

Workers' fight

5p

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June 21st to 28th 1975

REPEAL
the Prevention of
Terrorism Act!



44 people deported — for political beliefs
541 people arrested — for being Irish
6 months in jail — for selling a poster

SEE P.2

889,000 OUT OF WORK

FOR THE past eight weeks an average of 13,000 people a week have been joining the dole queues. At this rate, the present official level of unemployment stands at 889,000 — 13,500 more than the post war peak of March 1972.

Not that the official figures represent the real situation. In particular the official figures massively underestimate the amount of female unemployment as many women losing a job or deciding to get a job but not finding one do not register as unemployed.

At the beginning of the year, Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, thought that unemployment might climb to 1,000,000 by the winter. On April 15th he spoke in Parliament expressing exactly the same outlook. While only last week the National Institute in its journal, *Economic Review*, predicted that the million mark would not be reached till the year's end. Now it appears almost certain that that figure will be passed by the end of August!

Nor does the rising tide show any signs of abating. The last two months saw unemployment rise by a staggering 103,800 altogether — the largest rise of any two months since the war. Apart from during the three day week, the only week to top the last week's leap forward in joblessness was the week before!

205,000 workers were on short time working and are not included in the figures.

Commenting on these figures, Hugh Scanlon, President of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, said, "If this trend continues there will be no need for any regulation of wages — unemployment will do that".

Scanlon was speaking at the Engineering Union's conference at Hastings, where left wingers successfully (though with Scanlon's hesitant opposition) committed the Union to a policy of opposition to the Social Contract.

It was clear to the majority of the delegates that measures like the Social Contract are designed to make people think they share the interests of the capitalists and that this is a lie.

On the following day, the Scottish miners meeting in Inverness rejected the Social Contract. As John Phillips, Scottish Executive member, said "As long as there is a capitalist system, there can be no Social Contract."

These two decisions should be the first of many rejecting outright the proposition that the working class should lift a finger to help the capitalists out of the crisis of their system, rejecting outright the talk about 'tightening our belts', about joint efforts and about us all being in the same boat.

There is one simple test: Ask how much the thousands of workers made redundant received as severance pay, and then compare that pittance with

Jobless — the stick to hit wages



Photo — Workers' Press

Champagne for some — going for up to £24 a bottle. Stable workers have been on strike for nearly two months fighting for a pay rise of £1.47 a week.



NUR leaders Frightened of their own power

BY STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

ON THE SAME day as Labour Ministers met and discussed the failure of the Social Contract to meet the wishes and needs of both British and international capitalists, Sidney Weighell, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, agreed the end of pay negotiations that had often looked like going to a movie-type cliffhanger finish.

Two weeks before June 20th, the NUR National Executive Committee had voted 21 to 3 to strike from June 23rd if their national pay claim of 35 per cent for rail workers earning less than £36, and 30 per cent for those earning above, plus a national minimum rate of £34.65, was not settled.

The June 20th deal was for an average of 29.8 per cent, including thresholds, with a special supplement for lower paid workers. It differs little from the Rail Tribunal offer of 27.5 per cent, plus £4 bonus for the lowest paid grades. But this latest offer will be rapidly overrun if the present rate of price rises continues. Within a year the lowest paid railman will be taking home

a wage packet slashed to ribbons by inflation, and the present pay offer will have done little to offset this.

The outcome of the protracted negotiations, while giving little comfort to anyone in the bosses' camp who still hoped the Social Contract might reduce wage increases to something like 20 per cent, does give the CBI, the Government, and the TUC tops a breathing space in which to patch together

Contd. back page

Automatic

There is no doubt that the crisis that the capitalist class faces is one it hopes to ride out by making us pay for it. For them — and for their allies in the trade union movement and the Government — the priority is cutting our real wages.

For us the priority is fighting back against these attacks, and refusing to carry the can for the crisis. Against wage restraint — for solidarity with workers' struggles to maintain and improve living standards, for a sliding scale of wages (automatic cost of living increases to keep pace with prices). Against unemployment — for work or full pay, for nationalisation without compensation.

"Under this new Act we are living in a police state. The police can take someone away, without saying where, or what is against (them)."

Mr. Christopher Scott, a solicitor, was describing what had happened to his client Margaret Crowley when she was arrested without warrant under the Prevention of Terrorism Act just before last Christmas, and denied access to friends or solicitor for 5 days. In that time she wasn't allowed to wash, or clean her teeth, and had only 10 minutes' exercise.

She was never charged with any offence. But she was a member of Sinn Fein, and had never made a secret of it. The point is that although the Act was presented as being a great new aid to the police to "prevent terrorism", its real intention and effect has been the harassment of Irish republicans.

The Act, which was rushed through Parliament in a matter of hours last November as a blatant public relations exercise, has allowed the police to pick up hundreds of Irish people, either in their homes or as they were entering (or re-entering) the country; to put them in a police cell for 2 days or longer and deny them even the usual rudimentary rights of arrested persons; to threaten, frighten and lie to them, to deprive them of comfort, proper food, sleep, exercise or washing facilities.

The police have used the extra powers given them by this Act to go on random 'fishing' expeditions, sometimes taking everyone they find in a house. Typical is the case of a young man who was arrested, and whose girl friend was later visited and brought in to the police station. Her young sister being with her, she too was taken in, and both were stripped and searched. In the end, all three were released, with no explanation, charge or apology.

The Act is 'distinguished' by its very large number of loose definitions. This gives it a 'dragnet' quality, allowing the police to prosecute or not as they please, allowing them a great latitude. There are sections which imply censorship of the written and spoken word - these sections have nothing whatsoever to do with "preventing terrorism" and everything to do with muffling the expression of political opinion.

Drastically

So far, there has only been one conviction under this section - but that, involving the maximum sentence of six months' jail and a £200 fine just for offering a poster for sale (a first 'offence' at that), was clearly exemplary.

The National Council for Civil Liberties reported in April that "the existence of the new powers was sufficient to frighten Republicans into censoring their own, often perfectly legal, political propaganda. It certainly became a source of anxiety for many Irishmen as to whether it was illegal to desire a United Ireland or the withdrawal of troops from northern Ireland" - let alone to advocate these things. "Since the Act was passed, both Sinn Fein and Clann na h'Eireann ... have drastically

curtailed their political activity for fear of a charge under the Act." Yet both are legal even under its 'draconian' provisions.

Thus it hits far wider than its proclaimed target, the IRA. And thus political opponents of the government's policy in Ireland have been repressed, directly or indirectly.

The most direct repression has taken the form of exclusion orders. These can be made on another vague basis - if the Home Secretary believes that a person is 'concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism' (as defined in the Act to be 'use of violence for political ends' which puts 'the public in fear'). Like the Lords' rapist who needs to have no reasonable basis for a belief that his victim was willing in order to obtain an acquittal, the Prevention of Terrorism Act doesn't say that the Home Secretary should have any reasonable grounds for his belief. Nor does he have to state his grounds, nor yet prove them what his 'belief' is based on. No charges of any kind need be brought, which no court will hear.

The 'appeal' procedure consists of an interview between a defendant who doesn't know what he's been charged with and a government "advisor" who doesn't know what the charges are. No solicitor is allowed to be present to assist the defendant or witness the proceedings. It is in fact hardest for an innocent person to challenge an exclusion order because he wouldn't even begin to know where to start in refuting an unknown case.

Of the 49 people so far served with exclusion orders, only 5 have successfully appealed, two of them having strong trade union backing. To appeal can mean up to a

month in jail, and many have not done so because they just wanted out. Police have misled others, saying they could appeal when they got to Ireland: in fact notice of appeal must be lodged within 48 hours of the order.

Writing to the Guardian a few weeks after the Act was hustled through Parliament, Nicholas Maxwell of London University College Department of the History and Philosophy of Science, warned: "...it seems to me that legislation of this kind threatens to take us farther and farther down a very slippery and dangerous slope. Can we be sure that the Act will not in the future be extended to cover other extreme revolutionary movements?"

Silence

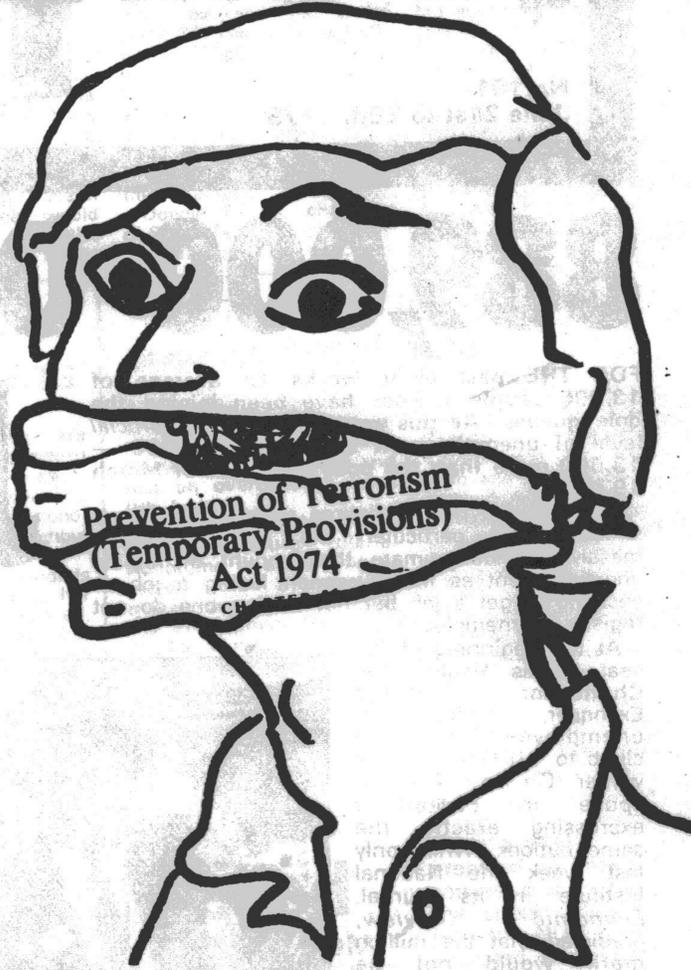
"...All the signs indicate that we are entering a grave economic crisis, which is bound to provoke extreme political passion. Is it not dangerous to have such an ill-conceived piece of legislation on the books at such a time, when there will be every temptation to use it for purposes for which it was perhaps not originally intended?"

I expected" he continued "there to be a public outcry against the new legislation, the kind of barrage of analysis and criticism that controversial political decisions and legislation usually receives in the media. In fact there has scarcely been a murmur of protest or serious criticism. The silence has been deafening."

We must break that silence - which in the last six months has scarcely diminished. Every socialist and militant must mobilise for July 5th to swell the first demonstration against the Prevention of Terrorism Act into a protest that cannot be ignored.

REPEAL

the Prevention of Terrorism Act!



TROOPS OUT
MOVEMENT

DEMONSTRATION
Sat. July 5th

ASSEMBLE
2.30
Kilburn
Underground



Crucial events in Portugal this week are bringing the country to yet another major turning point. As the capitalist economy lurches into further crisis and right wing forces mount armed attacks in the north, shipyard workers from Setúbal and Lisbon have taken to the streets in a massive demonstration calling for revolutionary workers' councils. Another front has meanwhile opened up in the 'Free Speech' issue, with the Socialist Party supporting the Catholic bishops who own Radio Renascença against a workers' takeover backed by the forces of Copcon, the internal security wing of

the army. Inside the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the ruling Armed Forces Movement, debate has continued day after day on new political directions for post-Castano Portugal. Copcon commander Carvalho has proposed the creation of Revolutionary Councils of workers and soldiers. Carvalho apparently sees such Councils as under the control of the AFM, but whether such control is possible is another matter. The debate is still unresolved as we go to press. Next week's paper will carry a full analysis.

Italy - election victories open door for 'compromise'

THE regional and local elections of 15th-16th June in Italy brought nearer the "historic compromise" for which the Italian Communist Party is aiming.

The CP secured 33.4% of the votes, only marginally fewer than the dominant Christian Democratic Party's 35.3%. Since the last regional elections in 1970, the CP has gained 5.5%, while the CD has lost 2.6%. Since the early 1950s, when the CD gained almost twice as many votes as the CP, the CD's lead has gradually declined, but this is the sharpest movement yet in that direction.

There is now a combined Communist Party - Socialist Party majority in the province of Liguria, as well as in Tuscany, Umbria, and Emilia Romagna, where there was a left majority before. In addition, in the Marche province, the CP and SP are evenly balanced with the right wing.

At the end of the Second World War, the Italian Communist Party was in a position to take power in Italy. The armed workers of the Resistance, mostly under CP leadership, had effective power. The CP leaders, however, chose to enter a capitalist government and cooperate in restablisising capitalism. That aim achieved, they were kicked out of the government, and - despite the fact that Italy has had nearly 40 coalition governments of

various sorts since the war, and that the CP is the second largest parliamentary party - the CP has never been allowed back into the government.

While the hard-headed capitalists of Italy have no fear of any revolutionary ambitions on the part of the CP leaders, they are apprehensive about the tremendous boost which CP participation in a government might give to the expectations and confidence of the Italian working class. The scene outside the CP headquarters after the election results were announced, with an enormous crowd chanting "Rome is red" while the CP leaders made soothing speeches, sums it up.

Over the last few years, the domination of Catholic reaction in Italy has weakened a good deal. The big left-wing majority in the divorce referendum last year was one sign of that. In February this year, a court ruled that the Italian law saying abortion was illegal, was unconstitutional. Since then pressure has built up for a referendum on a liberalisation of the abortion law.

Precisely because of this radicalisation, and in order to head it off, it becomes more and more likely that the Italian capitalists will accept CP participation in the government as a lesser evil.

And that will no doubt produce serious repercussions elsewhere in Europe, especially in France. M.T.

DON'T SHOULDER BOSSES' BURDEN

"THAT night we had our most desperate meeting with the Governor of the Bank (of England). Claiming that our failure to act in accordance with his advice had precipitated the crisis, he was now demanding all-round cuts in expenditure, regardless of social or even economic priorities, and fundamental changes in some of the Chancellor's economic pronouncements.

"Not for the first time I said that we had now reached the situation where a newly elected government with a mandate from the people was being told, not so much by the Governor of the Bank of England as by international speculators, that the policies on which we had fought the election could not be implemented—that the government was to be forced into the adoption of Tory policies to which it was fundamentally opposed. The Governor confirmed that that was, in fact, the case.

"I asked him if this meant that it was impossible for any government, whatever its party label, whatever its manifesto or the policies on which it fought an election, to continue, unless it immediately reverted to full scale Tory policies. He had to admit that that was what his argument meant, because of the sheer compulsion of the economic dictation of those who exercised decisive economic power.

"I said that if that was the case, I was not prepared to accept it. What he was telling me was that not only were social progress and indeed the whole of our mandate for reform in danger, so was democracy itself. To accept his argument would mean that the Queen's first minister was being asked to ring down the curtain on parliamentary democracy, by accepting the doctrine that an election in Britain was a farce, that the British people could not make a choice between policies, and that the policies were directed from outside the country, mainly by people who did not understand Britain and relied for their information on the advice of people whose motives ranged from ignorance to malice. In these circumstances, I concluded, there was nothing left for me except to appeal to the democracy I was being asked to repudiate, go back to the electorate for a mandate giving me full powers to handle the crisis.

"The Governor recognised my constitutional right to do this. Not unfairly, he warned me that if I did so — and the process would occupy some four weeks — the run of sterling would continue and indeed intensify; that our reserves, which had already fallen considerably would have run out long before polling day, long before I had any mandate for any other action. I told him that I recognised the force of his arguments..."

THAT is Wilson's own account of how in 1964 the bankers and bosses jerked on the leash and brought him closer to heel.

The events of the last three weeks are almost a repeat performance of 1964 but in slow motion. For whereas in 1964 the run on the pound was sudden and the reaction to it sudden, this time the referendum forced a delay of any attacks on the Labour left until after the announcement of the "Yes" victory.

Within days of that announcement, though, the heads were rolling. To some the changes seemed slight... Benn shifted sideways, another junior Minister, Michael Meacher, moved sideways, and another Minister, Judith Hart, shoved out. The real significance of the measures, however, was that the first two changes meant clearing out of the Department of Industry those who were connected with the drafting of the Industry Bill; while the second completed an attack on the Left Ministers with the exception of Foot (whose slavish Wilson worship puts him way outside the Left camp). The objective of the attack was further to cow the Tribune MPs and those workers and party activists who look to them.

RESCUE

The changes were capped by the decision to publish a second White Paper on the Industry Bill. Without doubt this will either water down or eliminate completely the "disclosure" provisions of the Bill. These provisions meant that companies would have to disclose information about their plans and their financial situation and order books to — among other parties — the trade unions. For all its limitations, this would have been a real gain for the working class. With these provisions removed, the National Enterprise Board will be no more than a centralised rescue operation for business.

The response of the Left MPs should be to demand, not a more favourable future reshuffle, but the complete abolition of commercial secrecy and right of workers' inquiries, and, further, nationalisation of the companies that are decisive for the economy — without compensation!

While capital remains intact, it

LABOUR: BREAK WITH THE BANKERS AND BOSSES!

demands that its confidence be boosted. And that can only be done when the working class is seen to be bearing the weight of capitalism's crisis. "Business confidence", after all, feeds off the demoralisation of the working class.

After 1964 this "business confidence" dictated a vicious wage freeze policy, a furious attack on the striking seamen, the development of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation as an instrument of effecting more rapid capital concentration and finally the attempt to introduce anti-trade union laws.

DEEPER

Today the social and economic crisis is much deeper. On an international scale energy costs have risen sharply, while monetary arrangements have been severely strained. Meanwhile the military defeat of the USA in South East Asia has further undermined the dollar standard. In Britain, where inflation is higher than in any other major industrial nation, where manufacturing investment is chronically low and constantly deteriorating and where the working class has not suffered a major defeat since the '20s, that crisis dictates for the ruling class and its servants in the Government a policy of even more severe attack than ten years ago.

Everything points, therefore, in the direction of moves to wage restraint and unemployment.

Another newer element — given the Government's success in the EEC referendum — is likely to be a resort, in various ways, to demagogic appeals to the population and the least active sections of the trade union movement. The reactionary possibilities inherent in such a course were heavily underlined by the right wing Minister of the Environment Anthony Crosland, commenting earlier this month on a poll conducted by Independent Television News into attitudes towards incomes policy. "Opinion polls", he pointed out "regularly showed large majorities in favour of tighter pay restraints, yet in spite of this the workers were fearful of showing restraint themselves lest other groups should steal a march on them".

The pressure building up on unions to adopt a postal ballot system is another reflection of the same type of thinking.

Well might Wilson ask whether "any government, whatever its party label, whatever its manifesto or the policies on which it fought the election (could) continue unless it immediately reverted to full scale Tory policies."

But last time Wilson spectacularly bowed the knee to the bankers, the defeat of the Labour left implicit in this was not reflected so much by a polarisation within the Party as a desertion of the Party in disillusion by masses of Left leaning Party members. This time it will be different.

This is recognised by the right

is the basic touchstone for any left movement. Questions of general social policy — the Sliding Scale of Wages, work or full pay, nationalisation, fighting to end commercial secrecy, etc — are central in the present crisis. A battle must be joined on every major question of government policy.

The Left MPs, gathered for the most part round Tribune, are still somewhat cowed after their referendum defeat and still talking nationalism (siege economy, import controls and so on) rather than taking up even the most basic programme of demands in defence of working class living standards. It is imperative that they organise a fight around such a programme within the Labour

fighting back were confined to single conferences, like last year's 'Clay Cross Conference'. If the Left is to be strengthened and not just mildly defended, a clearly structured and defined movement must be developed, and soon!

The only grouping with the mass influence to do this is Tribune. Yet we clearly cannot afford to wait until the Tribunes do something. Every militant step forward at local level will help the working class fight back and will increase the pressure of the Tribune leaders to respond.

A movement led or influenced by the Tribunes could play a progressive role in the development

wing, who, anticipating this polarisation, first set up the Manifesto group of MPs last year and this week inaugurated the Social Democratic Alliance to campaign at grass roots level. The bitter truth is that the right are waging more or a fight than the Left; this is the case whether you look at Benn's refusal to fight his removal and the silence of Meacher's removal compared with Jenkins' tooth and nail fight to have Prentice still in the cabinet even though his post is not of Cabinet rank or the failure so far of the Left to try to mobilise the rank and file.

Yet the fight-back against the right cannot simply be confined to direct sectional action, even though that direct action struggle

Party if defeat and disillusionment are not to be masters again.

But this cannot be done in a token way. It would be a mere mockery to demand that the Labour Government break with the bosses and bankers while supporting within the PLP and in Parliament those measures which precisely express the Government's abasement before these enemies of the labour movement. It would be a mockery to "stand for working class interests" while not supporting the rail strike and other instances of the direct defensive action of the trade union movement.

As it would be a mockery of any sort of effective campaigning and organisation if such a project for

of political consciousness in the working class. But the condition for that would be a serious debate, in which urgently necessary measures would be spelled out one by one and the Tribunes' programme judged accordingly. The issues would be raised of the sliding scale of wages, of work or full pay, of nationalisation without compensation, of international working class unity. Revolutionary socialists would strive to win the leadership away from the Tribunes. For any left movement based on 'left unity at all costs' could only end up delivering itself into the hands of Foot, and therefore of Wilson... and therefore of the bankers and the bosses.

DEMAND AUTOMATIC COST OF LIVING INCREASES

"It seems an article of faith in labour circles", lamented the Bank of International Settlements, "that wage increases must at least match the rise in the consumer price index, even though the price increases have partly come from abroad. But sure as fate, real consumption is going to have to be curtailed and the mass of labour is going to have to be obliged to shoulder its share of the cut". The right wingers of the Labour Government are now expressing themselves nearly as bluntly as these international bankers; and if Wilson is less outspoken than Healey or Crosland, his fundamental attitude is no different.

Above all this means a sharp brake on wages.

So far the Labour government has tried to suppress the level of wage claims by means of the Social Contract. That method — relying on the trade union bureaucracy to keep wages down — has not worked sufficiently for the needs of the capitalists. The reason why is simple. The trade union tops do not have the power to fulfill any bargain of which their side means sitting firmly on the lid of wage rises.

The idea of the Social Contract was for the Labour Government a return to the kind of relationship it used to have with the TUC prior to the bitter breaches of

the 1966-70 period. That was accomplished, but the TUC of today does not have the same relation to the rank and file as it did in 1966 and before. The balance of forces has altered in favour of the rank and file, militancy in general is much higher than then and some trade union leaderships have changed to reflect this development in a partial way. It was therefore impossible for the Social Contract to mean a return to 1964-66.

The failure of the social contract from the government's point of view (it always was anti working class in our view) was, as a contributor to the journal *New Society* recently put it, "not because the members of the TUC's General Council are either malevolent or Machiavellian. It is simply that they do not have the power".

This powerlessness is reflected by the public display of panic by the TUC economic committee every time it meets.

One plan after another for wage cutting is put forward; one 'voluntary' plan for wage cutting after another; one suicidal plan for poverty after another. The latest of these plans is the Jones Plan: flat rate increases for everybody in industry from the directors down.

Frantic

This plan would certainly be shipwrecked on the rocks of skilled workers' differentials either now or later, and not surprisingly the AUEW has turned its nose up at it as have the Power Engineers and the ASTMS. But the fact that it has got so far as to be discussed by the forthcoming meeting of the General Council of the TUC is a mark of the trade union bureaucracy's desperation.

The fact is they are panic stricken at the possibility of higher inflation, of higher unemployment and of the strength of the rank and file increasing as it attempts to win back all that inflation has taken away. The trade union leaders see the situation drifting out of their grasp and are frantic.

But if that is why they are offering to keep our wages down it is also why the CBI is refusing the idea of an agreement with the TUC unless the Government is a party to it. The employers realise the weakness of the TUC and that an agreement between them without the Labour Government's guarantee as a stiffener would be of little value.

This means that the CBI certainly feels that the Government will have to intervene in the coming struggle directly on their

side, and will pressure it to do so. Naturally the Labour Government is wary of how openly it colludes with the direct class enemies of those it claims to represent, it would prefer to operate the softly-softly way.

This partly explains Wedgwood Benn being shifted to the Energy Ministry where his allotted task of sorting out the disputes among the oil workers will soon give way to his main job of coaxing the miners into giving up the idea of fighting for a substantial wage increase, and thereby heading off the main battalion of wage-law breakers.

The chief instrument of this policy will probably be a so-called 'Social Contract mark 2': a set of 'guidelines' about as flexible and non compulsory as a set of prison bars. But Wilson knows that he cannot rely on this working. At the same time there has been denial after denial from leading Government figures of any intention to introduce a statutory wage freeze. "The inadequacies and unfairness of a rigid statutory wages policy have already been exposed", said Crosland in a recent speech at Hull.

In the short term, the government will rely heavily on unemployment and cuts in public spending.

Already workers are losing out. Earnings are rising at an official level of around 18 per cent per year while prices go up at about 25 per cent p.a. Real take home pay is therefore dropping at an average rate of over ten per cent per year at the moment.

Price watch

The question is: will workers pay for the capitalists' crisis? To hold down wages will not halt the price inflation, fuelled by interest charges, non productive public spending especially on arms, and monopoly pricing. It will simply help the capitalist class to ride out their problems at our expense. We should insist on the right to maintain our standard of living through a sliding scale of wages — automatic cost of living increases, say 65p for each 1 per cent rise of the cost of living as determined by working class price watch committees.

Right now, however, a great deal hangs on the railwaymen. If they are beaten down for lack of solidarity, the conditions of the whole working class will suffer. If the railmen win, every other worker will be better placed to secure victories for himself or herself.

WORK OR FULL PAY!

THE announcement of a 15 per cent drop in capital spending in manufacturing industry in 1975 gives advance notice of a huge increase in the number of unemployed. Already the Government puts the figures at 860,000 and still rising.

The Government's figures notoriously underestimate the unemployment situation especially with respect to female unemployment. We can be certain that the real unemployment figures are already over the million mark.

With each settled pay claim the situation becomes worse. In the steel industry the offer made to the production unions — supposedly to offset even larger unemployment — demanded a huge reduction in manning. The offer so far publicised from the board of British Rail included curtailing recruitment and losing jobs by waiting for natural wastage.

In the public service sector redundancies will be the logical outcome of a policy of swingeing cuts — unless there is a concerted fight back. Last month Crosland, who believes we are "bent on suicide" when we claim a decent

wage, announced for the time being at least, the party is over". In other words, not only do we face a leap in council house rents, but social services will be slashed.

The picture has been bad enough up to now. We cited some of the facts in WF 97:

HOUSING: In 1968, 200,000 houses were built in the public sector, 426,000 altogether. In 1973, the figures were 114,000 public sector, 304,000 total. Meanwhile the number of homeless people in council temporary accommodation more than doubled between 1966 and 1973. Council rents have generally gone up at least £1.50 since October 1972.

Earlier this year the 1975-6 allocation for local authorities to rehabilitate and modernise housing stock was cut from the 1974-5 level of £400 million to £296 million.

HEALTH: The £111 million cut in health spending made in December 1973 has never been restored.

EDUCATION: From December 1973 the allocation to cover school running costs was cut 10 per cent, though costs have increased enormously (e.g.

paper prices up 100 per cent). One index of the effect of successive cuts is the number of teachers leaving their schools: in the school year 1972-3 it was 18.6 per cent of all teachers in England and Wales and 28.6 per cent in Inner London — excluding teachers leaving through retirement or death."

The fight for a sliding scale of public expenditure, increasing spending on the social services to keep pace with rising prices, is vital to maintain the general living standards of the working class, and also to avert massive redundancies in the public sector.

Since the work-in at the Upper Clyde ship yards, the struggle against unemployment has been one of the most dramatic. At this moment there are occupations in every part of the country, many of them where workers take over the plant rather than submit to the dole queue. Increasingly workers are not prepared to take their money and go.

The logical aims for this struggle are: workers' control of production; nationalisation without compensation; work or full pay.

Now: abortion on demand

WITHOUT a doubt the fight against the James White Amendment has brought a new vitality and strength into the women's movement. The National Abortion Campaign has played a major part, drawing in women who have never been involved in the women's liberation movement, but who recognise the anti-abortion Bill as a direct threat to the possibility of them deciding for themselves whether to have children or not. It is especially important that a lot of working class women have become involved in the campaign.

Integral to the campaign against the Bill has been the mobilisation for the June 21st demonstration. After the 21st, there is a danger that, as a result of assurances from the Home Secretary that the Bill will not go through, the whole campaign will lose its momentum and its self-reliance. To an extent, of course, this is inevitable. But the greatest possible numbers must be won to ongoing activity.

Right to choose

If the Bill is defeated the 1967 Abortion Act will stand. This Act is far preferable to the James White Amendment, as it makes it relatively easy for doctors to give abortions. However, even under the 1967 Act a woman must get two doctors' signatures for an abortion; she is therefore dependent on the views they happen to hold regarding the subject. The fight must continue for a woman's right to choose whether to have a child or not — which concretely means Abortion on Demand — and for this to be supported by improved medical facilities.

NAC has organised a conference in the autumn as an attempt to maintain the fight not just against the anti-abortion Bill but against the inadequacies of the 1967 Act. However, the momentum and energies of

How Abse conned White into the 'back street' Bill

A HORRIFIC description of the effect on women of back street abortions was given at a public meeting for the National Abortion Campaign in Bromley, London, on June 16th, by a London Hospital doctor. The doctor described women entering hospital with uteruses filled with pus after using infected knitting needles to pierce the womb, holes in the vaginal walls that had been burned by crystals so that faeces and urine were eliminated through the vagina, with paralysis caused by bubbles entering the bloodstream after using dettol and soapy water, or with severe internal bleeding.

Such atrocities have virtually disappeared since the 1967 Abortion Act became law, but there is little doubt that should the present Abortion (Amendment) Bill be passed they would reappear. Hospi-

itals have records of thousands of such cases annually passing through their doors before 1967.

Two MPs, Jo Richardson and Ian Mikardo, informed the meeting of the events leading up to the Bill reaching its third reading. It appears that James White, taken under the wing of the arch reactionary Leo Abse, was persuaded to change his original plan for a Private Bill on Battered Wives and Children to the present Abortion (Amendment) Bill. The Bill was published only two days before the second reading and many MPs were confused and misled over the content of the Bill, partly because the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child tried to convince them that its purpose was simply to eliminate sharp practices under the present abortion laws. A solicitor described the

NAC have in the main been directed towards June 21st and the James White Amendment. While this concentration is necessary, there has not been a great deal of discussion around the 1967 Act, let alone the relationship between abortion on demand and the broader aims of the women's movement.

The question of abortion must be seen in a wider political context if the fight is to be consistently maintained on a sound basis. The emergence of the James White Amendment is not completely unconnected to

the sharpening economic and social crisis and the fact that the right wing are looking round for opportunities to reinforce the hold of conservative ideas, sapping and dividing the militancy of the working class.

Already the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and Women for Life are busy mounting a counter offensive in support of the James White Amendment. It is therefore vital that propaganda and activity around abortion on demand continues, and especially in relation to raising it within the labour movement.

Much broader campaign

It is in this context that the Working Womens Charter has proved to be particularly significant and successful. In passing the Charter many trades councils and trade unions pledged themselves to campaign for readily available abortion (one of the shortcomings of the Charter is that it doesn't specifically ask for abortion on demand) and under pressure from Charter groups have been forced to take the issue up.

The Charter campaign — emphasising the unity of the ten demands of the Charter — has also been able to point out that for women to have a real choice a much broader campaign must be taken up to include nursery and creche facilities, maternity leave, equal pay and equal opportunities. That is the only way for women to gain any real control over their own lives.



TRADE UNION SUPPORT GROWS IN NORTH WEST

IN MANCHESTER, the National Abortion Campaign has won wide trade union support.

The United Manchester Hospitals branch of NUPE is supporting NAC on the basis of 'Abortion on demand'. On Friday 27th June the branch will be lobbying Tom Pendry, MP for Stalybridge, who voted for the James White Amendment, when he speaks at the NUPE stewards' conference in Manchester.

North Manchester hospitals branch of NUPE is also supporting NAC, and a speaker will be present from NAC at the next meeting of the Manchester district NHS committee of NUPE, on Thursday 26th June. Other support has come from ASTMS and NUR trade unionists, and a resolution to support NAC is going forward to the Trades Council on 18th June.

Salford and Hazel Grove LPYSS have pledged support to NAC. Manchester Labour Women's Council has passed a resolution, being circulated to all Labour Party bodies,

expressing total opposition to the James White Amendment and regretting having campaigned in elections for Labour MPs who were now giving White their support.

There was a major demonstration in support of NAC on Saturday June 7th, with more than 400 people marching. At a meeting held in the Houldsworth Hall after the march, some of the basic issues behind the campaign were explained in a speech by Dr Judy Gray. "Abortion is fundamental", she said, "because of the need for women to control their own bodies."

"For women to really have the right to choose if and when they have children we will need more than free contraception and abortion on demand, more than free nurseries — we will need to have a generally higher standard of life and a drastic change in the kind of attitude which leaves all the work of caring for children to the female half of the population."

Naomi Wimborne
Fran Brodie

The screws tighten in Northern Ireland

THE anti-democratic nature of British rule in northern Ireland was highlighted by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) (Amendment) Bill published on 18th June.

The Bill is intended to replace the Emergency Powers Act, taking into account some recommendations of the Gardiner report. However, the Emergency Powers Act may still be extended for another six months when it next comes up for renewal on 24th July.

Gauntlet

Under the new Bill, a whole series of new crimes are defined. Training people in the use of explosives or firearms; receiving such training; recruiting for a banned organisation (such as the IRA); carrying out any duties for a banned organisation (even if the action itself is perfectly legal, such as carrying a message or going to a shop to buy something); wearing a disguise; or collecting information on policemen, judges, or other state officials. In short, more or less anyone having the remotest connection with the Republican and socialist resistance in the Six County state can be jailed without having done anything at all criminal in any normal sense.

by Mike Field

For when even this net is not broad enough, the Bill gives wide powers to police and the army to stop, search, and question, and to detain without trial. People can be put in detention by an interim custody order from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. This interim order has to be confirmed within seven weeks by a detention order from one of the special advisers to be appointed to the Secretary of State. After one year detainees may apply for a reconsideration of their case.

The human meaning of all this is shown by a recent report in 'Republican News' (14th June). "The Brits murdered Sean McKenna, as surely and as cold bloodedly as they murdered 13 on Bloody Sunday".

McKenna died on 5th June after the last of a series of heart attacks. He was one of the first to be interned without trial in August 1971, and it was his three years' internment that broke his health.

He was kept spread-eagled against a wall for 30 hours, in the interests of 'depth interrogation'. He was subjected to the infamous sensory deprivation

many changes in the law that would result from the introduction of the Bill. For instance there would be a restriction on the freedom of speech in the press and for teachers and advisory bodies. Doctors would have the onus to prove themselves not guilty of having performed an illegal abortion — rather than the legal norm of 'innocent until proved guilty' applying.

The MPs felt that with the growing militancy of women against the Amendment Bill there is a good chance of it failing. However, there is no reason to assume that similar Bills may not be presented to Parliament in future. The job of socialists is to see that the growing militancy of women, particularly in working class areas, is focused within a broader framework of women's liberation.

Jan Morris

treatment. He was beaten, starved, forced to run a gauntlet between soldiers and RUC men armed with batons, over broken glass in his bare feet.

McKenna was released from Long Kesh last autumn, before the British Army had him dying on their hands. But, despite the Provisional IRA ceasefire, which has been maintained since February, 285 Republicans and socialists are still kept in Long Kesh concentration camp.

Sectarian

The police state regime in northern Ireland does not have as its purpose keeping the peace against the "terrorism" of the IRA. In fact the British Army has done very little to check — and has even helped — the sectarian assassination campaign of the Orange murder gangs. The role of the British Army is to maintain the artificial Six County state with its built-in sectarianism — and that cannot be done except through police state methods. The only way to peace is through the struggle to force the British government to withdraw immediately and completely from Ireland, to smash the Six County state, and to create a united 32 County republic.



New York — where the contradictions of capitalism are king

THE anarchic workings of capitalist financing mechanisms, normally hidden from workers by a screen of rarefied jargon, occasionally break open into a crisis which directly threatens the livelihoods of large numbers of people. This has been happening recently in that epitome of capitalist contradictions, New York City.

On June 10th, this wealthy city of the most wealthy nation in the world was saved from bankruptcy through intervention by the State government. The day before, city authorities had postponed sending out pay cheques to 15,000 teachers because they simply did not have the money. At the end of May, a similar short term cash crisis had been averted only by Governor Hugh Carey advancing the City treasury an emergency \$200 million. \$6.6 billion must be raised over the next 14 months to pay off existing debts and finance day-to-day operations.

Eroded

Carey's intervention is being effected through the setting up of a 'Municipal Assistance Corporation' (MAC). MAC will buy up the City's short term debts and replace these borrowings with its own long term bonds. In return, MAC will exercise some control over the City budget.

And that control, without doubt, will be exercised in the direction of attempting to cut education and welfare services, hospitals, libraries, fire services, etc., and chopping tens of thousands of public service jobs. New York Mayor Abraham Beame has already announced cutbacks including sacking 14,000 city workers, and has talked of laying off another 38,000.

The Municipal Labour Committee, a united front of public service unions, called a protest for June 4th against these planned cuts. Victor Gotbaum, District Executive Director of the largest union involved, has hinted at his willingness to accept dismissals among his members so long as contract benefits are not eroded, but there is talk of strike action. A confrontation between the unions and the city authorities seems scarcely avoidable.

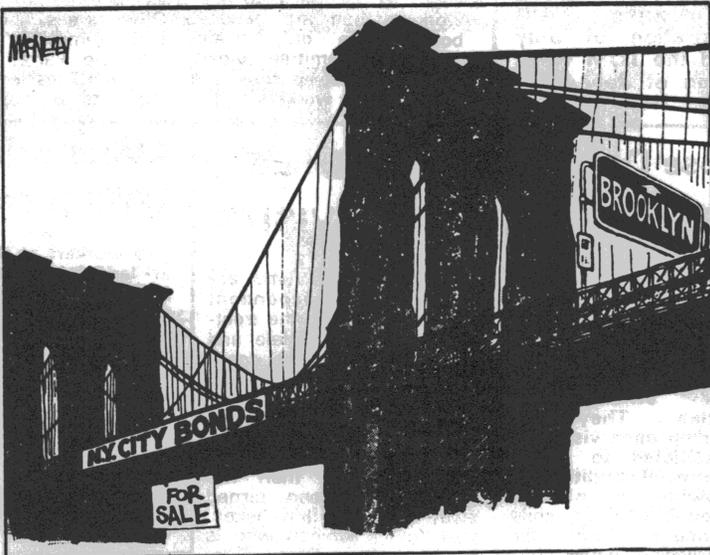
How has this situation arisen? First of all, New York is by no means the only American city in financial straits. Detroit has laid off 1600 municipal employees and still faces a huge deficit. Chicago and Cleveland have already dismissed hundreds of workers and cut vital services. The story is the same in dozens of cities where inflation and economic recession are having a ravaging effect.

Debt service

In this context, the unplanned irrationality of capitalist financing becomes increasingly evident. Over the last ten years, deficit financing — borrowing in the market to cover the budget deficit — has become endemic in New York City. And the city has been forced to offer higher and higher returns to investors whose confidence declines the more the authorities are driven to borrow. The cost of these returns increases the cost of servicing the debt and this makes even more borrowing necessary, for debt service accounts for a sixth of the current budget. Crooked accounting has for years masked the enormity of this crisis.

The situation now requires an attack on the strength of the working class, whose militancy in the public service sector has accentuated the

are king



authorities' crisis. One of the forms this attack will take is a cut-back in social services for the poorest black and Puerto Rican areas. Another will be an increase in unemployment (already massive, especially among young blacks), made worse by the fact that a lot of

industry has been moving out of New York in search of cheaper labour and lower taxes. This has also had the effect of eroding the city's tax base considerably.

During the crisis atmosphere whipped up in the week before 30th May, Beame called

in the municipal union leaders and urged them to adopt a 4-day working week and to forego a 6% pay rise scheduled for July 1st. Both these requests were rejected, but Beame was being quite consistent from the point of view of capitalism. For behind the dogma of the bourgeois economists about taxation having reached its 'natural limits' lies the reality of the whole commercial bank system.

Mythical

These banks already hold about a quarter of the City's debt, and have so many dubious assets in the form of loans to shaky business concerns and investment trusts, that they have insisted that what they consider to be the only really 'controllable' expenses in the city budget — wages, benefits and social services, would you believe? — are in fact 'controlled'. And this is made even more imperative because the city has issued such a flood of notes and bonds backed by mythical revenue estimates that investors are just not buying them any more.

And so it is left to those the financiers and city bosses want to 'control' out of existence to step in and defend their jobs, their conditions, and the amenities of one of the world's wealthiest cities.

J.W.HARDING

Images of superstardom

they may pay a price of suffocation and loneliness for their fame, but no-one is interested in that, for they have become their performance, their image. Thus stardom deforms, and quite often destroys.

The film "Janis" avoids these issues, showing only film of Joplin in performance — itself worth seeing — and some rather banal interviews. It doesn't even mention her death. And yet to see and hear her sing is in itself so extraordinary and powerful an experience that certain questions arise.

How was it that a white, middle class American girl, the product of a miserable childhood in a small town in Texas where she was classed as a 'misfit', a 'weirdo', could drag up from her depths the rebellion to sing black music

with such intensity? And what was the relation between such performances and the rest of her life?

The force of Joplin's rebellion was in her sensuality. But to assert this so forcefully, in the face of the hypocrisy of white American society, she had to define herself in the image of a whore, a red-hot mama. In her stage act she revelled in this sensuality, with the copulatory movements, the little dialogues with the audience about the men she was laying, and most of all with that amazing voice, so lustful and yet so wistful and lonely.

But her rebellion was trapped in one-sidedness because she was only expressing the other side of the domesticated housewife coin. And defining herself and being defined like this became a ruthless self-division: "I make love to 25,000 people in a concert hall and then go home to my room alone". Her person had become subsumed in her stardom and its trappings, her self-expression ruthlessly harnessed to the fantasy world created by capitalist promotion.

Joplin was buried alive. In her stage act she could express a revolt against this, and her classic songs like "Piece of my heart" or "Move Over" conveyed a life-force that was indeed tremendous. But so much of the rest of the time was spent in dead-end loneliness, where drinking and screwing and shooting drugs became oppressively necessary to ease that, rather than things to enjoy as they had been before. And, like all people in her position, she was surrounded by riff-raff and hangers on, whom she hated but who yet testified to her fame.

In one scene, she goes back to her home town, and we see a little of her bewilderment underneath the hip surface, but the film isn't really interested in exploring such things. All it gives us is the image for the fans — Janis Joplin on stage, joyously erotic, living entirely for the present, since "Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose".

Parkinson's book about

TORY PAMPHLET CALLS FOR POLICE STATE METHODS

"INEVITABLY the methods used by intelligence services to check terrorism involve work that is disagreeable. Telephones will have to be tapped. Letters must be opened. Informers must be paid. Agents provocateurs must be planted. Gossip must be noted and filed."

These proposals come from prominent Tory MP Philip Goodhart (joint secretary of the powerful 1922 Committee) in a recent pamphlet. "Torture", he goes on to say, "should have no place in a democratic society but... but! he goes on to bemoan the end of 'in depth' interrogation in Northern Ireland."

The police methods mentioned by Goodhart are of course already used — including torture which is widely used in northern Ireland. The same day as Goodhart's pamphlet was published, Labour MP Robert Kilroy Silk revealed the existence of a standard Home Office form which can be used by prison authorities to request police to investigate people who have sent letters to or applied to visit prisoners. This means that police are spying on people without the slightest evidence of any criminal behaviour.

It is significant, however, that Goodhart comes out openly advocating these police state operations, which are usually carried out shamefacedly. He also airs further ideas, such as identity cards and a computerised national fingerprints register. It is all justified, of course, by the need to 'combat terrorism'.

THE new film about Janis Joplin by Alk and Findlay, and Michael Parkinson's recent book about George Best, provide two additions to the burgeoning coverage of the phenomenon known as the Superstar. Their subjects, both 'legendary' figures, neither survived long: Joplin dying at 27 of a heroin overdose, Best 'retiring hurt' after a series of abortive comebacks.

With people like Best and Joplin, the first thing that comes to mind is energy. Energy and achievement — and in each case, the perversion of achievement and the waste of energy. For to become that kind of superstar is to have accomplishments and personality continuously transmitted through the tyrannical hold of a mass media image that has a concept of performance for which real people in real social relations are unacceptable. Off the stage or the field

BBC — British broadcasting cover-up

THE miserable Lord Chalfont who crawled out of the Labour Party just before the last election to sit in the slim shadow of the Liberals can be seen nowadays in a regular BBC TV series, interviewing various notables. Last week it was the Shah of Iran, next week it will be Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Tuesday's interview with the Shah was a good example of the way rottenness can be glossed over and the truth distorted out of all recognition. For instance Chalfont referred to the problems the Shah had with the "troublesome Mr. Mossadeq" in the '50s, neglecting to mention that Mr. Mossadeq's "trouble" was that he wanted to nationalise Anglo-Iranian oil — which Britain, not the Shah, found intolerable. Thus according to Chalfont it was the Shah who ousted Mossadeq, when in fact the CIA did it on the request Britain's Prime Minister Eden.

What wasn't covered up from a 'British point of view' was

allowed to be covered up from an Iranian point of view. By kind permission, we saw a nation without poverty, united in the love of its father-Shah, and entering the modern world with gusto.

Only at one point did the ugly truth threaten to break through the veneer of glamour provided by the Shah's family skiing at St. Moritz and state ceremonial occasions. That was when Chalfont, sweating perceptibly, timidly nervous, enquired whether it wasn't true that systematic torture was practised in the Shah's prisons. It wasn't, replied the Shah. And Chalfont seemed too relieved at having got over that question to pursue the liar, to confront him with the evidence and to press him further.

Rabin doesn't ski in Switzerland. His wife cannot confide the problems of rising from being a student of architecture to being an Empress.

What will Chalfont find to talk about?

George Best is a superficial affair, made up of stories from Best and vague generalities from Parkinson about sport-showbiz. Much of Best's story is a catalogue of the 'birds he's screwed', but again, it's largely a spectacle of someone thrashing about within the confines of his image. Parkinson has no light to shed on the way in which capitalism constantly transforms people into things, the way in which a working class kid from Belfast became one of the 'greats' of football and had his talent transformed into a glittering unreality by a media that fed off him and destroyed him as a player through the agency of himself.

Best speaks of the suffocation involved in being "George Best", but he's too self centred and shallow to understand the degradation of other victims of his "success". Thus: "I'd not go home unless I had a bird. Any bird, it didn't matter. I used to tour the streets in my car looking for crumpet to take back to the house with me just for company. Then it had to be two birds, or sisters, or mother and daughter, or Siamese twins — anything to break the monotony..."

He tells of his constant drinking to ease the boredom, the harassment from fans who either wanted to talk to him about football or fight him, the endless phone calls from young girls, the autograph hunters and hangers on. His reaction was a self-pitying craving for anonymity. But life for a modern superstar precludes this. You are there to act as a focus for the fantasies of your deprived followers, and are expected to live up to these demands.

To be sure, Best is pretty cynical about all this now, and he makes a good living as a businessman and club owner. There's no element of tragedy here — especially as he's such a bore. It's just that on the football field he was an artist. Like Janis Joplin, his triumph and his downfall were knit together in the society in which he performed.

ALAN HASLAM

'MILITANT' accepts LP gag on Irish campaign

LABOUR Party Young Socialist branches have this week received a "gagging" circular from Transport House.

'Organisational Circular no. 4', from Barry Clarke, National Youth Officer, dated 11th June, states:

"After due consideration the National Executive Committee (of the Labour Party) have decided not to give the LPYS authority to proceed with any activity centred round the proposals to hold an Irish campaign. The National Committee (of the LPYS) at its meeting held on June 7th accepted the decision and no further action is to be taken by LPYS branches in terms of campaign activity".

The LPYS National Committee, dominated by the Militant tendency, did some time ago propose an "Irish campaign". At the first sign of displeasure from Transport House about any challenge to the Labour - Tory bipartisan policy on Ireland, this campaign shut up shop. Not an enormous amount was lost, since the LPYS NC campaign concentrated on their favourite recipe for Ireland, of a "Trade Union Defence Force", and operated in direct opposition to the Troops Out Movement. But, however right or wrong the Militant's ideas, they showed a complete lack of will to

stand up and fight for those ideas or even for basic democracy in the Labour Party.

Since, then, however, a number of LPYSs have given support to the Troops Out Movement. Ten sent delegates to the TOM Labour Movement Conference on May 24th. One of these, Carlton LPYS, in Nottingham, has recently circulated all Constituency Labour Parties, LP wards, and LPYSs in Nottingham about a meeting on 'Ireland and the British Labour Movement' which they are sponsoring on July 15th, with a speaker from the Troops Out Movement.

It is possible that the 'Organisational Circular no. 4' will be used against activities such as this meeting. But Keith Bennett, Carlton LPYS secretary, told *Workers Fight* that he intended to go ahead with the meeting nonetheless.

This gag on the right of LPYS members to discuss and take action on the vital question of Ireland will meet with strong opposition from many in the LPYS dissatisfied with the meek "Yes sir, no sir" attitude of Militant. Resolutions of protest should be sent to the LPYS NC and to Trans-

port House. Activities like the Nottingham meeting must not only be defended against bureaucratic suppression, they must be followed up with similar initiatives elsewhere, including full participation by LPYSs in the anti Prevention of Terrorism Act demonstration of July 5th and the TOM week of action of July 12th to 19th.

BOB SCHOLEY, chief executive of the British Steel Corporation, is going round the country preaching at Joint Consultative Committees in favour of the six points put forward by the Trade Union Steel and Iron Committee (TUSIC).

Doesn't this alliance between management and union strike you as strange? Whose views does the union leadership represent, the union membership's or the bosses'? Work it out for yourself...

BSC are also supporting the call for a TUC national steel committee to negotiate wages and conditions. This would take away the right of local negotiations which are much more controlled by the shop floor workers than are national bodies. The only useful national committee would be one made up from the rank and file workers in the

Steel industry bosses use JCCs as lever for six-point plan

industry. As for the question about national committees coming up at JCCs, this is totally against the agreements made between the crafts and BSC. The JCCs, according to BSC, should not poach on union negotiating rights. Craft union workers at BSC's Cleveland plant are refusing to attend JCCs as long as they do this. Other areas should follow their example.

Dougie Farrell, chairman of South Teesside joint shop stewards and ex executive

member of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, rejected the call for a national negotiating committee put forward by Scholey but supported the six "cost saving" TUSIC points. He said the national body would "take away the autonomy of the unions and branches and would not therefore be welcomed by the shop floor".

But does he think that redundancy is acceptable to the shop floor? Reject the TUSIC six points!

Lol Duffy

Rose Dugdale & Rita O'Hare: DENIED NON-FAMILY VISITS

Rita O'Hare and Rose Dugdale, two women imprisoned in the top security wing of Limerick jail, have been at the centre of a series of hunger strikes and struggles. They are demanding open visits (i.e. not restricted to family) and improved conditions.

Following a physical attack on Rita and her children during a "closed" visit, Rose Dugdale went on a hunger strike that lasted for over 30 days. She ended it when her demands for visits and access to her solicitor were granted; and in solidarity with Rita she demanded, too, that conditions in the jail be improved.

Agitation in both Ireland and London has aided their struggle, bring it to the attention of the press (WF reported some weeks ago on the attack Rita suffered at the hands of prison thugs.) In Limerick, over a hundred people demonstrated outside the jail on May 25th, and the Committee for the Defence of Women Political Prisoners has been running a broad agitation involving socialist and women's groups. However, one major group missing from the march was the Provisional Sinn Fein, who have not taken up seriously or in any official capacity the agitation for the women prisoners.

In London there have been two pickets, one at Aer Lingus and the other at Tara Hotel, an Aer Lingus link hotel in Kensington. They were organised by the Women's Committee for

Prisoners' Rights, who are seeking an independent public enquiry into the treatment of Rose Dugdale and Rita O'Hare and the conditions of prisons throughout the 26 Counties.

Rose Dugdale's demands for visits and access to her solicitor were granted. However, since then her solicitor has been turned away after the first 'token' visit, and a woman who is looking after Rose Dugdale's child was flatly denied any visits because she does not come under the category 'family'. Letters can be received as long as they do not include references to other prisoners (e.g. Rita O'Hare), but basically the prison authorities' concessions were hollow.

Rita O'Hare continues her struggle by refusing any visits until her children, aged 13, 10 and 7, are allowed to visit here in open visit conditions, without a glass screen separating the family. The children are deemed by the prison authorities to be "aggressive and suspect". Her husband has also been turned away because he was accompanied by a friend who did not come under the category 'family'.

S.C.
Next picket: Ireland Information Service, Bond St. W1. 12.30 pm, Saturday June 28th. Contact Women's Committee for Prisoners' Rights at 114 Highbury New Park, N5: 226 7615. Letters and telegrams of support for Rita O'Hare to Committee for the Defence of Women Political Prisoners, 51 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

MEETINGS

BLACK Parents' Movement and Black Students' Movement: Public Meeting 3.30pm, Sunday 22nd June, at the Co-operative Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7. This meeting is part of the campaign over the case of Cliff McDaniel, a 17 year old student of Stationers Company School. McDaniel was assaulted by a police officer on April 17th, and subsequently charged with assaulting a police officer and insulting behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace. A demonstration is also being organised at the hearing, 10am on Thursday 26th June at High-gate Magistrates' Court, Bishops Road.

Socialist Teachers' Conference. Discussion on the central issues facing teachers: salaries, education cuts, social contract, equality of women, teachers and the labour movement, including the NUT and the Labour Party. Saturday 12th July, NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, off Theobalds Road, London WC1. 11am to 6pm. Tickets 50p from Bernard Regan, 24 St Agnes Close, London

LONDON Workers Fight meeting: "The struggle for women's liberation: what next after 21st June?" Speaker: Fran Brodie. 8.30pm, Sunday 22nd June, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, N1. Angel underground.

LIVERPOOL Workers Fight meeting: "Marxism and the Revolutionary Party" 8pm, Wednesday 25th June, at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool 8.

HARINGEY Troops Out Movement: inaugural meeting: 8pm, Monday 23rd June, at Edison Hall (annexe), off Crouch End Hill, N8.

South East London Troops Out Movement: Meeting on "Ireland and the Labour Movement: The Way Forward" Speaker from local Trades Council, just returned from Ireland. 7.45pm, Monday June 30th, Charlton House, London SE20.

Organised and unorganised unite against closure

470 workers at the Slumberland factory in Wokingham, Berkshire, have started a work to rule and ban on overtime as from 9th June.

They are fighting to defeat closure plans. According to an announcement from Slumberland management on 6th June, the Wokingham factory is to be closed, with 100 staff retained for distribution and sales, and

production is to be concentrated at their factory in Tipton, Staffordshire. Closures in Birmingham and Paisley were also announced.

Non-union members are joining with members of the Furnishers, Timber and Allied Trades Union in the action to save their jobs. FTAT officials say they will coordinate action in Wokingham with Paisley and Birmingham.

Rail strike called off FROM PAGE 1

some new wage curb package.

Throughout the country support was building up for the railmen, with official backing from major unions. NUR members, despite the press campaign, were solidly behind their leadership, and many wanted a fight on the basis of more militant demands.

The national rail strike, the first since 1926, would have found the bosses and the Government off balance. Quickly it would have paralysed key sections of the economy, creating a situation almost like that of a general strike. In such a situation, even if the Labour government did manage to beat the strikers down, their victory would be hollow: for such a confrontation would do irreparable

harm to the relations between the Labour government and the trade unions.

That was why the Government was prepared to make extra concessions to head off the strike. That is also why the NUR leadership accepted an offer which will not even keep up with price increases. They were frightened of their own power. The negotiations which have gone on over the past few days were thus determined by the fact that all parties involved were above all scared of the consequences if no agreement were reached. It was all played up by press and television to give the appearance of great dramas, when in fact the talks and walks around Whitehall achieved little except a slight improvement on, and rejigging of the Rail Tribunal offer to take it nearer the original NUR demand.

But in the end it was not a magician who produced the extra amount of money, but the potential power of working class action weighing on the minds of the negotiators.

SCAB LORRIES OPERATING AGAINST ICI STRIKERS

ICI, one of the largest monopolies in Britain, is facing complete shutdown in a matter of weeks. A major struggle for pay increases up to £21.50 is being waged by craftsmen and production workers at the ICI plants on Teesside.

Wilton is closed, with over 7,000 workers out. 2,400 craftsmen struck on June 10th, and 5,000 process workers came out when the bosses stopped the pay of four drivers who had refused to cross the picket line. At Billingham, 2,000 craftsmen are out, and if the national pay offer is rejected at national negotiations on Monday 23rd June, 4,000 process workers could be out, closing the plant down. Elsewhere the Teesside workers have got support. At Huddersfield the craftsmen had a 24 hour strike, and the process workers are operating a total ban on over-

The craftsmen put in for a £16.50 increase plus cost of living deal, and restoration of differentials. The main process workers' unions, TGWU and GMWU, are looking for a £21.50 increase.

ICI made £450 million profit last year, but they feel that they can resist the strikes which are costing them about £1½ million per day.

Scabs are in operation driving chemical lorries out of some of the strike bound plants. Trade unionists elsewhere must make sure they are turned back, as a concrete action of solidarity with the ICI workers.

FACILITIES FOR NUT SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES

THERE is a lot of fuss currently being made in the teachers' journals about the granting of facilities for union representatives. How is the NUT, the major teaching union, approaching the subject, and what does the agreement mean for school representatives on the shop floor?

One of the main functions of a trade union is to defend and improve the standards of living and working conditions of its members. Nowhere in the great NUT hoo-hah on the subject do we read this. Instead we read of "the crucial role of the school representative in establishing good industrial relations" with the employers.

The NUT bureaucracy see themselves as policemen acting on behalf of the employers to quell any militancy on the shop floor level. Thus we read that the school representative's function is to deal with industrial relations matters within the school where the responsibility is conferred on them by their organisation (not by the members of the union at the workplace!). It is quite common for militant NUT school representatives to be threatened by their employers with disciplinary action from the NUT itself!

The material gains in the

agreement are real but limited, amounting to access to telephones and notice boards and the use of school rooms for union meetings.

Although there is talk of school representatives getting a couple of hours a week to organise in the school, the training courses being set up by area NUT branches to make sure we have plenty to do in those two hours (as if we haven't already!) are being held during evenings or weekends (more unpaid overtime!) There is also, of course, absolutely no talk of having meetings in school time.

CORRECTION: In the article "Teachers to Thwart Army Recruitment in Schools" in last week's issue of *Workers Fight*, mention was made of the "violent and chauvinist elements in children's natures". Some readers have taken this to mean that we were suggesting that violence and chauvinism are elements in some sort of fixed, supra-historical human nature. Such a view would be anti socialist: what we meant to refer to was the violent and chauvinistic elements which exist in children's outlooks as they are at present, conditioned by capitalist society.

Protest over education cuts

IN Inner London the Education Authority are cutting back on the most vulnerable teachers first in an attempt to reduce costs. New teachers often start with what is known as a "temporary terminal" contract, which has to be renewed when it expires. Teachers with such contracts for less than six months (79 in number) are to get the sack, while those with such contracts

(165 of them) are to have their contracts 'reviewed' and will only be kept on if they are 'satisfactory'.

The Inner London Association of the NUT passed last week by 37 to 31 a resolution urging the NUT Executive to call a half day strike in protest against these and other cuts, this strike to coincide with the mass lobby called for by the South East Regional TUC at their recent conference on