in directly?

■ You can't oppose the government's financial policies merely by making a protest. Those policies are dictated not by the wickedness of Labour ministers but by the economic requirements of capitalism — so to fight these policies you have to mobilise workers. To a limited extent there has been a mobilisation of workers on this question — not by the AHA but by the trade unions themselves. The result was that Ennals has just granted an 18-month standstill on that budget cut.

ne SCLV ing for



ne Left to fight

- Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.

At the end of 1975 the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act came into force. And then the bosses won 70% of the equal pay cases and 90% of the sex discrimination cases taken to the tribunals in 1976.

For many working class women, thrown out of their jobs by redundancies and public sector cuts, and forced back into the home — where they are over-burdened as a result of lack of nursery provision and facilities to care for the sick and elderly — Callaghan's speeches about the family are a hollow joke.

They want the right to be economically and personally independent — and for that, they need to be able to free themselves from the burdens of caring for the young, the old, and the sick, and to go out to work, into the labour movement and into trade union and political activity.

Unless the cuts are reversed and women's equal right to

work is established, the modest gains of the sex-equality legislation will come to nothing.

Abortion promises to be a major issue at election time. Many Labour voters disapprove of abortion. But while, certainly, every person has the right to his or her own moral views on abortion, it is wrong that the views of anti-abortionists should be imposed as law on everyone else.

The unborn foetus is not a person in any full sense; the pregnant mother is. The right to decide must be hers. Restrictive abortion laws lead to nothing but women being bullied by husbands and doctors, to the spread of backstreet abortions, and to an increase in late abortions as opposed to earlier, safer and less distressing early abortions.

Free abortion and contraception on demand is Labour Party policy. It should be part of every constituency labour party's campaign.

- The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act now. Political status for Irish republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

The top army officers who preach 'counter-insurgency' and organise strike-breaking in Britain do not become philanthropic peace-keepers when they cross the Irish Sea.

In Northern Ireland the British army is propping up a sectarian state based on Protestant supremacy. It is maintaining the anti-democratic Partition of Ireland. It is defending an oppressive and unjust set-up which cannot be made peaceful. And it is trying to forcibly beat down all the active, militant people in the Northern Catholic minority who are fighting to end that oppression and end the centuries-old British grip on Ireland.

The Labour government has just continued the Tories' work. Soon after taking office in 1974 they gave in to the sectarian 'Ulster Workers' Council' strike and dropped 'power-sharing', a set-up resented by the Protestant bigots because it gave the Catholic middle class a small share of government posts and government patronage.

The Labour government's

other major new policy in Northern Ireland has been the scrapping of 'political status' for Republican prisoners, as from March 1976.

To the Republican prisoners it is clear that they are jailed for their activity in fighting for their country's freedom, and they have mounted a major struggle for recognition of this. The SCLV supports them.

The Labour government is also responsible for the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act', introduced in November 1974 as a so-called emergency measure and renewed periodically ever since. In the first 2½ years of operation of this Act, 2251 people were detained (mostly with no charge being made) and 81 deported on the say-so of the Home Secretary.

In 1921 the Labour Party resolved to support the right of the Irish people (as a whole) to determine their own future. That is still the only basis for peace and progress in Ireland. And the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' has given new evidence for the old axiom: a nation which oppresses another cannot itself be free.

- It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic re-selection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade. These measures are essential if we are to have a leadership of the labour movement which is responsive and loyal to the interests of the working class.

The best policies are no good without the means to fight for them. The SCLV will back left-wingers against right-wingers as Labour candidates; it will

press those candidates to commit themselves on key issues; and it will urge constituency Labour Parties to hold MPs to account on those commitments.

But fundamentally we look not to getting a few more left wing promises or left wing MPs, but to the action of the rank and file. We want the broadest democracy in the labour movement so that the rank and file can organise most freely and bring pressure to bear most effectively on the labour movement's leadership. A left wing candidate in the

recent elections in Peru said: 'In our country, the main voters are the tanks'. In Britain, the ranks keep in the background and the main voters are the balance sheets. In his memoirs Harold Wilson has described how the Bank of England dictated policy to the 1964-70 Labour government.

More recently we have seen the bankers of the International Monetary Fund dictating policy to the present Labour government.

The working class cannot afford to 'leave it to our elected representatives', still less to give MPs and trade union officials a job for life. Without democracy and accountability in the labour movement, all the promises and conference resolutions are empty words.

ands which provide the basis for a fightback. Is it the kind of thing you have in mind?

■ I support the campaign, it is a contribution, though a small one, which we have to get maximum support for. It is that sort of platform which has to be taken before the labour movement. Unless we can break the isolation that usually surrounds such campaigns we won't be able to coordinate the forces that are needed. A fight-back must be the basis.

And that holds, whichever way the result goes in October, or whenever.

□□ Before the election NUPE will be running a series of rallies round the country to demand a national minimum wage of £60 a week. What is your view on this campaign?

■ I'm supporting that campaign, and speaking at some of the meetings connected with it, because it is something which does need to be done, regardless of the electoral result for Labour. I don't think we have to base either our attack on the government or our demands for changes in government policy on the possibilities of electoral victory or defeat.

It's a good campaign, but there is a need to extend it by taking it into other unions. And there needs to be a link-up with demands like those of the NUM in a general move to improve the incomes of working class families.

The question is, will the union leaderships hold to those demands and, for NUPE, will the leadership be serious about the fight, so it doesn't just become an exercise for recruiting members.

□□ What way ahead do you see for the left in the Labour Party?

■ Like most committed socialists in the Labour Party I believe there is a major fight ahead. Irrespective of the next general election, there is a need to organise within the party. The left is, as yet, not organised.

We need to argue out a platform that will bring together the widest range of forces on the left on a clear political line and that line must be dictated by the need to break the social-democratic basis of present government policy.

We're going to prepare the ground for that fight now.

□□ How do you think the left in the Labour Party can organise?

■ There has to be a coming together of left wing forces within the Labour Party and the unions.

In March of this year Lambeth Labour Group decided to circulate every Constituency Labour Party in London and every Labour Group, demanding a recall conference of the London Labour parties, to deal with the question of the Tory-controlled GLC selling off council properties.

There is a need for the left to work out a common platform to which we must attract people in the Labour Party and the unions — a common political platform for a change in direction in government economic policy. We can't fight as individuals, local authorities can't solve their areas' problems themselves, nor can the left solve the problems by fights in individual CLPs. There has to be coordination of that sort of activity, so there has to be agreement on a platform.

□□ In the election period the SCLV will be trying to organise at least a section of the left in the Labour Party, around dem-

PRAGUE SPRING OF 1968



CONTINUING HIS SERIES on the Czech events of 1968, JAMES DAVIES takes up the story after the publication on 27th June of the unofficial reform manifesto, '2000 Words'.

THE PUBLIC response to the '2,000 Words' appeal was enormous. Thousands of resolutions and letters flooded into Party, union, and newspaper offices.

The conservatives counter-attacked. They talked about "an appeal for counter-revolutionary situation", and "an attempt to break up the party and introduce anarchy and build institutions which could lead to the destruction of the state".

From the other states of the Warsaw Pact (except Rumania, which kept up warm relations with Czechoslovakia throughout) came similar attacks. The East German party organ Neues Deutschland linked the author of the '2,000 Words' with US hawk Brzezinski.

Even the reformers attacked the '2,000 Words'. Their general line was summed up in a Presidium resolution which claimed that the appeal "opened the path for anti-communist tendencies".

'2,000 Words' denounced the whole leadership of the CPCz, and not just individual personalities. "The main guilt and the greatest deception perpetrated by these rulers was that they presented their arbitrary rule as the will of the workers... In practice the workers did not decide anything... The rule was executed in their name by a specially educated group of officials of the party and state apparatus.

Dubcek bends to Soviet demands

In effect they took the place of the overthrown class and themselves became the new authority".

But reforming and conservative bureaucrats alike were most worried by the appeal's call to set up works committees, to oust conservative officials and managers, and to set up committees for the defence of free speech — in short, to organise outside the established bureaucratic framework.

Dubcek and the other leaders came under increased pressure from the USSR.

Letter

The Czechoslovak leaders turned down a joint request from the USSR, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Poland to meet to discuss the internal situation. They replied proposing a series of bilateral meetings instead.

In the middle of July, however, those states met in Warsaw without the Czechoslovak representatives. There they drafted the infamous Warsaw letter, declaring: "We cannot assent to hostile forces pushing your country off the path of socialism and creating the threat that Czechoslovakia may break away from the socialist commonwealth. This is no longer your affair only. It is the common affair of all communist and workers' parties... It is the common affair of our countries... united in the Warsaw Pact".

In response, the mass of the people rallied even more firmly in favour of reform. There were preparatory committees set up in many factories designed to become organs of self-administration (in line with the new legislation), committees for the defence of the freedom of the press were established, and trade union leaders of extreme conservative views were ousted.

By mid-June Dubcek had found it necessary to speak out against "employing the weapon of economic struggle"

as demands for wage rises, strike threats, and even unofficial strikes mounted. A trade union conference in June decided that henceforth the unions should be independent vis-à-vis the state and political parties.

In mid-July delegations arrived from the Communist Parties of France and Italy. Waldeck-Rochet, for the French CP, was completely at one with the USSR. The '2,000 Words', he echoed, was a platform for counter-revolution.

The Italian delegation, however, was considerably influenced by the events, and seemed to have approved the reforms. The Czech events were certainly to play a role in the development of 'Eurocommunism' in both those CPs.

At the end of July, the Czechoslovak leaders met Russian leaders at Cierna nad Tisou — in a very strained atmosphere.

Although Russian troop exercises in Czechoslovakia ended on July 20th, there were repeated delays in withdrawing the troops.

Pravda reported the alleged discovery of a secret arms

cache near the German frontier and a secret US army document with preparations for "aggressive adventures". The Bulgarian press fantasised about further discoveries of arms caches. Neues Deutschland asserted that "a quiet counter-revolution" was under way in Czechoslovakia.

Happy at what appeared to be a firm reply to the Warsaw letter, thousands of Czechoslovaks demonstrated their support for the government. "We are thinking of you. Think of us!" was their message to Dubcek at Cierna, urging him to stand firm against the Russians.

So eager were the party and union leaders, however, to avoid mass mobilisation and placate the USSR, that the radicals' call for a five minute general strike was vehemently denounced.

All Dubcek told the public about the Cierna talks was: "You can be satisfied with the result". In fact the Czechoslovak leaders had sought to reassure the USSR by promising to control the movement more closely, not to legalise any new political parties or organisations, and to bring in

some form of press control. The very fact that the Cierna talks were kept a complete secret mean a de facto censorship on news.

The following day the same Czechoslovak representatives met in Bratislava with the five Pact states that had signed the Warsaw letter. A plati-tudinous statement was adopted and Dubcek insisted that there was no threat to Czechoslovak sovereignty. The only leader to suggest there might be such a threat, General Prchlik, had been sacked.

Visits

Over the next weeks of the summer several East European heads of state visited Czechoslovakia. The visit of Kadar of Hungary was kept a secret, as was Ulbricht's from East Germany. But when Tito and, later, Ceausescu arrived in Prague, there were huge demonstrations of support.

With the 14th Party Congress not far away, the public ferment, so different from the usual apathy, grew steadily. Although the party elections were "inner-party matters", the merits of the candidates were openly discussed in the media, with occasional suggestions that the more conservative figures not be elected.

The Party Congress that was never to be completed looked like the death-knell for the conservatives.

Gammell Lairds: splits a recipe for defeat

A CONFED mass meeting early in July at Gammell Lairds, Birkenhead, was told that the future for Lairds workers looks very bleak. But the meeting failed to decide to do anything very much about that bleak prospect.

The Confed chairman told the meeting that the present orders for Lairds shipyard (part of British Shipbuilders) would only last 2½ years and cover only part of the workforce. Meanwhile Western Ship Repairers was due to close down on Friday July 7th; appeals and protests through the 'official channels', delegations to local MPs, etc., had been to no avail.

At Lairds, the stewards were recommending a protest picket on the gate during a visit by Princess Anne the following week. But the meeting feared it would do more harm than good — and decided to levy £1 from each member for a delegation to London to see 'our' MPs and ask for more work.

This was passed by a large majority — evidently the example of Westerns had not impressed them.

But this meeting did not cover all sections. The Caulker-Burners and the Shipwrights had met before, and decided to stay away from the mass meeting and not to be bound by its decisions.

This is the second time in three months that these two sections have refused to recognise a Confed mass meeting. And however feeble were the decisions arrived at in the Confed meeting, such an abstention can do no good. It's a continuation of a history of divisions at Lairds between different unions and even between separate sections of the same union.

We just cannot afford to be divided in the fight against redundancies. Already there is talk about letting those over retirement age (a fair number at Lairds) go, and not demanding that their places be taken by workers on the dole.

If people believe that the mass meetings of the Confed are undemocratic (and there is some substance to that belief) then they should attempt to change those meetings, and not just refuse to attend. Refusing to attend is also undemocratic, with a minority declaring it will ignore majority decisions.

A lot has to be done to make the unions more effective at Lairds. One way is to show that they are not just mutual appreciation societies for the stewards, but bodies prepared to fight all attempts to blame the workforce for the state of the shipbuilding industry.

As a bulletin put out by Workers' Action in the yard said, "The campaign (against redundancies) has to unite workers in British Shipbuilders, and other industries, in the fight not just to save jobs but to create more jobs." The bulletin goes on to urge the setting up of a national shop stewards organisation in British Shipbuilders.

Workers in Merseyside should have learnt by now that it is no use appealing to be made a special case. That's what we should learn from the failure to stop the closures at Western Ship-repairers, at Leyland's Speke No.2 plant, at Plesseys, and a whole number of other plants.

The only effective weapon in the fight against redundancies and closures is the united strength of the working class. The trade unions already have demands such as a 35-hour week, earlier retirement, and against overtime working. We should implement them now, and not wait for the trade union leaders to decide when it is appropriate — what more appropriate time can you get than when 1½ million are on the dole?

Implementing our own demands now, such as work-sharing on full pay, is the only way to stop the rot.

LOL DUFFY

'Calling all workers — you've been sacked!'

ON Wednesday night, 5th July, without a word of warning, a message came over the Tannoy system at the Edge Lane (Merseyside) factory of Plessey Electronics — announcing 600 redundancies.

The redundancies will affect about 260 staff and 340 shop floor workers at the plant. They are the latest in line of the 2,400 which Plessey has announced over the past 15 months in the area, and will add to an unemployed total of over 85,600 already signing on in Merseyside.

The unions in the factory, apparently taken by surprise,

made no immediate response. What's clear is that the redundancies will not stop there. The company has blamed the fall in demand for the strowger telephone exchange equipment which is manufactured at Edge Lane. The last order for that equipment was placed eighteen months ago.

Workers are furious at the way the redundancies were announced. Management must have been planning them for some time, but kept back the announcement to the last minute to create as much confusion as possible.

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NUM- Will the Executive negotiate the claim away?

A 40% increase in basic pay for faceworkers, to £110 a week, was the major demand coming out of the conference in Torquay last week (July 3rd to 7th) of the National Union of Mineworkers.

The 40% rise call came from the South Wales area, and was passed with the support of the union's Executive. But more

But more militant resolutions were defeated. A call for £6,500 a year by Yorkshire, which Arthur Scargill stated was a 'frontal attack' on the incentive scheme, and a re-statement of the last conference's call for £135 per week by Group 2 area (Southern Scotland), both failed.

The right wing on the Executive were pleased with the result. Gormley declared

that the claim was "more realistic and more attainable than last year's" and stressed that it was a point to start negotiations from.

The right wing, having defeated the militant resolutions, evidently felt safe enough to start 'negotiating' before they could even catch sight of an NCB negotiator!

Recall

But the South Wales resolution also called for a recall conference if the £110 demand was rejected, in order to "consult the membership on the organisation of various forms of industrial action". Also passed was a call for a 30-hour week for faceworkers — another demand that the

Executive (who opposed it) will no doubt try to 'negotiate' away if they get the chance.

A resolution from the Leicester area which called for wages to be indexed to the cost of living was defeated. The left saw it as an attempt to head off confrontations over pay: which it was, being linked to a call for 3-year wage deals.

Such a measure of linking wages to inflation would, however — if tied to one of the more militant claims — have had exactly the opposite effect and could have provided a valuable addition to the left's argument for an increase that would really ensure wages were keeping pace with inflation.

The attempt by Derbyshire and Yorkshire to reform the union executive was defeated by 145 votes to 126, well short of the two thirds majority that would have been required for the change.

The proposal was to introduce card voting on the executive on disputed issues — in proportion to the strength of the regions. At present, the Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire areas, with a total of over 93,000 members, have 5 members on the executive between them; while Kent, Cumberland, Leicester, North Wales and South Derbyshire, with a combined total of only 9,600 members, have one Exec. member each, giving them ten times the votes per member that the larger coalfields have.



THE UNIONS



DOLE OFFICE ACTION - CARVED UP!

From Monday July 10th, hundreds of CPSA members in DHSS and Department of Employment [DE] offices have been taking industrial action.

They are out on official strike against the proposal to cut over 1,000 jobs in the DE by bringing

in fortnightly signing-on for dole claimants.

However, the action is marred by the strict limits that the National Disputes Committee [NDC] of CPSA has put on it.

18 DE Unemployment Benefit Offices were chosen by the employers to operate the new scheme on a pilot basis. Instead of calling them all out to stymie the progress of the pilot scheme, the NDC has allowed only 5 to come out, together with their 'linked' DHSS offices. That can hardly threaten the new scheme!

Staffing

Despite a Conference resolution demanding that the NEC give full backing to whatever action the DE members may want, and despite a statement from the Union's President that any DE branch that wanted to come out would be able to do so, the NDC have prevented the members at the Camberwell Unemployment Benefit Office [also in the pilot scheme] from coming out with the other five offices.

Employment Minister Albert Booth, in a statement in Parliament, has pledged that the fortnightly signings can be brought in with the same staffing levels. But no reduction in hours has been proposed to match the reduced workload, and it is obvious that the employers are going to rely on 'natural wastage' over the next year to drive down staffing levels and quietly achieve their target of 1,000 jobs lost.

Bitter

The bitterness within the CPSA about the carve-up of this industrial action is immense.

One result is that the electoral unity that created the massive left majority at the recent conference is already deeply split. It has become very clear to many CPSA members that a 'left' majority is not the same as a fightback against the Government or the Civil Service Department. What it does mean is that the fulltime bureaucrats have found allies within the NEC who are more pliable than the right wing were and, it seems, willing to turn the CPSA into a 'tame left' union more interested in pressuring a Labour Government behind the scenes than organising a struggle against a Labour policy of low wages and cuts in jobs.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

Employers tell Firemen - 'Worse conditions for shorter hours'

The FIRE BRIGADES UNION is holding a recall conference on July 17th. Its purpose, as far as the Executive Council is concerned, is to endorse their total lack of action in the face of new moves by the employers over our fight for the 42-hour week promised in the strike settlement early this year.

The employers (the local authorities) have been determined since we went back to get us to trade the 42-hour week for a deterioration in the working conditions we have fought so hard to win over the last thirty years.

They are trying to introduce station cleaning (got rid of six years ago), variable manning, and other 'productivity' deals.

While the employers have withdrawn the immediate threat of redundancies for ancillary workers, the threat to jobs is still there if they can push such a 'trade' through. Despite the shorter-week promise, firemen's jobs are

threatened. For instance the employers state ominously in their published offer that they "give notice that they intend to continue an examination of all standards of fire cover."

They have also reverted to their original demand for 3-shift, 8-hour working, after initially bowing to the union's demand for retention of the existing shift pattern.

The delegates at the recall conference will be faced with a clear choice.

They can either accept the Executive Council's method of dealing with the employers — appealing to the Home Secretary and other friends in high places (the very people who were on the other side in our strike) to help us, which will mean we end up accepting a trade of hours for jobs; or we can start a campaign now to force the employers to concede a 42-hour week on our terms.

Unfortunately, delegates to the conference will be going from the Brigade Committees, and there will be little rank and file involvement. Most firemen will not even know who their delegates are, let alone be able to mandate them.

Yet the mood in the stations is militant. In recent elections for a national officer two candidates

standing as left-wingers got a healthy vote — and an SWP member standing on the platform of Rank & File Fireman polled 15%. A good proportion of the members understand clearly the need for a rank and file fightback against the employers, and also against the inactivity and complicity of their own officials.

Perhaps if the result of the negotiations affected THEIR pay and conditions they would be a little keener.

A large lobby of the recall conference is expected, and should be supported by all firemen. If we are not to lose the small gains won from the strike, the most important of which was the 42-hour week concession, we will have to organise to:

■ Take the 42-hour week unilaterally, with the rota under union control

■ Work a shift pattern of our own choice, not the 8-hour 3-shift system

■ Elect a National Strike Committee if a strike is needed to win the 42-hour week without undermining our conditions of work

■ Pay the national officials the average wage of those they represent, not Divisional Officers' wages.

DOUG MACKAY
FBU Acocks Green, Birmingham

LETTER

CPSA - Wrong tactics?

Comrades,

I cannot agree with Stephen Corbishley's attitude (WA110) on the 'Fortnightly Attendance Payments' dispute in the Department of Employment.

Agreed, socialists have to support workers in struggle against their employers, even if the workers' policies and methods of struggles are misguided. Agreed, too, that the CPSA members in the employment exchanges are right to act against the threat of 1,000 jobs being cut.

But why take up the fight on the basis of demanding that claimants must still 'sign on' weekly rather than fortnightly? Why not welcome fortnightly signings, and simply act to reduce the hours of work for the employment exchange clerks?

Such action would give a boost to other workers' struggles around the slogan "Cut the hours, not the jobs". And many claimants, I'm sure, will prefer fortnightly signing-on.

At the very least they should be consulted.

But the CPSA members have just pressed ahead with their action — and on top of that they have chosen a form of action which will mean many claimants not receiving their money!

In reply I may be told that I am being 'unrealistic'. But the labour movement has suffered far too long from the sort of narrow-minded, timid, "look after yourself and never mind the rest" realism represented by the CPSA tactics.

COLIN FOSTER
London

COWLEY STEWARDS BACK 'THE NINE'

A decision on the fate of the "Cowley 9", due to be made by the Midlands Regional Committee of the TGWU on 12th July, was postponed to Wednesday July 19th.

The Committee will meet then to consider the results of an inquiry into charges against nine militant TGWU members at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant. The nine include the Plant convenor and three deputy convenors

The Cowley Nine faced trumped-up charges like 'disrupting' a T&G District Committee meeting by walking out of it, revealing the size of a branch secretary's commission, and criticising affairs of the Union.

The Oxford District Finance and General Purposes Committee of the union recommended that some of the Nine be barred from holding union office and that Alan

Thornett (a prominent member of the Workers' Socialist League, recently elected as deputy convenor) be expelled from the union altogether.

Action is already taking place to block this attempted victimisation. A meeting of the 170 T&G shop stewards in the Cowley plant voted overwhelmingly to demand the charges be dropped by the Regional Committee and that the union should instead fight to force the management to recognise Alan Thornett as Deputy Convenor, which at present it refuses to do.

The 'Cowley Nine Defence Committee', which has already organised considerable support in the union, is preparing for a massive lobby of the Regional Committee meeting.

NIK BARSTOW

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, 182 Upper Street, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

FRIDAY-MONDAY 14-17 JULY. Conference of Socialist Economists 1978 on *The Crisis of Capitalism and working class strategies in the 1970s*. In Bradford. Booking details from Teddy Brett, School of Social Science, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QN.

TUESDAY 18 JULY. A. Sivanandan speaks on 'From Immigration Control to Repatriation', 6.30pm at the Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1. The meeting will launch *Race and Class* pamphlet no. 5: price 20p plus 10p postage.

THURSDAY 20 JULY. Revolutionary Communist Tendency meeting: "The Recession: Capitalist Offensive and the Working Class". Speakers: Mike Freeman and Kate Marshall. 7.30pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Admission 20p.

SUNDAY 23 JULY. Merseyside Workers' Action meeting: "The way forward for the anti-fascist movement". Guest speaker: Sean Matgama. 7.45pm at Stanley House, Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8.

SATURDAY 5 AUGUST. Revolutionary Communist Tendency day school on 'Internationalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat'. Speakers: Frank Richards and Mary Masters. For details write to BM RCT (6), London WC1V 6XX. Registration £1, non-earners 75p.

"WORKERS POWER" no.6 out now. The Left and the Labour Government; the Anti-Nazi League; Revolutionary Unity; Lenin and Luxemburg — from social democracy to communism. 60p from 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8JA, or from left bookshops.

PICKET GARNERS: Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St, 243 Oxford St, 40-41 Haymarket, and 56 Whitcombe St. Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, room 84, 12-13 Henrietta St, WC2.

PUBLISHED by Workers' Action, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1, and printed by ANVIL PRESS (T.U.)

WORKERS IN ACTION

STRIKE AND RALLY AGAINST RACISM

ON JULY 5th, as a shift of Bangladeshi workers were clocking off at Hedges and Butler's bottling plant, Three Mill Lane, East London, they were set upon by car loads of white racist thugs.

The racists threw bricks and hit the workers with pick-axe handles. Seven Bengalis were injured and one had a fractured skull.

After this, the latest in a series of racist attacks in the East End, the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee have called for a rally in Brick Lane on Sunday 16th and a general strike and demonstrations on Monday 17th. The 17th has been called 'Black Solidarity Day'.

Brick Lane has been the scene of racist riots — fortunately checked by the prompt resistance of local Asian youth — on two Sundays recently, 11th and 25th June. It is also a regular patch for the National Front to



sell their papers. One aim of Sunday's rally is to drive the Nazis out of Brick Lane.

The strikes and rallies will also be protesting about the recent racist murders in the East End. On Sunday 25th June Ishaque Ali was strangled with a shoelace; on 4th May, Altab Ali was stabbed in the neck; and on 20th April 10-year old Kenneth Singh was beaten to death.

Time and time again the police have shown that they

will do the absolute minimum about racist attacks. More police have recently been moved into Brick Lane, but their chief activity is stopping Asians and searching their cars.

At Hedges and Butler, according to a local resident, the press got there before the police. Then the police said they would protect the factory gates the next day, but did not turn up.

The racists and the fascists

must be stopped, before their attacks on the black communities and on workers grow any bolder. The maximum turnout on the 16th and 17th is vital.

FRAN BRODIE

Sunday July 16th
RALLY AGAINST RACIST VIOLENCE: Assemble 10.30, corner of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road.

Monday July 17th
BLACK SOLIDARITY DAY: STRIKE AGAINST RACIST VIOLENCE. Demonstrations:
□ Bethnal Green: assemble 5.30pm, Naz Cinema, Brick Lane.
□ Hackney: assemble 5.30pm at Hackney Town Hall.

Both events organised by the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee, supported by the ANL and over 60 local organisations, including Hackney Trades Council and Stepney and Bethnal Green Trades Council.

Cardiff protests stall deportation

TRADE UNIONISTS and anti-fascist activists in Cardiff have taken up the case of Mohammed Sharif, a bakery worker at Memory Lane Cakes, who is threatened with deportation.

Sharif came to Britain 4½ years ago from Pakistan, and has worked at Memory Lane for 2½ years. He was arrested last Thursday, 6th, and taken to Cardiff Jail. He was due to be deported on Tuesday 11th with no more ado, for having overstayed his permit.

The case was quickly taken up with South Wales MP Neil Kinnock, who agreed to support Sharif and got the deportation deferred. The Bakers' Union branch secretary at Memory Lane, and union regional organiser Gloria Martin, have also given their support.

The local Anti-Nazi League is supporting a picket every night outside Cardiff Jail, and other protests are planned.

GEOFF WILLIAMS

Garners: still not enough support from the union

500 trade unionists and other supporters of the *Garners strikers* marched past the main Garners Steak Houses still operating last Saturday evening, to show their solidarity with the 6-month strike of the catering workers for union recognition.

There were banners from Region No.5 (Oxford) of their union, the TGWU, but unfortunately no support from their own union in London, though other London trade unionists (Camden Trades Council and Hammersmith Nalgo) were there.

The main call of the demonstration, for mass pickets against the police harassment, grated considerably on the ears of the 'notables' who led the march: Brian Nicholson of the T&G EC, George Anthony of the AUEW London North District Cttee, and Communist Party leader Gordon McClellan. But a mass picket outside the Haymarket restaurant was held, despite police harassment and one arrest.

The six months of official strike have been a battle not only against Garners boss Margolis and his scabs,

but also against the blocking manoeuvres of the full-time T&G officials. Local official Abrahams actually insisted on seeing medical evidence before believing that pickets had been injured!

The failure of the Garners strike recall conference to come up with anything other than a re-statement of the strike committee position, and the blocking by Les Shorter (T&G Regional Organiser) of a call for mass picketing, have meant that potential support has not been mobilised.

Put the Civil & Public Services Association NEC has donated £250 to the strike committee, and circulated all branches with details of the strike; and both CPSA and another Civil Service union, the SCPS, agreed to instruct their members in employment offices to black adverts for staff to work in Margolis's ventures.

The strike needs more of this sort of backing. The next march must be given wider publicity and every trade union militant and labour movement activist should work to get the sort of turnout that placed Grunwicks under siege last July.



Above: an Edinburgh demonstration in solidarity with Irish Republican prisoners on the occasion of a procession through the city by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guard

[July 6th]. In London, 5,000 joined a demonstration on Sunday July 9th, with the slogans: Political status for Irish prisoners of war, amnesty, British troops out now.

Casual labour on the bread line

Despite the promises and excuses that were made when Spillers bread operation closed down, the big bakery firms are still relying heavily on compulsory overtime and casual labour.

At Merretts bakery, Cardiff, management recently turned down a demand from shop stewards to fix definite manning levels of permanent staff on the bread production lines.

At present the lines have no definite manning levels. Casual labour is used to fill the gaps, often making up 25% of the workforce on some lines.

The casual workers are mostly students on vacation. When they return to their colleges, no doubt management will insist on maintaining production regardless. That has been their policy in the past, and they do not look like changing it.

This use of casual labour not only helps management push up work rates, it threatens job security and work conditions and potentially creates a pool of scabs in any industrial dispute.

The stewards' demands must be: employ a permanent workforce on every line; regular reliefs to cover for rota days off and sickness cover.

And we must be ready to use industrial action to win these demands.

GEOFF WILLIAMS

30,000 Postal Engineers strike

30,000 Post Office Engineering Union members in London held a half-day strike and demonstration on Tuesday July 11th, as part of their campaign for a 35-hour week.

This was the first action additional to the national overtime ban to be called by the union's National Executive, which was granted powers at the last annual conference to hold regional one-day strikes in support of the demand. Several

London branches called for the strike action to be for the whole day.

Local strike action has been taken in many areas, with up to 6,000 POEU members out at a time. Strikes in solidarity with members sent home for implementing the overtime ban have taken place in Harrogate, Hull, Scarborough, York and North London, and many branches have made decisions to follow their lead if any of their members are sent home.

GEC workers can still win

THE CONTRACT engineers taking industrial action for higher pay at GEC Telecommunications in Stoke, Coventry, have returned to work without winning their demands.

After over 100 engineers were threatened with suspension the factory ASTMS branch took over the negotiations, the agreement they reached provides for all the contract engineers to be taken back — but also for a return to normal working as from July 11th. Negotiations are still proceeding, but the bosses show no signs of conceding anything on pay.

The computer operators, also on strike for higher pay in a separate dispute, are standing firm. The ASTMS branch organised a token strike in their support on Tuesday and Wednesday 4th-5th July, and is banning overtime and night shift work.

The computer is being run by the management, but they are not able to do any more than standard payroll and stock control work. Work on developing the new System X equipment is blocked. The computer operators can win yet, if they stand firm and get enough support from the union.

ROB MCGONIGLE

FUND DRIVE for workers ACTION

Another £20 this week brings our fund total to £1226.80. After adding our regular monthly £58.80 in bankers' orders, the fund stands at £1284.80.

Please keep the money coming in during the paper's summer break — all our overhead expenses still have to be paid for. Send contributions to 'Fund', Box 1960, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

WORKERS' ACTION

After this issue we are taking a three-week summer break. WA 112 will be dated August 12th.

Petrol station strike must be spread

Workers at 4 Heron Service Stations in Birmingham have been on official strike since Monday July 3rd for union recognition.

An ACAS ballot of staff at 32 Heron stations in the Midlands showed that 60% wanted the T&GWU to be recognised. The company first stalled, and then announced that they would not recognise the union as — because of high staff turnover — it was no longer representative!

Tanker drivers have blacked petrol supplies to all Heron stations in the Midlands, and car delivery drivers on contract to British Leyland are refusing to handle cars for the company.

Help is urgently needed on the picket lines to allow the strikers to visit other sites to spread the strike.

ST