



TUC... BACK FORD WORKERS WITH ACTION

The overwhelming Labour Party Conference decision showed Ford workers that the whole movement is behind them.

By Lynn
Walsh

Ford workers have not only breached the 5% limit but by rejecting Ford's 8% offer have made it quite clear to one and all that they are not prepared to accept any form of wage restraint.

The outright rejection of 5% and all restraint by the Labour Party Conference made it clear to the bosses that the government has no backing from the labour movement as far as the 5% is concerned. Immediately after this, Ford management made its 8% offer. But the overwhelming Labour Party Conference decision also showed Ford workers that the whole movement is behind them and strengthened their determination to fight for their full claim.

The Ford workers' claim is an entirely reasonable one (see reports from the plants, page 14) especially in view of Ford UK's massive profits (estimated at

continued on page 2



TORY CONFERENCE... An ominous warning



Mrs Thatcher speaking at last week's conference

Last week's Tory conference in Brighton gave us a horrifying glimpse of what another Tory government would mean for the workers in Britain.

The Tory women at last week's Party Conference may have had fewer flowery hats; Mrs Thatcher may have opposed the 5% limit; one delegate may have worn overalls, but the Tory leaders unmistakably demonstrated that they are still the party of big business.

Some of the true-blue delegates who were allowed to the rostrum—calling, among other things, for a return for the stocks and flogging, and full backing for Ian Smith's murderous regime in Rhodesia—were a sickening reminder of the ultra-reactionary, pre-

By Roger Shriver
(Deptford Labour Party)

judged people on whom big business, the ruling class relies for electoral support.

Heath, the union-basher of the 1970-74 Tory government, now appears on the "moderate" side of the Party. Embarrassing Thatcher and Joseph, he came out in favour of an incomes policy, even voicing support for Callaghan's policy. But at the same time he also demanded

continued on page 2

Apartheid under seige



Feature
article
Page 11

behind the negotiations Ford offer- "less than last year"

Ford's two offers of 6.5% and then 8% were rejected. For most Ford workers they would have come nowhere near the claim.

The Ford strike goes on. After the huge publicity build-up to last week's negotiations, Ford management and Fleet Street's hired hacks are now denouncing the union negotiators as "unreasonable troublemakers".

Friday's two offers of 6.5% and then 8% were decisively rejected. For the majority of Ford workers they would have meant between £4-£5: nowhere near the claim for a £20 across-the-board increase to bring over them over the £70 minimum.

Management's letter sent to all hourly-paid workers on Tuesday urging them to "persuade" union officials to call off the strike, was not well received. "Most blokes will tear it up—I threw mine on the fire", Roy Green, Dagenham shop steward and John Hickey (T&GWU) told 'Militant'. "It's going behind the trade union negotiators' backs."

By Eileen Short

Ford management claim that they are now ready to negotiate freely, thus removing "all obstacles" to an agreement. However: "Despite the fact that they have doubled their profits in this last year, the offer they have placed before the union falls short of the 1977 offer. It's a misnomer that they are negotiating 'freely'", said Richie Rolands, spokesman for the Halewood shop stewards.

Ford safety /5/
Picket reports /14/

The company is demanding a productivity deal and restrictions on the right to strike without official backing, meal and tea breaks, absenteeism and 'discipline'.

They must be dreaming! Ford workers are not going to watch their hard-won rights

undermined. They are determined. Behind them they have the swelling support of the organised labour movement.

They have the official backing of the AUEW and T&GWU. The dockers and seamen are refusing to handle any Ford shipments.

Ford cars will not be seen at the motor show due to blacking. The firemen will not cross picket lines. And up and down the country, unions, Labour Parties and the Labour Party Young Socialists are lining up behind the Ford workers.

The action is biting hard. Ford, who expected to make a massive £300 million profit this year, are losing £10 million a day in Britain and Europe. Unions throughout Ford's European plants are meeting to discuss international action. The whole European operation is expected to grind to a halt over the next ten days.

Already the bosses have been forced to drop their attempt to impose a rigid 5% pay limit. The resounding rejection of pay restraint at the TUC and Labour Party conferences has forced employers, government and trade union leaders to reconsider.

The growing anger has erupted. Workers have loyally tolerated wage restraint for three years, at the request of the trade union and labour leaders. But it has solved none of the problems, and we are still faced with the threat of another Tory government. Trade unionists are no longer willing to stand by in silence as the government whittles away its support by adopting policies dictated by the employers.

The Ford workers have shown the alternative. End pay restraint, guarantee wage increases to make up the fall of the last three years, with a £70 minimum for all to end low pay. Introduce a 35-hour week to improve working conditions and create jobs for the unemployed.

Ensure this as a right for every worker by taking over the profitable monopolies, and running them under the control of those who produce the wealth. That is the way to win the support of the mass of Britain's workers, and eliminate the Tory threat.

That is why every worker must back the Ford workers.

these workers know to their cost.

All these and other union moves point to a winter of industrial conflict. This is why it is imperative for the TUC leaders to make it clear to the government that the legitimate demands of workers to restore lost living standards must be met in full.

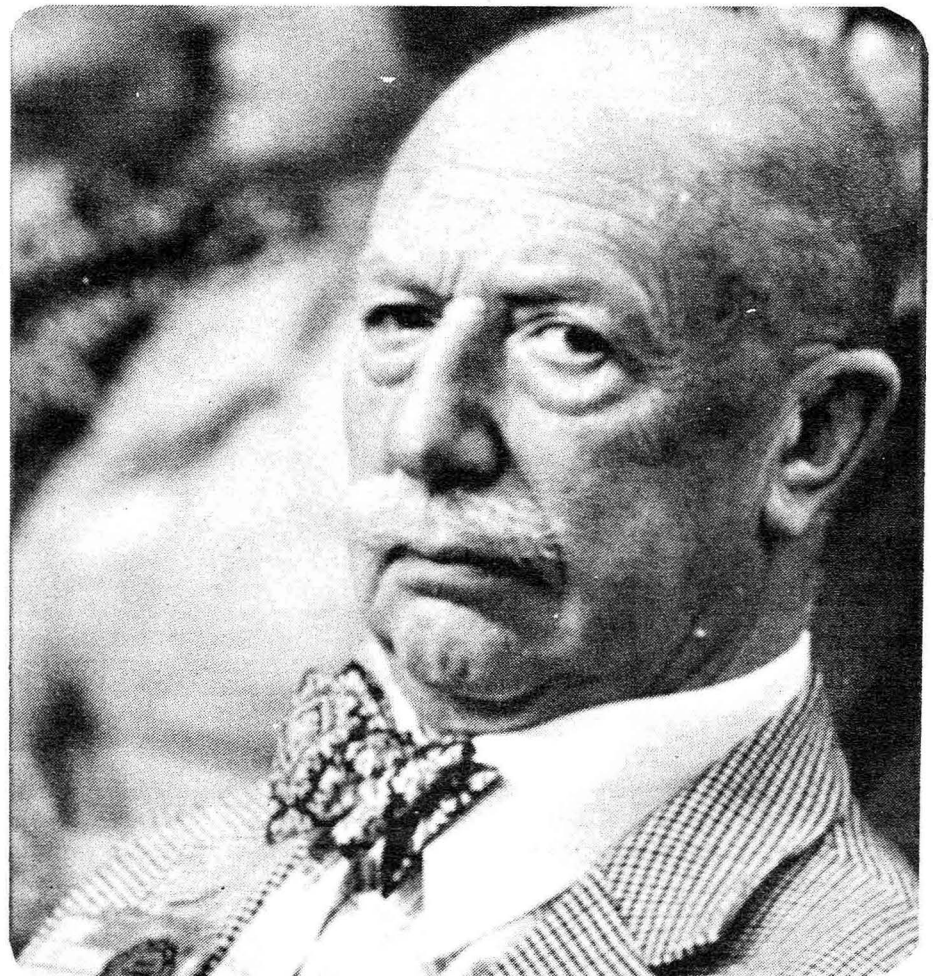
They must reject out of hand any attempt to revive the incomes policy in a disguised form. A new 8% limit is as unacceptable as the 5% limit. A secret limit of an undisclosed percentage is still a limit—and must be rejected.

James Callaghan and Dennis Healey argue that the only way to keep down inflation, increase investment and production, and—in the far distant long run—improve living standards is to hold down wages.

But as far as the bosses who control industry are concerned there is only one way to increase investment and production: by increasing profits. And there is only one way of doing this: by holding down wages.

Callaghan and Healey have also darkly threatened that if

ominous warning



At the Tory Party conference...

photo: Julian McKittrick

continued from front page

"monetary measures", "cuts at least twice as large as now" to get the economy moving.

Heath's more or less open attack on the Thatcher leadership highlights just how crude Thatcher, Joseph and the rest of the present Tory leadership really are. Heath's criticisms no doubt reflect big business fears of the angry reaction a Thatcher government would immediately draw from organised workers.

But at the bottom, the split in the Tory leadership is one of tactics, not aims. Both factions are out to cut workers' shares of the national wealth and to fetter the trade unions.

Thatcher called on workers and bosses to co-operate to build a society rewarding enterprise. "Taxes will be cut," all the Tory leaders promised, but the main cuts would be on capital gains tax,

income surcharge and the like—that is, taxes affecting the rich. VAT would go up, and many delegates called for social security and dole money to be taxed.

"Government spending was too high." Too much went on social security, housing and employment subsidies etc. More would be spent on defence, of course.

"No fixed percentage pay rises," they proclaimed. But any extra paid to the workers of profitable enterprises would be paid for by minimal increases for those in unprofitable firms. The bosses make the crisis. We pay for it.

All the cries of the Tories are summed up by Sir Geoffrey Howe, the likely Chancellor in any Thatcher government. He spoke approvingly of Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore, where, he said, the economies were catching up with Britain because their government "encouraged free enterprise,

kept taxation down and kept the government out."

They also just happen to be societies where trade unions are severely restricted, if not banned; where opposition is extremely dangerous, and where elementary democratic and welfare rights are trampled on. The monetarist policies which have been so successful for the big tycoons in these countries, and in Chile of course, are based on the economies of the prison camp.

The only fly in the ointment for them is the enormous strength of the organised working class, as Heath found to his cost. Any worker aware of the meaning of those policies would be horrified; and a campaign by the leaders of the labour movement to expose the Tories and pose a socialist alternative would ensure that the Tories would never be allowed to try their ideas out on the working class.

BACK FORDS

continued from front page

£300 million this year). The average real wages of British workers have only just returned to the 1971 level. We have six years of cut living standards to catch up!

Clearly, the eyes of millions of trade unionists are on Ford's. Over 1.3 million workers have claims in the pipeline. Many employers are undoubtedly hanging back, waiting to see what will happen at Fords. A victory for 57,000 Ford workers would give a tremendous boost to these other workers, whose claims average between 20% and 30%.

But watching and waiting is not enough. The Ford workers' action is completely in line with TUC and Labour Party Conference decisions. It is therefore up to the leading bodies of the movement, and especially the TUC General Council, to co-ordinate support and action for the Ford workers.

Chrysler workers, who usu-

ally follow Ford settlements, have already rejected a derisory offer of 4.2% to 4.9% and given 14 days' notice of strike action.

Last week, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions handed the bosses a claim for a £20 increase on the basic rate and a substantial reduction of their present 40-hour week. This would bring the basic rate for a skilled engineering worker up to £80 in April next year—hardly a fortune these days!

The National Union of Miners is drawing up a claim for a 40% increase for miners.

Even more urgent, however is the claim for a £60 a week minimum for local authority workers. No section of workers has been harder hit by the pay restraint of recent years than these predominantly low paid workers. It is a complete myth that pay policies favour the low paid (see page 7) as

the trade unions do not act "responsibly" and accept wage restraint, then the Labour government will have to resort to monetary restraint—in other words the same deflationary policies advocated by Thatcher and Joseph, which would drastically cut living standards and send unemployment soaring to over 2 million and higher in no time at all!

The labour movement—starting with the TUC General Council in the current Downing Street talks—must completely reject this blackmail.

The alternative to the poisonous capitalist pill prescribed by the right-wing Labour ministers is not the same pill without its sugar coating—but the socialist policies repeatedly called for at the TUC and LP conferences.

The co-ordination of support for the Ford workers by the TUC and the Labour Party must go hand-in-hand with the systematic exposure of big business's responsibility for the present crisis and the mobilisation of support for socialist policies.

Take over the handful of big monopolies, banks and finance houses which dominate the economy. Plan production in the interests of all, under workers' control and management.

Then it would easily be possible to guarantee full employment and a minimum living wage of at least £70 a

week for all. Working hours could be drastically reduced. Cuts in social spending could be restored, and hospitals, schools and other essential amenities immeasurably improved.

But to do this, the fetters of private interest, rent and profit must be broken.

Youth Campaign Against Unemployment CAMPAIGN FOR A 35-HOUR WEEK

Leaflets £4/1,000

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35hr WEEK CAMPAIGN MOVES INTO TOP GEAR

For more than two years the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment has campaigned in the ranks of the labour movement and amongst young people on the burning issue of youth unemployment.

By Glenys
Ingham
(Deptford LPYS)

In January 1977 the YCAU convened an assembly in London of 1400 delegates representing Trades Councils, shop stewards committees, union branches, Labour Party branches and Labour Party Young Socialist branches from all over the country. The assembly adopted a clear socialist programme to combat unemployment and launch

youth.

But at the end of the day we still come back to the central point that only the employed workers organised in the mighty 12 million strong trade union movement actually have the strength to make

LEICESTER: 11 am-5 pm. AUEW Hall, Vaughan Way. Speakers include: Stan Newens MP; Nick Bradley (YCAU Sec.)

BRIDGEND: 11 am-4.30 pm. Ogmere CLP Rooms, Bridgend. Speakers include: South Wales NUM EC speaker; Muriel Browning (Leyland Convenor); Chris Richards (Cardiff POEU); Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board)

LONDON: 11 am-5 pm. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road (opposite Euston Station). Speakers include: Eric Heffer MP (LP NEC); Norman Atkinson MP (LP NEC); Pat Byrne (CPSA NEC); Phil Frampton (Nat. Chairman LPYS)

BRISTOL: 11 am-5 pm. Shepherds Hall, Old Market. Speakers include: Ron Thomas MP; John Sharpe (Sec. TASS Youth Committee, Rolls Royce); John Blackley (AUEW Convenor, Rolls Royce); Glenys Ingham (Editor, 'Left')

PLYMOUTH: 11 am-4.30 pm. Scott Lecture Hall, Plymouth Central Library. Speakers include: Albert Bennett (Sec. Plymouth Trades Council); Bob Labi (Treasurer, YCAU)

GLASGOW: 10 am-5 pm. McLe!!an Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Speakers include: Dennis Canavan MP; Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council); Jim Brookshaw (AUEW)

NEWCASTLE: 1 pm-5 pm. Curtis Auditorium, Newcastle University. Speakers include: Joe Mills (Reg. Org. TGWU); Bill Connors (Nat. Org. USDAW); Tony Carty (NUPE); Brian Ingham (Industrial Editor, Militant)

SHEFFIELD: 11 am-5 pm. Graves Cinema, University of Sheffield. Speakers include: Dennis Skinner MP (LP NEC); Bob Wright (Asst. General Sec. AUEW); Walter Greendale (TUC General Council); Peter Taaffe (Editor 'Militant')

BIRMINGHAM: 1 pm-5 pm. Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth. Speakers include: Audrey Wise MP; Ken Cameron (Nat. Org. FBUI); Tony Sauniois (LP NEC)

The following meeting will be held on **Sunday November 26th.**

LIVERPOOL: 11 am-5 pm. St George's Hall. Speakers include: Frank A!!aun MP (Nat. Chairman LP); Joe Marino (Bakers' Union EC); Laura Kirton (GMWU EC); Kevin Roddy (CPSA NEC)



FIVE WEEKS TO GO

With only five weeks left to the YCAU November Industrial Conferences, some urgent jobs should now be completed.

All official YCAU sponsors should have been contacted and a meeting organised to discuss what support they can give to the campaign. But that should only be a start. In Brent, London, they have already arranged to speak at four union branches, explaining the demands around the campaign and giving details of the conferences.

Every area has now booked a venue and speakers. So what next? Local leaflets for distribution should be produced immediately advertising your conference. Tickets for delegates and visitors should also be produced in the next week so the job of definitely committing people to attend can begin.

Although all the conferences are regional, and there won't be great distances to travel, coaches should be hired. It will be far more helpful to those attending if a series of coaches can leave the furthest point away from the

conference picking up people on route. A social, plus, of course accommodation should be organised for the evening of the conference for those people who don't have to rush back.

Nationally the YCAU brochure will include details of all the conferences, an article on the 35-hour week, the YCAU declaration of aims and a poster with a cartoon by Alan Hardman. These are being sold at 4p each, so all should be sending money down to the YCAU now. Cash with orders is essential.

Time is short: the action for the conferences should now be well underway. New sponsors for the campaign should be sent quickly to Nick Bradley. Our list of sponsors to date already gives an indication of the depth of feeling inside the movement over unemployment and for a 35-hour week.

While the YCAU has won a significant amount of



support since it was launched there are still thousands of trade union branches, joint shop stewards committees, Trades Councils and Labour Parties who have not yet heard of our campaign. This is the campaign's main job. Building up support for our ideas is an integral part of the struggle against unemployment!

If your organisation has not yet sponsored the campaign write to the address below so that we can send literature and a speaker to your branch or committee to outline our aims and activities.

Nick Bradley (Secretary), 435 New Cross Road, London SE 14.

ched an ambitious scheme of local 'days of action', leafletting dole queues and careers offices.

In November 1977 we held a big lobby of Parliament on the issue of youth unemployment—1500 young people took part in an impressive mid-week event organised by the YCAU and the Labour Party Young Socialists' National Committee.

This was followed by a further phase of local activity and a regional lobby of Parliament in February 1978 involving London and the Home Counties. So the YCAU has begun to establish a name for itself and its socialist policies amongst unemployed

a real onslaught on the chronic problem of unemployment.

That is why the next major initiative of the YCAU, with the support of the LPYS National Committee, is to hold ten Regional Industrial Conferences all over the country the weekend of November 25th/26th 1978 attracting delegates from trade union organisations. The chief issue on the agenda will be the struggle for the 35-hour week.

The following meetings will be held on **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 25th.**

BRIGHT'S NURSERY

Mothers lobby conference

Report by
Sheila Woodhead
(Rochdale CLP
Women's Section)

The 4th October was an exhausting day for those involved in the fight to keep open Bright's Nursery, and for the general provision of pre-school services.

Rushing around collecting placards, banners and visitors' tickets preceded the flying visit to Labour Party Conference to lobby support for the Rochdale resolution calling for comprehensive pre-school facilities on demand.

Leaflets had been sent ahead to our delegates so they could distribute them to delegates on their way into the Conference. As most of the visitors were women and had to get children ready for school, we were unable to leave for Blackpool before 9 o'clock, and knew that the debate would be well under way before we arrived.

Joel Barnett came out to meet us and arranged for us to discuss the campaign with Joan Maynard, who has promised her support through Parliament and the TUC. Mike Noble came out to speak with us and has promised, as Secretary of the NW Group of MPs, to organise support and national publicity for us. The general supportive attitude of rank-and-file delegates was very heartening and kicked out,

once and for all, the myth that it is only women who are concerned with nursery provision.

Our visit coincided with the Kilmarnock lobby of Massey Ferguson workers. The men of that delegation, despite the immediate threat of closure that they face, boosted our morale by their sympathetic and genuine concern for our struggle, and their wishes of success.

Union's support

All this took place amidst the harassment that the mothers in our group face as a matter of course—regular runs to the toilets, attempts to alleviate the toddlers' boredom, and sweet-bribes to persuade them to be patient just a little longer. One woman rocked the baby in its pushchair, balanced her little boy on her hip, and handed out leaflets to delegates, without thought about the difficulties.

Then, a rapid snack, a dash back along the motorway, to prepare for the march and lobby of the Council.

We assembled at 4.30 and carrying our placards and banners made our way from the Nursery to the Town Hall. The Trades Council and the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union brought banners

and demonstrated their support, along with LPYS, Women's Sections and CLPs.

We arrived at the Cenotaph at 5.30. We had intended to report on our trip to Blackpool through a loud hailer, before the councillors began to arrive. The police forbade this, so it was a long time for the mothers and young children to wait, since most had come straight from work. Nevertheless, most of them did so, and the children amused themselves and us with their antics.

The public gallery is very small, but a group of about 25 people managed to listen to the proceedings. The remainder waited outside for the outcome. We were appealing for the Council to take over the Nursery, and soon we were informed that they were unable to take any decision before Brights had clearly decided what they were going to do.

They were willing to underwrite the losses Bright's claim are incurred by the nursery for one year, beyond which they offer nothing. The leader of the Tory Group said that was all they were willing to say at present.

But letters to local Labour MPs from the council indicate that they consider Bright's Nursery to be badly situated—a couple of miles out of the centre...despite the fact that



Mothers and children at Blackpool, gaining widespread support for pre-school facilities

many mothers travel from outside the Borough each morning, leave their children at the Nursery, and travel miles further to work.

A second claim is that priorities demand that other areas of the metropolitan district should come first.

This ignores the fact that all areas experience the same difficulties and all should be provided with adequate pre-school services. As one campaigner put it, "There's no legislating for equal rights and opportunities and introducing maternity leave, if you

don't back it up...it's all talk, if you don't."

The Committee are now meeting to work out the best ways of stepping up the campaign. One thing is clear, the issue is so important that those involved will not be easily fobbed off.



Recent anti-fascist activity in Brighton

NATIONAL FRONT ATTACKS

Labour movement more determined than ever

The National Front candidate at a recent Brighton council by-election—despite bringing in helpers from all over Sussex—received a derisory 32 votes.

That night, after the announcement of the result—a Labour gain following a strong anti-fascist campaign—frustrated NF thugs in combat jackets toured the area looking for isolated Labour supporters to beat up.

In the days that followed, the local Labour Party headquarters was attacked several times and bricks were thrown

through the windows. Leading Labour activists received abusive and threatening phone calls in the dead of night.

Volunteers

The Brighton and Hove Committee Against Racism and Fascism, led by its convenor, Labour Party member and 'Militant' supporter Rod Fitch, swung into action. A defence group was formed with a communications system so that within minutes of any possible attack they would be on the spot. The surrounding area was leaf-

leted, and there was no shortage of volunteers to keep an eye on Labour's premises.

Rod Fitch has been a particular target for the NF in this area, the home of Tyndall and a centre from which their activities, including finance and publications are directed. Practically all of Rod's street came forward and offered to keep his house under surveillance, and to be ready to respond to any call for assistance.

Rod has welded together an effective Committee based solidly on the labour movement, well supported by minority groups and the local

Jewish community.

Having failed to intimidate him by the usual methods, one of the NF members took out a private summons alleging that he had been assaulted by Rod.

However, even a policeman called by the NF who was on the spot where the alleged "assault" took place stated he saw no such assault. This was confirmed by other witnesses who, despite threats, were prepared to give evidence.

Rod was acquitted. In the same Court the next day, however, Paul Trill, agent for the NF candidate, admitted that he had followed two young anti-fascists onto a bus and punched and kicked them.

Trill, of course, strenuously denied that he was part of an NF pack on the look out for anti-fascists to beat up.

He was fined £100 with £40 costs.

It was interesting to note that while on the previous day the NF were very much in evidence in the public gallery—they included Regional Organiser "Parker", Tyndall's father-in-law—not one was present to support Trill. He had to face the music alone.

"We have learned a lot from these events", Rod Fitch told 'Militant'. "Our determination is stronger and our organisation has been reinforced. While our campaigning work and investigations continue, our self-defence will be kept on the alert in the event of any backlash by the fascists."

Ray Apps

(Brighton Kemptown
Labour Party)

STOP THE TORIES!

says Andy Bevan

At a 'Stop the Tories' public meeting organised by Bristol Labour Party Young Socialists, Andy Bevan, Labour Party National Youth Officer, pointed out the strength of the working class, 12 million strong, organised in the labour and trade union movement.

The TUC has grown since the struggles of the early 1970s, when through a period of political strikes we saw the Heath government brought down.

In the 1950s and '60s the bosses made concessions to the working class, in the form of wage rises and social reforms which they could afford due to the world boom. But in 1968-70 world trade began to drop. We are now in a period of small booms lasting only 3-4 years, with investment by the bosses minimal, while 66% comes from the state itself. The bosses are leaving the money in the banks to make a fast profit, investing abroad and speculating.

He pointed out what would happen if a Thatcher right-wing government was put into office, relating this to the two point plan of big business for drastic cuts in living standards and ten years of mass unemployment. Labour has to explain what a return of the Tories under Thatcher and

Co. would mean, because what happened under Heath in 1970-74 would be nothing to what would happen under Thatcher's right-wing leadership.

Andy pledged that the LPYS would fight for the return of a majority Labour government as the only way towards a socialist alternative.

In finishing he said that the mood on the shop-floor was changing, and that the trade unions must fight to protect the gains made by the working class in the past, and to protect the living standards of the low paid workers, by putting forward the demand for a basic minimum wage of £70. He said that the period ahead will be opened by explosive struggles of the working class. "No force on earth could stop the 12 million workers when they move into action."

Robin Clapp then put forward the demands of the Labour Party Young Socialists, calling for: a £70 minimum wage linked to a genuine cost of living index, sharing of work without loss of pay, an end to unemployment, and the nationalisation of the major 200 monopolies, banks and insurance companies.

Andy Corfield

Left & Right

A capital scheme

The Bank of England has put a limit of £80,000 on investment capital which can be taken out of the country by Britons emigrating to EEC countries. This restriction would hardly bother the average worker, but Albert Michael, the chairman of stamp dealers Stanley Gibbons, found it galling; and found a way round it. Legally.

Stanley Gibbons' German subsidiary bought a house at Cagnes-sur-Mer on the French Riviera, as a base for expanding its European operations. Later they acquired an alternative base, a shop in Monte Carlo. Mr Michael then agreed to buy the Riviera house from Stanley Gibbons at the market value of £83,000; £3,000 above the 'maximum', paying half to the company immediately and having the rest deducted from his salary over the next three years. Limits? They're only for the working class.

The £500 million man

Any reader who was worried by Earl Grosvenor's problem with rats [*'Militant'* 427] will be pleased to know that his lordship's coffers have not been emptied.

The *'Sunday Times'* of 8th October reported that the £500m earl still owned all the land in Belgravia plus one third of Mayfair, the south side of Oxford Street and the land of 33 embassies. If London life gets him down he can visit his shopping centre in Wales, shooting land in Scotland, and trout farms and country seats throughout Britain.

Not to mention his hotel in Hawaii, island in Vancouver and his Australian office blocks.

Later issues will give our readers some of his thoughts on taxation etc. and more of the wit and wisdom of Gerald, Earl Grosvenor.

Driven to drink

'The Sun' has now overtaken the *'Daily Mirror'* as the biggest selling daily paper in Britain. *'The Observer'* colour magazine recently published a hymn of praise to *'Sun'* editor Larry Lamb. Lamb has taken what had been the pro-Labour *'Daily Herald'* to a 4 million sale tabloid which earned both the political praise of Sir Keith Joseph, and a profit of £13m last year, which other papers, including the *'Observer'* doubtless envy.

The thoughts and actions of many of the paper's journalists are less complimentary. Despite relatively high pay, a number of journalists' strikes have cost the paper millions of pounds. Many so-called troublemakers have been paid to leave. Even with those remaining, *'The Sun's'* mixture of unashamed distortion, unadulterated trivia and unclothed models causes many editorial staff to refer to *'their'* paper as *'The Beano'*.

Small wonder, then, that apart from *'The Sun'* the most profitable institutions in Fleet Street are the bars.

Obstacle course

It is an unfortunate fact that certain sections of the labour movement are run in a very bureaucratic fashion. One of the worst of these is the National Organisation of Labour Students.

For a NOLS membership card this year, a student is required to give: his/her name, home address and phone number, term address and phone number, home constituency, if he/she is a Labour Party member, and which CLP they are a member of, their year of study, and if they are a final year student, their faculty of study, their date of birth and their NUS or College Matriculation number.

The Secretary of the Club has to sign the card twice [once with the date], the academic year has to be filled in three times, and the name of the Labour Club twice. The amount paid for national affiliation has to be filled in, and the student has to sign a declaration, with a date. This is a grand total of 24 separate pieces of information or signatures; considerably more than are needed to obtain a passport.

Evidently it is going to be easier this year to leave the country than be a delegate to NOLS Conference.

'The Dispossessed'

A REVIEW BY RUTH AYLETT (Sheffield Heeley CLP)

Many people see science fiction as nothing but "trashy escapism", and it may come as a surprise to find this book reviewed in a socialist paper. But even if this were true for science fiction as a whole, *'The Dispossessed'*, by Ursula Le Guin would be an exception and is a million miles from the wet mysticism of *'Gods from Outer Space'* (and its like) or from the glossy galactic cowboys-and-indians of *'Star Wars'*.

Two planets circle each other. The larger, rich and fertile, is a battleground between various capitalist nations. On the other, its moon, barren and largely desert, lives a socialist society, the exiles of a revolutionary movement two hundred years earlier that, too strong to be immediately crushed, was given the choice of settling there.

On this moon, Anarres, there is no state at all (for this reason, the author, who quite obviously doesn't know much about Marxism, calls it "anarchist"), and the worst swear word in the vocabulary is "propertarian". All property, buildings and even most personal goods are socially owned and supplied, and the work of organisation and production is carried on by "Syndics" with the help of a high degree of technology such as computers.

In this society grows up Shevek, who becomes a brilliant physicist, and begins to try to formulate a theory of space and time that would allow faster than light space travel. But as he does this, he

begins to find that both he and his friends are coming up against a budding bureaucracy, still very weak and unrecognised, but able to mobilise opinion against any work they consider "unorthodox" or "against the principles of the revolution".

This bureaucracy feeds on the poverty of the planet and begins to gain ground quite fast as a result of a four year famine, and until Shevek and his friends feel they have no alternative but to form a "Syndicat of Initiative" to unite all those whose work has been blocked and suppressed.

Twisted

Finally they send Shevek to Urras, the main planet, to work with the physicists and do what he is prevented from doing on Anarres. The book brilliantly contrasts the personality of Shevek, brought up so that socialist principles are as natural as breathing, with the twisted and warped personalities of the physicists on Urras and the unhealthy hothouse atmosphere of their

university. Women are elegant playthings barred from any useful work, and the beauty and luxury showered upon Shevek rests on the dirty overcrowded slums that he is never allowed to see.

Hoping that his theory will be used for the good of all he finally realised that they have made him their "tame" anarchist and that his theory is about to become their property. Against a background of war and an upsurge of a new revolutionary movement he escapes them to try and link this movement to the regeneration of socialism on Anarres.

Inspiring

In spite of the author's obvious lack of knowledge about Marxism and socialist theory, the book is crammed with inspiring ideas for socialists. Against all those who tell us "human nature", greediness, lust for power and so on make socialism a pipe dream the book holds up a picture of how not particularly saintly people could live in a socialist society.

Above all its theme is the impossibility of "socialism in one country", where it is clear that everything that has been won on Anarres will, bit by bit, be lost unless its self-enforced isolation is broken and the revolution is spread to Urras.

Not only in its ideas and its picture of two completely different societies, but also in the way it depicts the ordinary people who live on Urras and Anarres, the book could

knock many modern novels flat on their faces—if you like science fiction—read it! And if you don't—well, it may even convert you!

"Future in good hands"

Betty Traun from New York, who has written many articles for *'Militant'* on the USA, was a visitor to Labour Party Conference. She gives here her impressions of the week in Blackpool.

As for the town itself, I was struck by the fact that it was a town that we do not have in the United States—strictly a resort for the working class. The faces of the people were work-worn, the faces of hard-working people on holiday, enjoying very simple pleasures. The entertainment provided for them by the entrepreneurs there pandered to a low level of taste, and got me mad.

Even the postcards sold to be sent home were the bawdiest I have ever seen, and I distinctly am no Victorian prude. The theatre fare was awful, not intended to elevate the mind. Give them a laugh so they forget what their lives are like. Keep them from thinking. Give them a garish nightlife of brilliant lights, and send them home thinking they had enjoyed themselves.

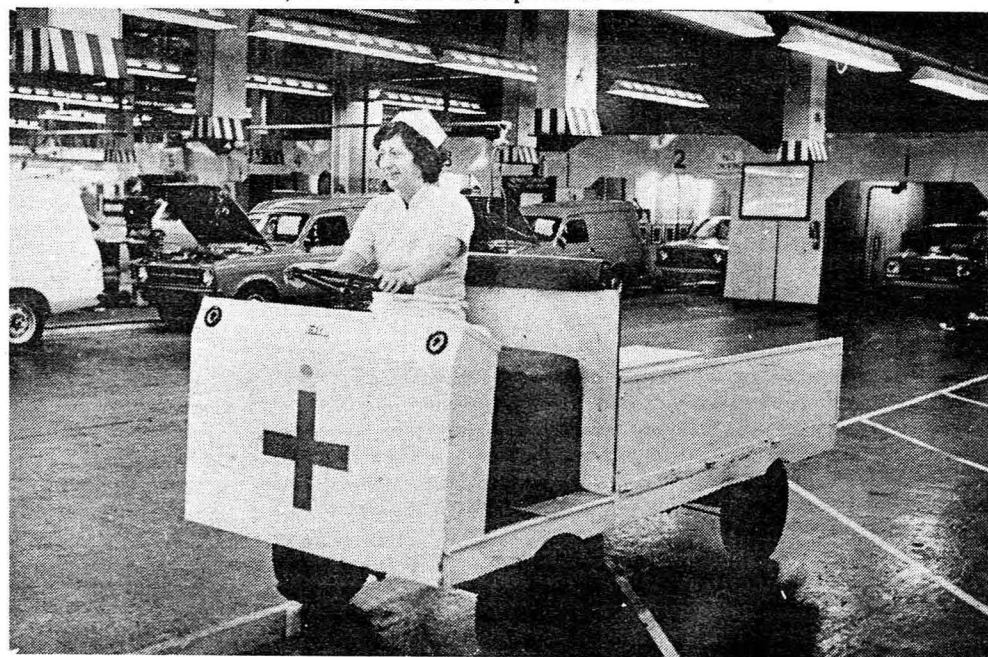
Now to the Conference itself. These young people of the YS are just great!

My greatest thrill came with the young comrades up at the podium speaking through the microphone. To me they were more statesmanlike than the older men of the NEC up there on the stage.

Without speaking the Queen's English, in the language of workers, they hammered home the truths to other workers with clarity and passion, and were applauded from the floor again and again. I really can't express to you the feelings I had as I listened to them: an air of their political development, the mature, high level of their intelligence.

How articulate they were, addressing a huge crowd of workers and others, at ease, in full command of themselves. I applauded them until the palms of my hands hurt. It was they who asked for the rejection of the 5% cap on wages demanded by the prime minister of England, and they won against him!

They are the shining light of the future, you all are the coming leaders of this country, and the future rests in good hands. Once and for all, you will wipe out finally the scourge of ages—the exploitation of man by man. What a future!



FORDS: Mobile stretcher carrier at Ford Halewood Credit: John Sturrock (Report)

CHASE FOR PROFITS CAUSES ACCIDENTS

When the Ford management originally turned down the union's pay claim, one of their main justifications was that productivity was far lower in Ford UK than in their German plant.

They calculated that it took 51.6 hours to build a Cortina at Dagenham, compared with 24.8 hours at a plant in their German combine. This, they implied, was due to the inefficiency of British car workers.

What they failed to give were the real reasons for this low productivity. As *'Militant'* has often pointed out, old machinery, not updated due to low investment and manage-

ment inefficiency e.g. in organising the supply of parts are major factors.

Now, the annual report of Ford Werke AG (Ford West Germany) gives another reason, that productivity can be raised by a brutal disregard for the health and safety of workers.

Speed-up

Figures for industrial accidents per million hours worked in Ford UK for the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 were 11.0, 14.3 and 10.9 respectively. Corresponding figures for German plants were 32.5, 27.1 and 23.8 respectively.

Without a doubt, British workers could greatly increase productivity in a planned economy through introducing technical improvements and avoiding the errors of a management remote from the realities of production.

Where profit is the key, greater productivity not only threatens workers' jobs. The bitter experience of German workers is that such a speed-up can more than double the already great dangers to life and limb involved in earning a living on the production line.

Roger Shrives

Summing up the Labour Party Conference



"This week has seen the biggest shift to the left at Labour Party conference since 1973".

This is how, two weeks ago, we described the first few days of the Labour Party conference following the rejection of the 5% limit and all forms of wage restraint. It was followed by the rejection of a right-wing motion endorsing the government's economic strategy and its record over the last few years.

But conference did not vote this way on all issues. Many of the debates and votes reflected contradictory moods among the delegates, and no single, consistent line was followed. No rounded out socialist programme was adopted.

Ford workers

It is necessary, therefore, to draw up a balance-sheet of the decisions taken and their relationship to the developments taking place in the labour movement.

Without doubt, it was the revolt of the Ford workers which set the seal on this conference. Until then the right-wing leaders had expected a quiet, tame conference where, like last year, Callaghan could appeal for a show of unity at the last Labour Party gathering before the general election.

But Monday afternoon's economy debate upset all that. In fact, even the opening speech from the Blackpool Labour Party representative welcoming delegates to the town—usually a non-political formality—fired the opening shot straight at incomes policy. The speaker said he had defended Phases 1, 2 and 3, but when it came to another year of sacrifice the men on the building site he represented had told him to "get stuffed", and—he warned Callaghan—that's what they'll say to you.

It was not only the right wing who were taken aback by the new militant mood of the unions. Many on the left have written off the willingness of the working class to struggle since the movement ebbed during the period of the Labour government.

Only a couple of months ago, the lefts in the AUEW, having suffered electoral setbacks, blamed the workers themselves, with some saying the workers were moving to the right, despairing that wage restraint was "what they wanted." Some pessimists even saw the union returning to the right-wing domination of the 1950s for the foreseeable future.

But below the surface a process was taking place



Terry Duffy [left] Ex-officio delegates [centre] James Callaghan [right] Photos: Julian McKittrick

among the workers, which 'Militant' has consistently predicted would open up into bitter opposition to the Tory policies of the government.

The revolt of the workers has taken so long simply because they have been given no fighting lead and no alternative policy from their leaders. Now the workers themselves have taken the initiative and forced their union representatives to stand out against wage restraint at the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

If the Ford workers had not taken the new TUC policy of free collective bargaining into their own hands—with the electrifying effect this had had among workers throughout industry—those union leaders who were forced by pressure from below to vote against incomes policy at the TUC would most likely have shied away from the issue at Blackpool. But with the prevailing mood at this conference being the most left wing for about five years, this was difficult.

Catalyst

What made it impossible was the determination of the Young Socialist and 'Militant' supporter who moved the successful composite 37 rejecting the 5% limit. No amount of pressure from the platform could force him to remit the motion.

By forcing the issue to a card vote, where everyone had to show where they stood, 'Militant' supporters and the LPYS members acted as a catalyst to the changing mood. This was the most important impact of the LPYS on the conference—crystallising the leftward trend into a definite resolution and forcing a concrete decision.

The key role played by Marxist delegates in this year's conference was, of course, consistently ignored—or rather deliberately concealed—by the capitalist press. When they are trying to whip up a witch-hunt against the left, papers like 'The Times' are able to see

Marxists in every corner of the party (even where they don't exist!). But when Marxist speakers successfully move resolutions from the rostrum at Conference, this august mouthpiece of big business is suddenly overcome by a reluctance to identify them.

Young Socialists and 'Militant' supporters were also to the fore in the successful demands for a reversal of cuts in the health service and for an ending of hospital closures (where the NEC recommendation was overturned); for a minimum wage based on two-thirds of national average earnings; for the elimination of private education and cutting class sizes to 25 or less; and other demands.

But perhaps the most surprising expression of radical mood was the outright rejection of a resolution giving support to the government's economic policy. Normally this non-committal and rather insipid resolution would have been passed on the nod. In fact, in past years such right-wing token statements of loyalty were carried at the same time as demanding socialist measures.

But this year there was no chance of Conference "facing both ways" and leaving an opening for Callaghan to claim that one decision backed him, thereby ignoring the critical motion.

Nevertheless, given the independence of the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Cabinet from the Party which gave them their power, the Labour leaders regrettably do not feel themselves bound to carry out the democratically-decided policy of the most representative and sovereign body of the Party. In that sense, conference is merely a barometer, indicating the pressure of the movement, but having no power to implement its own discussions on government policy.

For immediately after the conference Callaghan announced new discussion with the TUC on wages, accepting the end of the 5% limit but hoping for a new guideline of about 8%, even though Composite 37 rejected all

forms of wage restraint in a capitalist economy.....

However, miners' leader Joe Gormley, a member of the TUC economic committee, has already contradicted Len Murray's announcement on the talks. Gormley has reminded him that there is no basis for discussion on wages: free collective bargaining is the order of the day.

The NUM this week followed TUC and LP conference decisions in submitting a claim to the Coal Board for a 40% wage rise. This was followed by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions agreeing on a claim for 1,250,000 workers for a 33% wage rise from £60 to £80, a 35-hour week and a fifth week's paid holiday.

The movement does not proceed to a socialist outlook in a straight line

Last week's issue of Labour Weekly made the assertion that in the vote on wages it was only the block vote of the big unions that carried the day, with the bulk of the Constituency Labour Parties remaining loyal to Jim. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Even at last year's muted conference, where the union votes were already gathered up behind the scenes by the government, the CLP delegates voted overwhelmingly for opposition resolutions which mainly represented Marxist views. During the debates this year any observer from the galleries above would have had to be blind not to see the clear left-wing response from the constituency sections below.

Even when Callaghan made his speech on Tuesday, peppered with jokes and strident calls followed by pauses for applause, those in the constit-

uency delegates' seats remained largely unmoved.

There is no shadow of doubt that the rank and file of the party who actively participate in local party work and who debate political issues in the GMCs now vote by about three to one for socialist policies. In the future they will be joined more and more by the union delegations.

Still, many debates did highlight contradictions. The Party is now committed to fighting for the nationalisation of North Sea Oil, agricultural land, private steel companies and Western Shiprepairers. Yet resolutions on racialism were either defeated or remitted, leaving no clear statement on this burning topic this year.

A composite on law and order giving vent to reactionary ideas was carried. Although a call for the replacement of the Official Secrets Act with a Freedom of Information Act was successful, a move for the scrapping of the Criminal Trespass Law was lost.

Despite fears prior to the Conference that the NEC would shift to the right (because of expected moves against the left in the trade union and women's sections), Monday's election resulted in a marked strengthening of the left. Ian Mikardo lost his place, but Dennis Skinner and Neil Kinnock were elected. In the Socialist and Co-op section, right-wing Manifesto Group supporter John Cartwright is replaced by Tribune MP Leslie Huckfield.

Democracy

Clearly, the movement does not proceed to a rounded-out socialist outlook of society in a straight line. But we can be confident that on the basis of the experience of the great events that loom ahead, and with patient explanation of Marxist ideas, the trade unionists will find a way to a socialist programme and a marxist perspective.

The platform congratulated itself on the democratic nature of Monday's debate on



the economy, but when it came to discussing reselection of MPs and the Party leader, manoeuvring of the worst kind took place. Three proposals for changing the election of the Party leader were presented by the NEC: election by PLP, by Conference, or by an electoral college.

Yet these were put to a vote without the real political issues behind the change of rules being discussed and without any speech in favour of one of the proposals being allowed at all, despite protests!

On reselection of MPs, the authors of the NEC minority report were also not allowed to move their report and explain the issues to conference. A leaf could be taken out of the Young Socialists' book here. Ever since the Marxists won a majority they have allowed minority documents to be moved and fully debated at their conference.

The proposals for mandatory, automatic reselection would undoubtedly have been won were it not for the now infamous "mistake" made by Hugh Scanlon in not casting the AUEW's 900,000 votes. But given the feelings of the membership, things cannot rest there. New demands will come forward next year.

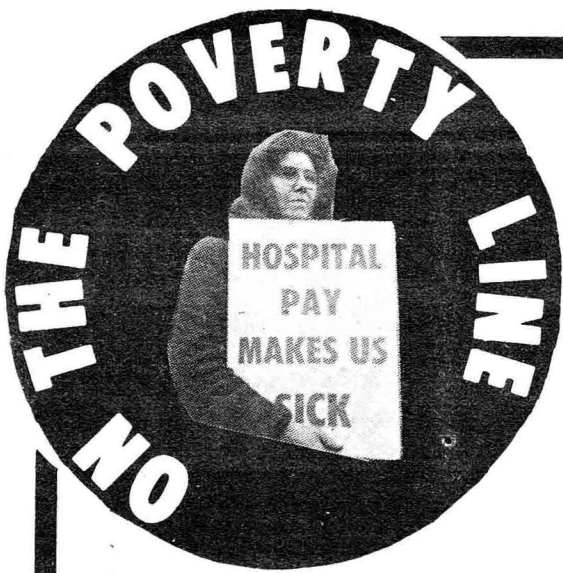
The next period will see mighty battles take place in society. Demands by millions of workers for the restoration of fallen living standards and for a 35-hour week to attack the scourge of unemployment will produce industrial conflict on a scale not seen for four years. The outcome of the general election will provoke new political debate in the ranks of the Labour Party.

In these big events fresh workers will move into their traditional organisations demanding action. As the recognition of the Ford strike shows, even right-wing union leaders will be forced to voice their members' pressure. Where they refuse to move they will be replaced.

The trade unions, and with them the Labour Party, will be transformed many times in the course of the coming mighty class struggles as the right wing discredits itself and as the left reformists are found wanting.

The search for a consistent socialist programme and for democratisation of the Labour Party, to make the leader and the Parliamentary party accountable to the rank and file, will begin earnest. It is in guiding the workers to such a fighting programme and perspective that the future responsibility of Marxism lies.

Brent Kennedy



WAGE RESTRAINT NEVER HELPS THE LOW PAID

In the second of three articles, **Jeremy Birch** shows the disastrous effects of pay policies

"A great deal of the sympathy that has been expressed about the plight of the lower paid in the past year or so has been downright hypocrisy. The government has wept crocodile tears over the low paid but has refused to do anything even for the hundreds of thousands that it employs itself. On the other hand, it has given massive tax hand-outs to the very rich."

That's one person's view of low pay. In fact, it's the view of Jack Jones, until recently general secretary of a union that includes quite a number of low paid in its own ranks. I should hasten to add that the government Jack was lambasting was led by Ted Heath and not the present Labour

administration.

But there might well be a good few workers who would suspect that his words taken from an old T&GWU pamphlet, 'Towards the Minimum Wage: the Case for the £25,' could be as appropriate for government policies over the last four years too. After all, the workers' share of the national cake, having remained constant for 20 years, fell 2% in 1971-76.

Poverty trap

That 1972 pamphlet sounded the warning: "It's just not true that 'one man's wage increase is another man's price increase'." But three years later the whole philosophy behind wage restraint was based on the premise—of which a certain Labour Prime

Minister was the foremost exponent—"one man's pay rise is not only another man's price rise: it might also cost him his job."

Of course, the wage restraint policies were, as the document announcing details of the stage one £6 limit proclaimed, supposed to be "fair because everybody except the low paid is called to accept some cuts in living standards."

Jack Jones' pamphlet even forewarned of the dangers here. Give the low paid just a few pounds more, and they are caught fast in the 'poverty trap'. He quoted Michael Meacher MP who had discovered that 245,000 low paid workers lose half or three-quarters of any pay rise, and 85,000 lose even more.

So under the £6 pay limit, a family of five on £30 a week, paying £6 a week in rent was in fact 75p a week worse off under that increase, due to reductions in a variety of benefits.

More recently, the Low Pay Unit worked out that Denis Healey's April '78 budget, which aimed to help the lower paid, managed to increase the number of families who would lose 90% of every extra £1 from 78,000 to 86,000! For an extra 25p goes in income tax,

and 6.5% in national insurance, and 50p is deducted from their Family Income Supplement.

The reality of the situation is, according to the government's own statistics released just before parliament rose, that in the three years from 1974 on there was an increase of 123% in the number of fully employed workers taking home earnings below the supplementary benefit level.

Wages Councils

If you include their dependents, then the number of people living on earned income below this level rose by 147%. Just a little up the scale, and only a little, there was an increase, too, in the number of workers earning up to and including 10% above the supplementary benefit poverty level.

But with their dependents as well, the increase is 307%. And all this under wage restraint.

That pamphlet of Jack Jones was particularly critical of some of the special bodies established to help the low paid: "Workers whose pay is determined by wage boards and councils and not by normal collective bargaining are at a serious disadvantage.

The T&GWU wants to see this system scrapped as quickly as possible."

Once again, the Low Pay Unit supplies the facts, and under the Social Contract particularly the record of the 38 Wages Councils was quite shameful.

Eight of them failed to give the full £6 permitted under Phase One, and one Council decided not to give the full £2.50 under Stage 2 as well. But Stage 2 allowed a 5% increase up to a maximum £4 rather than £2.50 for workers in the £50-£80 bracket.

Fifteen Wages Councils failed to avail themselves of this opportunity to raise living standards in their industry.

But on the question of these Councils, it should in any case be borne in mind that there is a wholesale evasion of the legal minimum wages they set: 25% of catering, retail and hairdressing employers get away with paying less than the minimum, while 34.2% of the workers in the retail food trade were underpaid. With just 135 inspectors to check up on all the employers in all the Wage Council industries, is it any wonder?

Wage restraint certainly has not done much for the low paid. In fact, it's benefitted no-one, except of course the

employers. If well paid workers are forced to accept a smaller wage increase, then, as we all know, there is no miraculous way for that excess to find its way to the low paid. It gets no further than the ever-open tills of the employers, who have rung up record profits, while Labour has been in office.

Fight!

It's only when the well organised workers are on the offensive, extracting large increases for themselves that the path ahead is cleared for the lower paid, perhaps less well organised, workers.

Jack Jones put low pay down to the fact that for many workers "there is no normal free collective bargaining process determining pay." For the last three years there has not been "free collective bargaining" for anyone, and certainly a complete end to wage controls is an essential part of any real programme for tackling poverty.

The real pity is that leaders like Jack Jones, in many ways the architect of the Social Contract, should have forgotten so much of what they said only a few years ago about low pay.

The best paid "non-union factory" in the country

Joe Ashton MP aroused the indignation of delegates in the Labour Party Conference debate on re-selection when he tried to make out a "trade union" case against mandatory re-selection.

He claimed that automatic, mandatory re-selection would mean "instant hire and fire" and "a night of the long knives, the biggest purge seen for many years." Joe has apparently lost sight of the fact that Labour MPs are supposed to be represent-

atives of the Party's policies and interests, not careerists worried about their long-term professional status.

Comrade Ashton provoked loud booing and jeering, moreover, when he threatened that if re-selection were implemented, at least 25 MPs, if dropped by their party, would repudiate the Party and stand as independents.

However, in case anyone is swayed by Joe's heart-rending story of poor, under-paid MPs working in "a non-union

factory in which there are no shop stewards", let's take a look at the new rates of pay for MPs and ministers.

The House of Commons has just approved a resolution to increase MPs' salaries by the Phase 3 ten per cent. The basic salary of an MP now goes up from £6,270 to £6,897 a year. There is also a rise in the level of reimbursement MPs can claim for secretarial expenses: the new level will be £4,098 in the year to 31 March 1979.

PM's payroll

Two other allowances stay the same: the extra cost allowance (overnight and subsistence expenses for non-London MPs) is £2,534 pa, while the London weighting stays at £385 pa.

Labour MPs on "the government pay-roll" are even less hard-done-by.

The Parliamentary salaries of ministers—the amount they receive on top of their member's salaries—are also increased by 10 per cent. For example, the salary of a cabinet minister goes up from £3,208 to 3,529, while his/her ministerial salary as a secretary of state rises from £13,000 to £14,300 a year.

This gives a total of £17,829 plus the other allowances mentioned above. Junior



Reg Prentice gives a donation at last week's Tory Party Conference

Photo: Julian McKittrick Militant

ministers' Parliamentary pay is increased from £3,908 to £4,299.

For pension purposes, however, the pay of all MPs is regarded as being at a level of £9,372. The new Parliamentary salary rates took effect from 13 June.

The basic salary of MPs (excluding any allowances) is substantially higher than present average male earn-

ings. The salaries of Labour ministers, however, are astronomical compared to the wages of ordinary workers.

How can representatives of the labour movement understand the day-to-day problems of workers when they are so far removed from their conditions?

An essential element of Labour Party democracy—alongside a democratic pro-

cess of automatic, mandatory re-selection which still has to be fought for following the conference vote—is that MPs should receive the same salary as an average industrial worker, plus legitimate expenses audited by the Party.



Joe Ashton MP

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

Northern Ireland

1968 WHEN THE ANGE

In the working class areas, the Bogside and the Falls, slum housing, poverty and mass unemployment were the springboard of unrest.

Peter Hadden, of 'Militant Irish Monthly', explains the reasons for the failure of the Civil Rights Movement.

For most people in Northern Ireland, the 5th of October, 1968, stands out as the day when the 'troubles' began. The events of that day transformed the Civil Rights Association [NICRA] for a period into a mass force with a huge base of support in all the Catholic areas of the North.

The 5th of October was the day chosen by Civil Rights leaders for their first march in Derry. Two days before the march, the Minister of Home Affairs in the Stormont Parliament, William Craig, announced the banning of all marches in Derry. Despite pressure from the more 'respectable' middle class leaders of NICRA to accept the ban, the march went ahead.

In large measure this was due to the pressure from the local labour movement. A little over 2,000 people assembled outside the railway station in the Waterside area.

They set out along the chosen route but found, after advancing a few hundred yards, that their way was blocked by a cordon of police. Unable to advance, the march leaders stopped and attempted to organise an impromptu meeting.

A few people were already treated to traditional RUC medicine—baton blows across the skull. Meanwhile at the back of the march a further police cordon had sealed off the street. Having trapped the march the police began a series of baton charges.

Only by running a gauntlet of fists and blows did the marchers manage to escape through the police cordon to their rear. Some quickly regrouped on the wasteground nearby and picked up stones, bricks and anything else

they could find to defend themselves from the thugs in uniform of the RUC.

Liam de Paor in his book 'Divided Ulster' acknowledges that it was the radical youth, most particularly the Young Socialists, who were to the fore in the fighting.

"The brunt of the street fighting had been borne, not by any traditional nationalist element, but by the Young Socialists, who had shown great courage."

Instantaneously, the Civil Rights Movement became a mass force. The sight of police brutality, some of which was shown on the television news, ignited the anger of the Catholic ghettos.

One month later another march was organised along the route proposed for October 5th. This time about 15,000 people turned up.

The sheer force of the numbers involved paralysed the baton-wielding arms of the state forces. This march surged across Craigavon bridge over the Foyle, then filed past police barricades and reassembled in the centre of the city.

Class problems

While from the beginning the programme of civil rights limited itself to opposing the discrimination practiced against the minority, the movement itself gained propulsion from more deep-seated problems.

It was in the working-class areas, such as Catholic ghettos as the Bogside in Derry and the Falls area of West Belfast, that the movement drew the strongest support. Here it was the terrible conditions of slum housing, poverty and mass unemployment which acted as the springboard of the unrest.

Unemployment in Derry in 1968 stood at 17%. In nearby Strabane the figure was about 25%.

In addition, the awakening of this movement of social upheaval in Ireland came as part of the greater awakening of the workers' movement in Europe. 1968 was also the year when the working class of France demonstrated that the deep lull which had



Bloody Sunday, January 30th, 1972. Crowds run for cover when British Army attack peaceful demonstration. Action by trade union leaders could

descended upon the class struggle in the advanced capitalist nations as a result of the post war economic boom was over.

In May, ten million French workers, in what was then the largest general strike movement in world history, occupied their factories.

The eruption in Northern Ireland also took place against the background of a movement of social agitation in Southern Ireland. There the rank and file of the Irish Labour Party pushed the Party to its most left-wing position since the days of James Connolly.

All this underlined the potential which existed in Northern Ireland in 1968: potential not merely for reform, but for a united movement of Catholic and Protestant workers for social change.

The conditions which drove people from the Catholic areas into the streets, and eventually behind the barricades, during 1968 and 1969, were conditions shared by Protestant workers. Discrimination had been used by the Unionist bosses to prevent the workers uniting on class issues. Protestants had been treated with marginal preference in relation to jobs and houses.

But the occasional crumb dropping from the Unionist table did little to ameliorate the misery of the mass of Protestant workers. It did not, as some Civil Rights leaders stated at the time—and as many Republican leaders have since echoed—somehow mag-

ically convert the Protestant population into Irish equivalents of the French colons in Algeria.

On the contrary, conditions in the Protestant ghettos differed not one bit from those in Catholic areas.

In 1969 it was revealed that 95% of the homes in the Protestant Shankhill Road in Belfast had no inside toilet; 96% had no fixed bath and 97% lacked hot water. It was shown that no less than two-thirds of the heads of households in this district earned less than £13 a week, hardly a princely sum even in 1969.

Such conditions could have been the cement of a united class movement, not simply for housing or job re-allocation, but for decent homes, decent jobs and a living wage for all.

Divide and rule

It was primarily this danger of a class explosion and the effects this would have had in Britain, which determined the strategy of the British ruling class. They saw the influential role of various socialist groups and left-wing ideas within the Civil Rights movement, and feared that its "moderate" middle-class leaders might be elbowed to one side. Thus the British government began to put pressure on the Unionist leadership to introduce reforms.

During the period following the first world war the British ruling class and the architect of its policy Lloyd George,

had been stricken with dread at the prospect of social revolution in Britain and Ireland. They lived under the permanent shadow of the October 1917 revolution in Russia. It was in order to divide the socialist movement in Ireland that they resorted to the trusty and well tried tactic of divide and rule, even going to the length of the partition of Ireland by means of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act.

At that time they reacted with loud applause to every sectarian outrage which was committed by the Unionist lap-dogs whom they fostered and developed in Northern Ireland.

But by the 1960s things had been stood on their head. Instead of sectarianism, the British bosses were interested in cultivating "economic co-operation" with the South so that they could profit from the market in the 26 counties.

No applause came from the corridors of power in Westminster at the antics of the RUC on October 5th. Instead, the eyes of British capital fixed with dread on the rumblings which had been provoked in the ghettos.

Terence O'Neill, Unionist Prime Minister at the time, was persuaded to concede at least some of the civil rights programme. In November 1968 he announced a package of reforms. They included the abolition of the totally rotten Derry Corporation; the abandonment of the Company vote in local elections; the introduction of a housing points system; and the repeal of

parts of the Special Powers Act. These and other soporifics which accompanied them were to prove far too little and far too late.

They failed to tackle the economic problems underlying the agitation. Yet they were sufficient to whip up a furore of opposition from among the Unionist right-wing.

It is difficult to teach an old dog new tricks. Large sections of Unionism failed to re-adjust their thinking to take account of the needs of their British

Had the labour movement used strength to the outset, the campaign, led by demands for a class they could headed a united movement of Catholic and Protestant must not same mista

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have prevented this.

paymasters in the new period. They had been taught to react to opposition with guns and batons and could accept no other way.

Giving concessions to defuse a movement was a strategy beyond their imagination. Increasingly, the "moderate" O'Neill was to face a growing challenge from the right-wing of his own Party.

In February, 1969, O'Neill called a general election hoping to isolate his right wing opponents. He won the

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election but at the cost of seeing eleven of his outspoken critics returned to power.

In fact, it was far more than the fate of their "moderate unionism" which was in the balance at this stage. Inherent from the start was the danger that NICRA would degenerate into a purely Catholic movement which would alienate any Protestant support. This was the real choice which existed at the time: either working class unity and socialist policies; or a narrow Catholic-based movement and ultimately the triumph of sectarian divisions.

The initial reaction of Protestant workers to the civil rights demands was largely sympathetic. Counter-demonstrations organised by Ian Paisley had attracted only the most backward sections of the Protestant population, the rural—often evangelical—breed who made up the backbone of die-hard Unionism.

In the towns it was only sections of the middle class and some of the most lumpen elements who would have backed the actions of Paisley. Among the workers, and above all among the youth, there was a latent sympathy for the civil rights movement's attack on the system.

In 1969, 75% of the population of Queen's University were from Protestant backgrounds. Yet in a survey conducted in that year, 75% of the students stated their support for Civil Rights. Also in 1969 in a Westminster by-election in Mid-Ulster,

Civil Rights leader and left-winger Bernadette Devlin, making her appeal on a radical social programme, defeated the sitting Unionist candidate partly by winning the votes of some Protestants.

If the civil rights agitation concentrated only on the issue of discrimination against Catholics it could never develop support from among the Protestant population and Protestant workers in particular. Ultimately, it could only succeed in driving them into the arms of bigots.

Spreading the misery

Civil Rights as put forward by those most prominent within the NICRA, John Hume, Ivan Cooper and Austin Currie, simply meant a re-distribution of jobs, houses etc. Posed in this way it could only be interpreted by Protestant workers as a challenge to what little they had.

When there were not enough decent homes for all the people, reallocation on a points basis simply meant the displacement of some Protestants to make way for Catholics. So too with jobs. In 1968 there were 7% of the population without jobs.

If all that was asked was an even spread of this misery, it simply meant removing a few Protestants and replacing them with Catholics. The equal distribution of the dole queues!

In this way the agitation for civil rights, even if unintentionally, could become sect-

arian in its effect. However, in addition, there were those within NICRA, sections of right-wing nationalist opinion, whose every utterance was coloured with bigotry from the very first moment.

One such was Aiden Corrigan, subsequently an apologist for the Provisionals, who during his time as a civil rights organiser explained: "We've got to defend our children's faith against Protestant, atheist and communist ideology".

The majority of those behind the civil rights banner were on the left and would have responded to a socialist lead. However, some of the so-called lefts within the movement, above all the supporters of the Communist Party, argued against raising socialist policies. Such ideas would be divisive; they would break up the "unity" of the Civil Rights Association. So in order to sustain unity with the Catholic middle-class leaders and with bigots like Corrigan, the Communist Party leaders and some other left-wingers were prepared effectively to block the united movement of Catholic and Protestant workers.

Trade unions the key

The key at this time rested with the labour movement, above all with the trade unions. Had the unions intervened as a body at the outset of the civil rights campaign, linking the civil rights demands to a socialist objective, they could have spearheaded a movement of Catholic and Protestant workers.

By the late 1960s the labour movement was in a position to lead such a struggle. Politically and industrially it had been strengthened. The first stirrings of the civil rights agitation saw also a filling out of the ranks of the Northern Ireland Labour Party as more and more workers searched for a socialist alternative.

In Derry the Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists became a mass force. In other parts of the country, including Belfast, NILP branches went from strength to strength.

Nor were the ideas put forward by NICRA alien to either the trade unions or the Labour Party. As early as 1965 Belfast Trades Council had called a special conference on this question. Those attending, a majority of whom were from Protestant backgrounds, had passed resolutions demanding an end to discrimination. In 1960 the NILP and the ICTU had issued a joint memorandum demanding civil rights and presented this to the Unionist Government.

However, as soon as mass support attached itself to these demands in 1968 the leadership of the labour movement hurriedly scrambled for cover. Instead of intervening to lead the struggle and give it a class orientation, the trade union leadership refused to intervene, thus making it easier for the Unionists to paint the NICRA as a purely Catholic movement.

During the marches and the troubles which grew in regularity and size after October 5th, trade union banners and the trade union and Labour Party leaders

were conspicuous by their absence. With no alternative from the official trade union movement which could have provided an attraction for the radical left wing of the Civil Rights Association, this body quickly became disorientated.



Bernadette Devlin

A few days after October 5th students at Queens University in Belfast formed a loose-knit left-wing organisation called 'People's Democracy'. The leadership of this body reacted empirically to all changes in the situation and ended in political impotence.

It was the failure of the labour and trade union leadership to intervene which more than any other factor determined the degeneration of the civil rights movement, the drift away from class ideas, and ultimately the growth of sectarianism. By the summer of 1969 the pattern of this first phase of the troubles had been set; mass marches and meetings, counter demonstrations, riots and barricades, and a steady growth of sectarianism.

In August 1969 the cauldron which had simmered since October 5th the previous year came to the boil. Clashes in Derry and Belfast following the traditional Protestant Apprentice Boys' parade in Derry resulted in a virtual uprising in the Catholic areas of the city; sectarian clashes in West Belfast; the unleashing of armed police thugs on the Catholics of West Belfast; and six deaths with the destruction of at least 150 homes in Belfast during one night.

The British ruling class reacted by sending in the army rather than risk the escalation of this situation and the development of a dangerous and uncontrollable civil war.

Continued inaction by the labour and trade union leaders paved the way for years of sectarian bloodletting. It meant the deepening of the sectarian battle lines in Belfast as tens of thousands of families were forced to move from mixed estates into "safe" ghettos. It opened the way to the re-emergence of republicanism, for a period, as a mass force; and for the appearance of Protestant armies. It meant internment and military harassment.

Above all the failure of the labour leaders to act meant the postponement of the building of a united movement of the working class.

During the early days of the civil rights agitation it was only those who supported the 'Militant'—then only a monthly paper in Britain—together with sections of Derry Labour Party, who clearly explained what was required.

The February 1969 issue of the 'Militant' gave the warning:

"It must be recognised that the mass of Protestant workers have not been drawn to the banner of the Civil Rights campaign...Unity can only be achieved on a class programme...In all cases the demands must be related to the needs of all workers and the programme fought for inside the labour movement. This is the only unifying force, for all workers in the final analysis, both North and South."

Workers' unity

Today, ten years after the RUC batoned down the civil rights marchers in Derry, the opportunities for the development of a united working class have re-emerged. Sectarianism has been in decline for a period, and major class battles loom as the world economy hovers on the edge of a new recession. A new generation of youth has grown up and is looking for something better than the capitalist system can offer.

It is up to the activists within the labour movement to examine the events of ten years ago and the period since, to understand the failures, and fight to ensure that this second opportunity for building a mass socialist movement uniting Catholic and Protestant workers is not squandered.



SRI LANKA

The Joint Trade Union Action Committee [JTU-AC] of Sri Lanka at the last moment deferred the Token General Strike planned for September 28th. The JTUAC majority stated that it needed more time to prepare to meet the threat of mass dismissals that the government was methodically preparing.

The government had also come to an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Federation [jointly equivalent to the CBI] that all strikers in the private sector would be sacked and that the government would have the necessary legislation passed retroactively.

The press and the radio constantly blared out for days that there was a plot afoot to "overthrow the lawfully elected government" and all the other rubbish that the capitalist class resorts to whenever a strike threat is imminent. Workplace strike meetings were banned, workers putting up posters were arrested and the Volunteers mobilised.

Although these threats did have some effect on workers, the main reason for the poor response to the strike call was the fact that the JTUAC did very little mobilisation down at the workplace level and was slipshod to the point of indifference in the way in which it set about organising the token general strike. Several Federations aligned to the old LSSP leaders and the Communist Party did not even send out strike notices to some of their affiliated unions, and the mobilisation of union branches by union headquarters was even more negligent.

These Federations were also most reluctant to set up militant strike committees at each workplace embracing all the unions represented there. They were also sectarian in that they refused to draw unions other than the 17 Action Committee members into the central strike organisation. This refusal was due to their fear that the United Federation of Labour, and the country's biggest Railway Workers' Union, both of which are aligned to the new-LSSP, would find a voice

Workers and peasants must be mobilised against UNP cuts and repression



LSSSP returns to ideas of Marxism at 1977 Conference. Now in the forefront of class battles

in the decision-making bodies.

Most seriously, however, the reformist majority of the JTUAC was not prepared to accept responsibility on behalf of the workers for the nearly warlike situation that would arise on the 29th morning when the state put its lock-out into effect. They were not prepared to contemplate contingency plans for the next stage of the struggle. Naturally many workers were demoralised and wondered where they were to go from here.

The 17,000-strong Government Clerical Service Union, in many ways the key union in

the state sector, is now under threat of expulsion from the Action Committee for its critical attitude towards the constant blundering of the reformist majority. This follows the new-LSSP section wresting 100% control of the GCSU from the old-LSSP faction at the 11th August General Conference of the union.

Since December 1977, the GCSU, supported by the Local Government Trade Union Federation and the 30,000-strong Ceylon Teachers Federation, has been pressing the Action Committee to adopt a sound practical programme to unify and build

up working class opposition to the UNP. The reformist leaders, however, are wary of any such mobilisation programme because they fear that they will be unable to retain control of events and developments thereafter. Mobilisation, they fear, will cut across their wholly electoral perspectives in the coming years.

The old-LSSP and the CP are now in a United Left Front whose sole propaganda cry is: "Vote for us in 1983." At the same time, as the workers' and peasants' revolt against UNP policies takes on an ever more agitated form, they have no option but to

agree to strikes and other direct actions on pain of losing their influence altogether. The ULF, therefore, is constantly at sixes and sevens, and their muddling on the token strike issue was quite typical.

Advanced workers, though furious with the leaders for the way in which they mishandled the whole Token General Strike issue, nevertheless realise that given the mess that the JTUAC had got itself into, there was no way out except a tactical retreat. To have gone ahead would have meant a serious blow to the trade union organisations—that is, the best elements

would have been sacked.

Furthermore, the activists have not lost their credibility at the shop-floor and they get a sympathetic hearing when they explain the mistakes of "last time" and the need to mobilise and organise much better "next time". Unfortunately, one cannot rely on the Action Committee leaders to measure up to those tasks any better "next time". This places a heavy burden on the shoulders of those who have a real understanding of the dynamics of the class struggle and really want to defeat the UNP government.

The government is trying to make the best of the breathing space that it has got. Harassment, transfers and victimisation is in store for those militant workers and worker-leaders who came to the notice of the authorities during the build-up for the abortive strike. The Minister of Labour has announced that he intends to rush through special legislation making a secret ballot supervised by the Commissioner of Elections compulsory on all unions before strike action can be launched.

The UNP government has as yet imposed only a small part of the welfare cuts that it has promised the vultures of the IMF. The big axe is expected to fall in the November Budget. It fears the mass reaction to these policies and wishes to neutralise the power of the working class before the event.

Clearly then the confrontation has only been briefly deferred: the decisive settling-of-accounts deflected for a moment. While the Sri Lanka working class mobilised itself for a showdown and prepares to draw wide sections of the peasants and middle classes into the struggle for democratic rights and against further erosion of living standards, the international working class, too, must throw in its support.

British workers can do a great deal to assist because of Britain's special relationship to Sri Lanka. Propaganda, demonstrations and a lobby extending when necessary to economic sanctions are means that can assist in defeating a would-be dictator.

Government threats must not deter unions

Commenting on the UNP government's plans to open up Sri Lanka to foreign capital, cut workers' living standards even further, and to strengthen the bonapartist powers of the president, the 'Financial Times' (6 September) said: "The trade unions could be the only unmanageable factor".

The withdrawal of food rations and drastic cuts are only the first results of the UNP's "open door" policy of allowing foreign monopolies to exploit the country.

The ability of the trade unions to join forces in united action is therefore of decisive importance not only for the defence of their members' immediate interests but for the future of all the workers and peasants in Sri

Lanka.

Accordingly, the new Marxist leadership of the LSSP, which ousted the old class-collaborationist leadership ten months ago, put out the call for a one-day general strike to give the workers confidence in their strength and prepare for a Hartal—an all-out general strike and the mobilisation of the workers' allies among the peasantry and middle class to bring down the government.

Strike demands

The demands of the token general strike called for September 28th by the Joint Trade Union Action Committee were:

(1) Restoration of rations of rice, sugar and other food-stuffs, on the basis and at the prices that prevailed when ration books were withdrawn,

following the budget of November 1977.

(2) Restoration of democratic rights and civil liberties that have been suppressed or restricted.

(3)a. Cessation of attacks upon trade unions and repression of free trade union activity in state services and enterprises under state control, abandonment of all proposals for attacks upon existing trade union and other rights of workers in such services and enterprises or elsewhere, and restoration of all rights of workers that have been taken away.

b. Cancellation of all orders of dismissal, vacation of post, suspension or transfer, and other acts of victimisation for trade union activity or for political or other reasons.

(4) Immediate grant of an interim increase of Rs. 150/-

per month in the wages and salaries of all employees in all sectors, and payment of automatic wage increases of Rs. 2/50 per unit increase in the Cost of Living Index to all employees, pending proper revision of wages and salary scales in each sector and the establishment of a proper sliding scale of wage increases to compensate for actual rises in the cost of living.

(5) Reduction in the prices of all essential commodities to reduce the high cost of living. But the political leaders of the ruling class reacted more decisively than most of the leaders of the workers' organisations. First the government declared that all public service workers who joined the strike would be regarded as having vacated office. Victimisation was the main threat.

However, the union which would have been first in line for such victimisations, the Government Clerical Services Union, urged the rest of the movement to stand firm. A leaflet they issued declared:

"On earlier occasions when our members came out on strike, Emergency Regulations were invoked, our service declared Essential Services and the strikers were threatened that they would be treated as having vacated their post. Yet we faced those threats fearlessly, defied the emergency regulations and continued the strike. But no government has been able to treat a single striker as having vacated post. That is because no regulations or circulars could match the strength and solidarity of the working class."

Although the GCSU and

the other unions who support the Marxist LSSP showed their determination to make the token general strike a complete success, the leaders of the other unions backed down when the government declared it "illegal".

Now everything depends on the workers' organisations. Any further retreat could lead to disaster. Now it is vital that all the workers' organisations unite for their common defence and prepare a real show of strength to ward off the UNP attacks.

The objective of the Sri Lankan masses must now be to prepare the way for a mass Hartal to bring down the bosses' government and bring to power a workers' government and the building of a socialist Sri Lanka.

SOUTH AFRICA

APARTHEID

STATE
UNDER
SIEGE

By David Freemantle

Never has it been more important for the British working class to show solidarity with the struggle of the oppressed workers and people of Southern Africa.

Southern Africa is passing through a revolution whose outcome will have enormous consequences throughout Africa and the world.

The national march and rally against apartheid, organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London this Saturday afternoon (21st), should be supported by all militant workers, Labour Party branches and trade unions.

Five years ago, Mozambique and Angola were still under the heel of Portuguese colonialism, which had ruled for five centuries.

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was firmly in the grip of the Smith regime—a racist government of the most reactionary land-owners and capitalists, holding 6½ million Africans under the absolute domination of 90,000 adult whites.

Namibia was still the scarcely-challenged fief of South Africa.

Reaction

In South Africa itself the mass resistance of the late 1950s and early 1960s had given way to more than a decade of brutal reaction and deathly "quiet", as the apartheid regime screwed its repression more and more tightly down onto the black people.

Five years ago, the smug optimism of the South African government and capitalists had only just been disturbed by the first reappearance of mass struggle in the form of the industrial strike wave in Natal.

Today the picture of South Africa is completely different.

Portuguese colonialism has been smashed—the result of long years of guerrilla warfare in the African colonies, coupled at the end with the outbreak of the Portuguese

revolution in 1974.

Mozambique and Angola are independent. The Frelimo and MPLA governments are carrying through the elimination of capitalism and supervising development on the basis of state planning of the economy and the national ownership of the means of production.

In 1975, the American-backed South African invasion of Angola, which was intended to smash the MPLA and install a black government which would protect capitalism and defend imperialist interests, itself ended in ignominious defeat. A last-minute change of plans by the US government, still licking its wounds from Vietnam, left the SA army over-extended and allowed Cuban forces, intervening on the side of the MPLA, to roll the invaders back.

Since then, the declining fortunes of the imperialist powers and their interests in Southern Africa, have fallen further and faster still.



Police move in to prevent march in Johannesburg

In Zimbabwe today, the Smith regime has lost control of vast areas of the countryside to the guerrilla forces of ZANU and ZAPU (linked together at the top for diplomatic purposes as the Patriotic Front). Fewer than half the white farmers, who control most of the food production, were prepared a few weeks ago to promise that they would even attempt to bring the harvest in.

The once "immovable" Smith has been compelled to promise "majority rule" and camouflage the continuing white dictatorship behind the priestly black faces of his "internal settlement" (which

by all reports is wholeheartedly rejected by the mass of the African population). He has declared martial law in most areas, set up military courts with the power to execute people without any civil appeal, and has instructed his troops to do their work without bothering about the law.

This is plainly a deliberate policy of atrocities and even mass murder by the regime against recalcitrant Africans in the rural areas. This mad ferocity only confirms that the regime must be very near to collapse.

As regards Namibia, too, the picture is now dramatically different from that of five years ago. The "granite" Vorster (until a few weeks ago the South African PM and now "retired" to the Presidency) has been forced to prepare a retreat, hoping by a combination of brute force and artful manoeuvre to avoid the consequences which have befallen the oppressors and exploiters of Mozambique,

Angola, and now Zimbabwe. This retreat has been dictated both by the struggle of the Namibian people themselves (led chiefly by SWAPO through its internal organisations and its guerrilla wing), and by the mounting pressure of the Western imperialist powers. It is important to understand what the aims of these Western powers are in Southern Africa.

World capitalism is in the epoch of its decline and fall. In country after country, capitalism has proved its inability to develop production and provide for the needs of the working people.

Even during periods of boom in the industrialised countries, the peoples on the fringes of the capitalist world have been unable to advance except by casting aside the fetter of the market economy and the profit system, and smashing the power of the rich oppressing classes which exploit them.

Turmoil

Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola are all examples of countries where this has taken place.

Now, with the renewed onset of the economic crisis of world capitalism over the past five years, the working people of the advanced industrialised countries are faced also with an iron choice—either socialism or a continued fall in living standards.

In countries like Britain, we face the turmoil ahead with the tremendous advantage of the democratic poli-

heaviest political chains.

In Southern Africa, the people are burdened by national oppression. For them, the struggle for a better life is bound up with the struggles for political freedom and democratic rights, for the abolition of apartheid, for their own state under majority rule, and so on.

And in turn, each of these democratic struggles is bound up with the struggle for material advancement, food, jobs, houses, literacy and education, social services, and every kind of human development. But capitalism is the great millstone which holds them back.

That is why the key to the development for the peoples of these countries lies in consciously linking the struggles for national liberation and democracy to the struggle against capitalism. But it is precisely this which the strategy of the imperialist powers in Southern Africa is designed to prevent.

The much-publicised "differences" between the Western powers and the South African and Rhodesian governments boil down to differences over the type of political regime necessary to maintain capitalism in Southern Africa. They are differences, not of ends, but of means.

The vital material support which the imperialist powers provide to the economies of Rhodesia and South Africa, and thereby to their racist regimes, has always been obvious.

Now the Bingham report on the busting of oil sanctions against Rhodesia has highlighted it and exposed the hypocrisy and cynicism which permeates government circles and the hierarchies of all the major parties.

The strategy of imperialism is to secure certain reforms in the countries of Southern Africa—nominal "independence", some system of elections which will include all adult blacks (so-called "majority rule"), the dropping of legally enforced racial discrimination—in time to prevent the mobilisation and radicalisation of the oppressed people to the point where they become fired with the determination to be free of capitalism.

South Africa is the vital element in all this—the main prize and main danger as far as imperialism is concerned.

The change in the whole

Southern African situation during the past five years has been forcefully demonstrated in South Africa in the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the political general strikes by black workers which followed it.

Revolution in South Africa, with its massive mineral wealth, industrial muscle, and working class which is now the majority of the population, would transform not only Southern Africa but the relation of class forces throughout the continent.

The manoeuvres of the imperialist powers over Zimbabwe and Namibia have as their ultimate aim the prevention of revolution in South Africa.

This explains the extreme unwillingness of the West to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, as well as Owen's recent assurance that the SA government would be given plenty of time if it toed the line on Namibia and made some gesture towards domestic reform.

British workers have no interest in these manoeuvres of imperialism in Southern Africa, and we should campaign vigorously to expose them and stop the complicity of the Labour government in them. The struggle of the people of Southern Africa to rule their own lives in a society free from oppression and exploitation demands our active support.

We should take action, through the labour and trade union movement, to end all British involvement in the economies of South Africa and Zimbabwe—all investments, bank loans, credits and trade—linking this to our own demands for the nationalisation of the banks and the commanding heights of the British economy under workers' control and management.

We must insist on the strict enforcement of the arms embargo against South Africa. We should directly support the demands of the workers of Southern Africa, for example for trade union rights and recognition, by using our own trade union power in the multinational companies with plants in Britain.

International working class solidarity is the surest guarantee of victory in the struggle in all countries for the socialist emancipation of mankind.



The key for the peoples of Southern Africa lies in consciously linking the struggles for national liberation and democracy to the struggle against capitalism.

LETTERS TO: The Editor, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LETTERS

TORIES— REACHING DEPTHS OTHER PARTIES CANNOT REACH

Dear Comrades

There I was the other night, sitting in the cinema waiting for the main film, on a rare visit, when a most peculiar commercial appeared on the screen.

This young couple were blundering about in a gathering gloom looking for "the queue for the 50p stalls". At first I thought it was yet another brand of lager [where the hapless wanderers burst into a brilliantly lit pub etc.]—then, to my surprise, a section of the audience started booing and hissing.

By this time the young couple had found the queue for serious operations and the queue for jobs and I began to realise that something a lot more poisonous than lager was being advertised—namely the Tories.

The punchline was almost drowned out by a raucous reaction from about half the cinema, so perhaps Saatchi and Saatchi should stick to washing powder after all. The chances of new Splurgo washing whiter than Brand X must be better than that of the Tories doing anything about queues for jobs and serious operations—except make them longer of course.

Yours fraternally
Ruth Aylett
Sheffield Heeley CLP

Train for the dole

Dear Comrade

Unemployment is so high in Northern Ireland that the government is paying (or should I say giving some pocket money) to people who go back to school to train for a job which you are not sure of getting after your training.

I was unemployed from 27th May with no signs of a job. I ended up on an Office Business training course.

It lasts twelve weeks and is really exhausting work, trying to cover a one-year course and we get £19.50 weekly.

To make things worse you do no exams, you just get a reference. What good is that and what do I do at the end of the twelve weeks—go on the dole?

Yours fraternally
Winnie Venton
Co Fermanagh
N. Ireland

Monopoly Power

Dear Comrades

In the last week two items have caught my attention, which once again reveal the extent to which private enterprise, and in particular the big monopolies, control not just our working lives, but also our limited spare time in the evenings and at the weekend.

Our wonderful local Radio Piccadilly (one wonders which monopoly owns this money spinner) today revealed the new board of directors of Rochdale Football Club. They were: Chairman—the head of Turner Asbestos, one of the largest producers of asbestos in this country; the other seats are being filled by a managing director, a solicitor and an estate agent.

This board does not even

seem interested in paying lip service to the ideas of participation by for example putting a solitary member of a supporters' club or (god forbid) a trade unionist on the board. Are their innermost secrets too sacred or embarrassing to even run the risk of a leak to all the overwhelmingly working class customers who spend a lot of time and money following and helping the club?

The other incident was at the Militant Meeting at Labour Party Conference in Blackpool. Because of the shortage of meeting places this took place at Tiffany's Night Club. On each of the seats was a compliment slip, on which was printed—Mecca—of course.

The management have hit

the nail on the head. If you want to go to any night club that is something better than just a dive-bar, you can almost bet your last pound on the fact that it will be owned by one of the entertainment giants, if not Mecca, than Rank or EMI.

We can look forward to the time when the monopolies have been ousted and the control of the entertainment industry is in the hands of the working class. No longer will the customers be treated as numbers to grab pound notes off and to push away as soon as possible, but as working people entitled to a proper service and decent entertainment.

Yours fraternally
Pat Skemp
Blackley Labour Party

Re-selection: 1979 Conference must decide

Dear Editor

Following Labour Party Conference, Crosby CLP instructed me to send the following letter to Ron Hayward, the General Secretary; as an open letter to the NEC.

Dear Comrade
As Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Crosby, Merseyside, I have been directed by the Constituency Labour Party to write to the National Executive to protest at the fact that a re-vote was not taken on the vital issue of mandatory re-selection when it was absolutely clear that the

vote of the AUEW had not been cast in the way that the delegation had decided.

We certainly recognise the difficulty of the chairman in that situation when, as she explained, if we had a re-vote every time there was a confused delegate the business would never be completed. However the mistake made by Hugh Scanlon in not casting the AUEW vote correctly cannot be dismissed that lightly, as that vote clearly had a decisive effect on the result, and realising that a substantial section of

Conference called for a re-vote, my Constituency strongly believes that the call should not have been ignored.

In view of the importance of this issue Crosby CLP are calling on the NEC to ensure that an opportunity will be given to the 1979 Party Conference to vote on this vital question of mandatory re-selection which we believe is indispensable to a healthy democratic Party.

Yours fraternally
Tony Mulhearn
PPC Crosby, Merseyside

Copper handshake No 5%

Dear Sir

As an apprentice plumber with British Rail (Engineering) Ltd I have recently seen examples of the cynical way capitalism treats working people.

I spent some of my apprenticeship in the Welding Training School. After a lot of

failures I eventually produced a perfect weld on a delapidated machine.

There was a great to do, with the foreman patting my back and the metallurgist checking it and varnishing it. It was eventually put in a box as a reference weld.

Later that day a foreman came round with a small catalogue for a man who was in the welding school. It contained a cassette, radio players and teasmads etc. For 34 years service!

The conclusion I came to from this is that my management are prepared to commend someone's efforts if it in any way raises the standard or amount of work done but fail to award, in any reasonable manner, 34 years hard work.

Yours fraternally
Steph Porter
Provan LPYS

Unions must defend apprentices

Dear Comrades

My brother, who recently left school, started work two months ago as a carpenter's mate. He took the job, even though the pay was bad, because he wanted to work in this trade.

He gets £22 (gross). Well, this is what he is supposed to get! But he works for a small firm and the boss sometimes doesn't give his full wages at the end of the week. This has led to him being owed £70 and he is finding it very difficult to get this money.

Despite the fact that he is only 16, he very often works over 10 hours a day and nearly every weekend. Sometimes he doesn't get home until 11.30 pm!

The firm is non-unionised and as this is his first job he is reluctant to make too much of a fuss in case he loses his job at such a time of mass unemployment.

My mum, angry and disgruntled, phoned ACAS for help. But it seems without a contract of employment (which he hasn't been given) there is nothing he can do.

I feel it is a disgrace that young people, like my brother, are at the mercy of such

Dear Comrade

Your paper, which I receive regularly, at least tells the truth about what is happening in the world, and does not echo the lies of capitalists, generals, dictators and the ruling class at large. The strike at Ford, will, I am sure, be only the first of many this winter telling Callaghan exactly what he can do with his 5%

I am a member of SCPS (Society of Civil and Public Servants), and on Wednesday we had a meeting of members from London HQ buildings. It was on the subject of London Weighting, and it was pleasing to see a group which is normally considered moderate warming to the prospects of industrial action.

What was shameful, however, was that the National Executive was not prepared to lead us in our fight for fair pay based on the agreed guidelines for London Weighting.

I enclose a cheque for £25 for the fighting fund.

Yours fraternally
A civil servant (name and address supplied)

Manchester Direct Works— Councillor replies

Dear Comrade

Happily, the Manchester Direct Works strike is over and I share with the convenors and employees of the Department the belief that the agreement now reached will bring about major advantages to the Department, to the citizens of Manchester, and to the employees of the Department. Nonetheless, I feel I must say a few words of explanation.

There was never any intention in the Manchester Direct Works Committee to reduce bonus earnings of the employees. What there was, was joint agreement between the convenors and the committee to introduce an effective work study scheme into the maintenance section and such a scheme has now been agreed.

There was never any breakdown of negotiations, never any ultimatum from Management or Committee; never any closed doors to any of the convenors, nor will there ever be whilst Labour controls Manchester City Council. I cannot accept that the agreement now reached could not have been reached without the sacrifice of over two weeks of wages but that was not the opinion of the convenors and I respect 100% the right of the Department to strike if that is their wish, as sad as it makes me, conscious of the distress any strike causes.

One thing I must take exception to, however, is the suggestion that Labour Councillors were hoodwinked by Officers of the Department. It's really not good enough to think that someone who

served his union over 31 years (Bill Risby has been a SLADE officer since he was 17, was National President from 1967-70 and was an elected union delegate to LP conference—Ed) and negotiated for them in company, branch and national negotiations, could be hoodwinked by any local government officer.

The Manchester Direct Works Department is, in my opinion, one of the best Direct Labour organisations in the country. It is the practical exposition of the philosophy of our Party. It is a jewel in the crown of our socialist City Council and let no one attempt to attack us or they will find a unity between labour politicians and Direct Works employees that hasn't been too much in evidence over the past few weeks.

Given the freedom to compete freely for building requirements within our area, Manchester Direct Works Department will prove to the community how successful Public enterprise can be, and we could make major inroads into the housing deprivations right throughout the wider area of the Manchester County Council and perhaps even into the whole of the North West of England.

May I, therefore, conclude by asking comrades in Militant to join us in our campaign for a new deal for Direct Works and the re-introduction of the local authority (Works) Bill.

Fraternally
Bill Risby
Chairman Manchester Direct Works Committee

NO LIMIT

NO LIMIT! That's the demand of the unions, the Labour Party Conference, the Ford and BOC workers...and... 'Militant'. And that applies to the fighting fund for our paper, too.

Last week marked a deadline for the September Drive for £20,000 to get back on our target for the year, but supporters didn't stop pushing! There's no limit to their energies once they're unleashed. Look at this week's total—£2,243.30.

As it is, we need a minimum of £1,700 on average each week—but there is no maximum! £70,000 is a target, not a limit, so don't worry about going over it before the end of the year. But don't think it's going to be easy, either.

The £20s, £10s and £5s are hard for any worker or student to part with. However, if approached in the right way, by explaining why the fighting fund needs this money, they will make the extra sacrifice and give generously.

Those who have donated this week include: £85 from supporters in Nottingham University Labour Club (including £25 from A Gripp, £15 from T McKintey and £15 from B Delaney), members of Swansa Labour Club £23.50,

Chambers (Glasgow) £20; two students in Brighton £15; three supporters in Littlehampton £15; D Stevenson (Swansea) £10; Eddie Loyden MP £10, and £6 from members of Blyth LPYS.

£5ers came in from P Thomas (Sheffield NALGO steward), L George (Lanelli POEEU), O Craxton (Hayes LPYS), J Cameron (East Kilbride), a Bristol Rolls Royce worker, I Kirkland (also Bristol), J Carrie (Nottingham) and K Gaffney (Bedford College). £3 was donated by F Perkins (Nottingham) and £2s were donated by J Such (Uxbridge), T McCallum (Gateshead) and J Turner (St Pancras).

£1 donations were received from the following: C McCallister (Manchester CPSA), W Rickets (Manchester PNP), R Sinclair (Paisley NALGO), K Edwards (Llanelli T&G), a Heathrow Airport worker, J Clarke (Ardwick), V McGee (Wallasey UCATT), C Worthington (Wallasey ASTMS), J Lewis (Newcastle), A Walters (Rotherham LP), C Edwards (Gedling) and J Lawrence (Newcastle).

Supporters have also given generously in collections as opposed to individual donations. Large collections have been made at: a Liverpool Militant Readers' Meeting £85.03, a Deptford Militant

Readers' Meeting £101.27 and one in the Camden/Westminster area £115.95.

Collections on a smaller scale have come in from Rother Valley LPYS (£2.32), Brighton LPYS (£1.72), Hazel Grove LPYS (£2) and Hampstead LPYS (£2.50). An 'American Auction' in Ware and Hertford LPYS raised £2.23 and a collection at Hampstead LPYS social raised £12. A collection at the GEC factory in Manchester raised £14.50.

A lot of money has been raised this week in fund-raising activities: such as, £42.36 at a party in Brighton, a jumble sale in Oxford £35.30, sale of pontoon tickets in Lanarkshire £28, Tote winnings at Birkenhead Labour Club £17, a going-away party in Cardiff £15, 'wedding fee' in Nottingham £15, sale of pontoon tickets in Southend £7 and a social in West London £6.40.

The pennies all mount up as well, and the proceeds this weeks include 'a round of drinks' at a union day-school in Paisley £7, a copper collection in Hackney which raised £2.50, 'a drink for the Militant' in Brighton £2 and a collection in Birmingham Poly £1.10.

Many thanks to all the comrades who donated money this week.

But 'Militant' readers will

FIGHTING FUND - TARGET £70,000

Area	Target	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,400		2,462.29
Hants & IOW	2,100		2,301.36
Humberside	2,200		1,573.15
Lancashire	1,500		637.70
London: North	7,700		5,576.41
London: South	3,800		2,881.48
Manchester & Dist	2,900		1,750.60
Merseyside & Dist	4,500		2,447.74
Midlands East	4,400		2,602.37
Midlands West	7,400		5,013.34
Northern	4,900		3,015.96
Scotland East	2,500		1,391.22
Scotland West	2,900		1,583.62
South East	2,300		1,989.80
South West	2,300		1,887.78
Thames Valley	1,700		1,303.84
Wales East	2,000		1,409.20
Wales West	2,300		1,841.08
Yorkshire	5,200		2,619.57
Others	3,000		5,428.68
Total	70,000		49,798.19

never be content. Huge resources are needed in the battles over wages, hours, social spending, nationalis-

ation etc. The Tories have a whole arsenal in Fleet Street, but Mentmore Terrace needs your help!

Make the sky the limit and use your tireless efforts to build the 'Militant'.

RED DELAY

The Editorial Board wishes to thank all those who have collected and donated so generously to the Militant Fighting Fund in the last few weeks.

Although the 3/4-year target was not fully reached, we are now in a position to muster the amount needed for the next big advance. [Again thanks to supporters offering loans of their modest savings etc. to tide us over.]

Readers will therefore be as disappointed as we were to hear that a manufacturing delay now

means the use of new production processes planned for the end of October is put back by two whole months.

Urgent representations are being made to insist that no further delay will take place. It will not be accepted — either by 'Militant's' printers and editors, journalists and photographers or, most important of all, the readers!

The results of your labours should therefore be apparent by the New Year at the latest—signalled by the use of the fiery red on the outside

pages.

But even this does not mean the battle is over. There's always another bill to pay and always scope for more advances in our capacity to get out the Marxist material every worker needs. We still have to get another £21,000 by January and COULD do it even earlier.

Help US in the fight for funds and 'Militant' will provide YOU with more and more ammunition for the fight against capitalism!

LPYS BACKS FORD WORKERS

A lively public meeting was held by Hackney Labour Party Young Socialists on October 15th, to discuss the Ford dispute.

John Aitken, a member of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee, explained the background to the dispute and the latest situation following

the meeting with management last Friday.

The management had originally refused to negotiate: but after the decision against pay restraint on the Monday of Labour Party conference, the management said it was obvious that the unions were not behind the government on the 5%.

John Aitken said that the conference decision had a decisive influence on the renewing of the negotiations.

The company had made several offers, having agreed to negotiate freely. However, the wages offer, amounting to about 8.2% was refused by the FNJNC, and the company made no move towards redu-

cing the working week.

Peter Jarvis, delegate to Labour Party conference from Hackney South CLP, spoke about the stand taken by the LP conference against pay restraint.

He said that James Callaghan's policies did nothing to get rid of the root causes of the problems facing the economy. Callaghan believes that unemployment will miraculously go down, but even the capitalist economists know that this will not happen.

The policies of the conference cannot be carried out on a capitalist basis, where a few firms control most of the economy. Only through a policy of nationalisation is there any way out of the crisis facing the working class. It is on the shoulders of the youth to see that these policies are carried out.

Peter Jarvis also urged those present to go back to their CLPs and trade unions and demand that the NEC

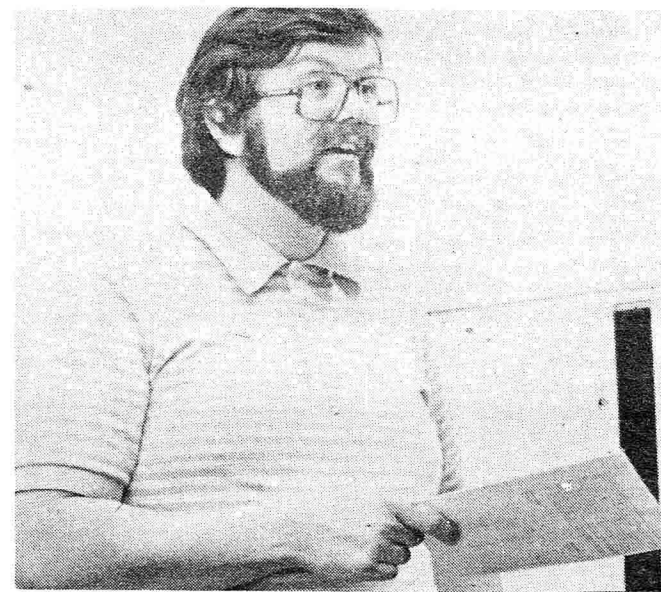
carry out a campaign against the 5%.

In summing up John Aitken stressed the importance of trade unionists joining and becoming active within their local Labour Parties.

£10 was collected from the 20 people present and donated to the Ford strike fund.

Lorna Oliver
(Hackney Central LPYS)

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant



John Aitken [EETPU, FNJNC]

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BLYTH Marxist Discussion Group. 'The Russian Revolution'. Chappington Community Centre. 7.30 pm. Wednesday 25th October.

MANCHESTER Militant Readers' Meeting. 'Which way forward for Labour'. Speaker: Margaret Manning (Moss Side Labour Party Conference delegate). Millstone Hotel, Thomas Street. Wednesday October 18th at 8pm.

RHONDDA Trade Union Discussion Group. Every Tuesday. Star Pub, Ystrad, Rhondda (Back bar). 7.30 pm.

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THE FIGHT GOES ON -FOR A LIVING WAGE

NEGOTIATIONS LOBBY

£20 on the pay, one hour off the day, productivity deals no way."

Bob Faulkes [Hackney LP] and Martin Elvin [Ruislip/Northwood LP YS] talked to Ford workers at Moscow Place.

'we've earned a fair share'

The placards on the lobby outside Bayswater House reflected the feelings of the Ford workers from Dagenham, Southampton and Langley. "5% we will wreck it and with his 80% so did Becket"; "£246,000,000 profits, we've earned a fair share." I spoke to John Hooper, T&GWU shop steward from the Southampton plant, just as the word came out: "They've offered 6½%." Angry shouts go up: "They can stuff it." "Break off the talks." The chant goes up, "£20 on the pay, one hour off the day,

productivity deals no way."

I asked John about his reaction. "That's it. 6½%! We'll tighten up on the pickets. We'll stop everything going in."

"Productivity deals'. We don't want to know. The ones that will get stung worst are the line workers. I've never agreed to percentages, it's got to be flat increases across the board. Why should those who've got more get more, and those who've got less get

less?"

Brian Allan, another T&GWU shop steward tells me "I've never seen the lads so militant, the lads just walked out when they heard the offer. Half the plant was out before we had informed the other half, it was phenomenal. We're not even talking about percentages. £12 before we should even consider talking."

The dinner break comes and the various fulltime officials and convenors on the National Joint Negotiating

Council (NJNC) emerge.

Again the chants for the full claim, with various comments "Why does it take so long to say no?" "What are they talking about?" Assurances are given as they cluster around. Ron Todd points out "we didn't even have to adjourn to turn down the

"You're the one with the comedian's ticket". "What about parity with your wages?"

By this time all the Southampton men have left. A few others come wandering back—one want to know, looking up at the prominent chimney on top of Bayswater

of fringe benefits at Fords—like thrombosis" remarked Tommy Osman, another 25 years' service man, an AUEW shop steward on the Works' Committee.

They told me what life was like working in Fords. "You know one worker who fell down dead, they didn't find him for nearly three hours because he fell behind some machinery. Fords insisted on finding out what time he died, so he could be dabled (clocked) out."

The stories of injustices, the super exploitation and conditions are endless, exemplified by the life expectancy at Ford—53 years.

An old Colonel Blimp type wanders up and proceeds to lecture the pickets on the scandal of striking etc. "I'm a self-made man." "Didn't make a very good job of it, did you?" "What's up with him?" "Must have shares in Fords". He's duly escorted away by a PC to the chorus of "Soldiers of the Queen".

Negotiations still go on. No news. The last few pickets start to pack up.

WHAT THE PICKETS SAID-

"Basically we have come here to picket today to show that we want the full claim. We are not interested in 5% or productivity deals, only our claim point for point."

"The situation at Langley is very good, with a full vote to come out on strike. We have an active picket line and strike-committee, and the men are visiting places for support. We have been to Heathrow Airport, Tricos, Magnatex, Uxbridge LPYS."

"The spirit is good, but we must be careful that Fords don't get away with their usual tactic of attempting to wear down our negotiators."

Mick Case, AUEW Ford Steward, Langley.

"So far as the Shop Stewards' Committee is concerned the latest offer is an absolute insult. We didn't expect the full offer today, but the offer is pie in the sky."

"The spirit of the lads is that they are out for as long as it takes."

Tony Liddington, T&GWU, Chairman of Shop Stewards Committee.

"The main reason for coming down here to picket today is to show Fords that we are solidly behind the strike."

"The company keep talking about percentages, but we are here for £s, the full claim. We want our share of the profits the company has made."

"I've been at the Langley plant for 16 years and its time I had something to show for it."

Melvin Murrae, AUEW Fords Langley.

'35 HRS TO END THE PROBLEM'

Tommy Osman, AUEW Shop Steward in the Body Plant at Dagenham, a member of the Joint Works Council, talks to 'Militant'.

Militant: What is your view of the company's statement about tightening up on unofficial strikes, absenteeism, meal and tea-breaks and discipline?

Tommy Osman: Take a three-shift worker in the body plant. He gets a 30-minute break for lunch. He has a sizeable trot to the canteen and then has to join the back of a queue. By the time he gets his lunch he has about ten minutes to eat it.

On time-keeping, if a man is late five times in one month he gets a letter. If it happens the next month then he gets

another letter. After that they get up to three days suspension for further lateness.

The company claim they have 33% absenteeism on a Friday night. Well obviously the men don't want to work Friday nights. It means spending all day Saturday in bed, while other people are out enjoying themselves. When we're not working for Henry Ford we are sleeping for him.

The 35-hour week would do away with Friday night working and slash absen-

teeism drastically.

No way has yet been found to prevent unofficial stoppages. If the lads have a point they feel should be represented, then they'll make sure it is.

Basically what the company want, is the right to re-man jobs during a strike. It's just a scabs charter, and there's no self-respecting trade unionist going to agree to that.

We used to have a physio-therapist at the plant, which was handy, with men working on the production line sometimes getting strained muscles etc. A man could be examined on the spot.

Now of course it means visiting the doctor, which means likely taking a day off. We pleaded with them to keep the physiotherapist, but they refused on the ground of expense. And they complain about absenteeism.

'we're staying out'

After the company's latest offer on Friday 13th, John Kelly spoke to two stewards from the Southampton plant.

J.Kelly: What do you think of today's offer?

Martin Killin: Derisory.

Terry Sullivan: A joke.

JK: What is the feeling of the men at the moment?

MK: All for staying out, until we get what we're asking for.

TS: This offer will just increase the gulf between the company and its employees.

JK: Do you think the fight at Fords for better wages will change the attitude of the Labour government or Jim Callaghan?

MK: No.

TS: No, let him stew in his own juice.

JK: If the Government will not change its policies what are the chances for the Labour Party at the next election?

MK: No chance.

TS: Dread to think, until the Tories open their mouths.

When asked if they had any comments to make, Terry Sullivan said that "the problems of the economy were not caused by working people but the system...what we need is a return of a Labour government for the Labour people."

A POLITICAL FIGHT

Bill Burgoyne, Ford's Swansea, talks to Kevin Ramage [Llanelli LPYS]

"I'm not on strike. I consider myself locked out."

"If Fords wanted us to work they would have come across with 7-8% plus a "productivity" deal to start with."

"We're fighting a political battle—with a Labour government in office. I'm a Labour Party member, but I can't see Labour getting a clear majority next time because of the policies."

"As a socialist government they should bring in a £60 minimum wage. That's only what you can exist on, no more. With a £60 minimum wage, and other policies like that, they'd soon have a clear majority."

"We've got to get people interested in the movement somehow or other. We've got to change our leaders. The leadership in the Labour Party, like our unions, must defend the working class or get out."

"But its no good moaning outside the Labour Party. We've got to get in and change it."

'TALKS OFFER NOTHING'

"Management turned on the tap of the strike. They will have to turn it off with an offer that satisfies the claim." That is Daventry Convenor Eric Knight's view of the negotiations.

The cynical attempt of management at negotiation was just a cheap programme designed to produce public sympathy and dishearten the Ford workers. This has only produced frustration combined with anger from the Convenors at a wasted journey.

Due to lack of components, plants in Amsterdam, Germany and Valencia are being

crippled. This may bring Henry to England—with an offer.

If not, practical demonstrations of solidarity will have to be stepped up. Collections from foremen, clearners, TASS members and LPYS branches in Birmingham have already contributed over £120 to the strike fund at Daventry. Please send all money to Eric Knight, 48 The Cherwell, Grange Estate, Daventry.

Brian Debus [Erdington CLP] talked to Eric Knight, Convenor, Peter Todd, Deputy Convenor, and other Ford workers at Daventry.

'CONCENTRATION CAMP'

S.S. Brar, T&GWU Fords Langley, spoke to John Cantwell:

Our morale has improved since the time that the strike started. After the Labour Party Conference the 5% policy must be a dead letter.

The unhealthy conditions at Langley make us even more determined to win. Fumes get everywhere, buildings are dirty and untidy, and covered in grease and oils.

The line workes are often not allowed to go to the toilet, as the line goes so fast, and the forman's not always around. We had no relief time at all for two months before the stoppage, even

though they're supposed to give us two periods of twenty minutes! The management stand over us like in a concentration camp.

A productivity deal would be unacceptable. Fords have already had their productivity, with massive profits to show for it. Sissons, the manager of the plant at Langley, is already renowned for manning cuts and speeding up the line. There's no scope for the line to go any faster.

The demand for a 35-hour week is a very important part of our claim. It should help to bring down unemployment, and give relief to people already working hard.

AEC CLOSURE THREAT

As reported in last week's 'Militant', 4,500 jobs are at risk following the threatened closure of AEC at Southall.

In 1968, the year they became part of the Leyland combine, AEC declared a profit of £45 million. By 1970 the management had turned this into a £6 million loss.

Figures issued after 1968 have to be treated with caution; Leyland had already expressed their determination to chop AEC. Lord Stokes said then, "I see no reason to maintain a plant south of Crewe."

Crazy pricing policies (marketing guides to salesmen in 1975 stated "pricing policies on AEC vehicles adopted to promote sales of Leyland and Scottish vehicles) ensured an overall loss of sales for the combine.

Production workers were sent down the road in 1971 and 1975 while clerical staff were kept on. As a result output per man fell from 3½

per man in the 60s to 2¼ per man in 1975.

They can't blame this one on "bad industrial relations". The last dispute was in 1974—a management lock-out. AEC shows all that's rotten about British capital—'Militant' spoke to Mick Martin (Works Convenor and Chairman of the AEC Defence Committee) on the fight against redundancy.

AEC develops its own engines and has a history over the years of high class quality products. It currently employs 2,500 on site and indirectly, I

estimate another 2,000-2,500 through component suppliers.

The company's argument for removing chassis production is "centralisation and rationalisation" to Lancashire where they have a current investment of £40 million in the "assembly hall!". The company's argument is that we must become competitive in the heavy vehicle market.

We do not support the policy of contraction. We believe the only answer for British Leyland and its workforce is expansion.

The first confirmation we had of the threat to our future was in a letter to the 'Sunday Times' of October 1st by Mr Desmond Petcher, the outgo-

ing managing director of Leyland Vehicles. He clearly states that the closure of AEC and others are to take place. We can no longer doubt management's intentions.

The consequences to Southall and the surrounding area would be disastrous. Ealing Southall has one of the highest unemployment rates in the outer London area.

With the loss of AEC many engineering firms, who supply components not only to AEC but to other plants as well, will follow.

At a mass meeting on 26th August the company's proposals of redundancy and threatened closure were rejected

by the whole workforce. There was a demand for a meeting at the highest level on AEC's future. It was also agreed that a lobby of Parliament should be organised when Parliament reconvenes.

Participation?

Ealing Borough Council have taken up the issue. Ealing Trades Council pledged its full support to any campaign by the membership.

The AEC workforce have been involved over the years in workers' participation. The British Leyland unions are in the process of renegotiating the participation agreement. They reached a draft agreement on Tuesday 22nd August.

'Militant' speaks to Mick Martin, Works Convenor at AEC Southall

Before the document had been printed, with company assurances that no plans would be implemented till the workforce had been consulted, on Wednesday 23rd August AEC announced its intention to make 25 redundant—20% of the indirect workforce!

How can the trade union movement have any faith in further management statements about "full consultation"?

On Monday 16th October a meeting was called of all officials, shop stewards and staff reps to decide the next stage in the struggle.



Kipling bakery workers' picket

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Kipling's Manchester: CAKES LIKE GRANNY'S—MANAGEMENT TOO

Workers at Mr Kiplings Cakes bakery, Manchester have been on strike for over two weeks.

The strike itself has been brewing for over two years. At the root of the dispute is the excessive hours of work demanded by management, sometimes 13-14 hours a shift, combined with high-handed treatment of workers and union representatives.

Three issues are at the centre of the present dispute: the upgrading of women workers without training or consultation with the shop stewards, the sending home of other workers without pay

when a worker refuses to work excessive hours, sending of disciplinary notices by recorded delivery to workers' homes.

Coupled with these issues is a history of local management attacks on conditions—trying to cut meal-breaks etc. When the local union representatives raise issues with the management, they can get no answers—everything is referred to "the faceless ones in London" as one shop steward put it.

By John Byrne

FIGHT FOR THE 35-HOUR WEEK!
For details of the YCAU campaign see page 3

HARLOW DUSTMEN WIN

The strike of Harlow dustmen [Militant 16 October] resulted in victory for the dustmen and their union NUPE.

The suspended dustmen, including NUPE branch officers, were reinstated and all disciplinary action dropped. Extra dustmen will be employed for six weeks to do the excess work while negotiations proceed over workloads. The dustmen want control over their rounds and enough manpower to finish their job in four long days.

The dustmen will receive full pay for the week they were on strike. However, the Council have refused to pay many other NUPE workers who were on token strike for two days in support. The dustmen will be insisting on this payment in their negotia-

tions. Meanwhile, the dustmen have each agreed to donate a day's pay into a hardship fund.

This dispute has highlighted the reactionary role of management who appear to have been telling the dustmen one thing and the Labour Councilors something different. In future there will be much closer consultation between NUPE and the Councilors.

Following our original report of this dispute [6 October], Labour councillors have complained to Harlow 'Militant' supporters about our reporting that "unfortunately leading Labour councillors are talking in terms of 'breaking the union'."

If we have misrepresented them in any way, we apologise. They are certainly welcome to space on our letters page to put their own point of view.

We recognise that Labour councillors in Harlow have in general a very good record of fighting for workers' interests. But in relation to this dispute we would ask them a number of

questions:

[1] Why did Labour councillors initially refuse to meet striking dustmen until they returned to work; and why did they not take steps to find out what were the real grievances of the dustmen?

[2] Why did councillors refuse to give reasons why an agreement drawn up in the summer on the basis of a time-and-motion study was not completed in the agreed time, six weeks?

[3] Why did Labour councillors refuse to give reasons for verbal and written warnings and suspension notices given to some of the dustmen in breach of national disciplinary agreements with

NUPE have increased their delegation to Harlow Labour Party GMC from two to six, to help ensure that only real defenders of working class interests become Labour Councillors.

NUPE?

[4] If problems were caused by full-time council officials, why did councillors stick to the advice of officials and refuse to discuss with the union members involved?

Whatever the councillors intended—and we accept that as the council recognises a NUPE closed shop it is very unlikely that the Labour group as a whole had any intention of "breaking the union"—the actions of Labour councillors in this dispute aroused considerable bitterness on the part of the NUPE members involved, and this was reflected in our report.

Social workers strike

Liverpool social workers have been on strike since Tuesday October 10th with 85%. Sandra Bryson a NALGO shop steward and social worker based at a large general hospital in Liverpool, spoke about the strike and background to Marie Harrison [COHSE] for Militant.

Our dispute is basically over the demand for regrading. Since our salary grades were fixed in 1971 a total of 36 new statutory laws and procedures have been introduced. These have resulted in massive extra duties and responsibilities for social workers and yet we have not received any more pay.

We have been asking for regrading since 1974. We have been waiting since May this year for the City Council to negotiate with us. So far they have refused and we therefore feel that industrial action is the only course left open to us.

The decision to strike was only reached after considerable heartsearching and much discussion, it was not a decision taken lightly. There are other local authorities out at the present time: Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Newcastle have been on strike for seven weeks. Social workers in many other branches

will probably strike in the near future.

NALGO are committed to full support for our demand and it is hoped that action will be escalated in the future.

Hardship

We have been attacked by the local press over our decision not to maintain emergency services, but we realise that if emergency services are continued the strike could go on indefinitely and those people not regarded as "life and limb" cases would suffer even further hardship in the long term.

If we are given the regrading we ask we feel that the service generally to the city would improve, because people would stay in the service and indeed it may even encourage more people into this type of work.

We are in the process of organising a trade union



Social workers demonstrate in London

liaison committee to make appeals to other unions for support and finance. However it is early days yet and we have a good deal of work in this respect. But support has been forthcoming from the public

service unions such as NUPE and COHSE. We welcome this solidarity and believe that the more pressure put to the authority from all sides the better, and the more likely we are to win.

CPSA- RE-ELECT LEFT-WING NEC

Photo: Julian McKittrick



CPSA rank and file cheer the defeat of right wing at conference

Following legal threats from Kate Losinska, the extreme right-winger of the CPSA's so-called "moderate" faction, Len Lever, President of the CPSA, this week declared the NEC elections null and void, and put in motion the machinery for a branch postal ballot.

This could not come at a worse time for the general membership of the union who are presently faced with crucial decisions on their pay campaign.

This year's campaign is likely to prove the most important in the union's history and the timing of the right-wing's move is seen by many activists as an attempt at deliberate sabotage.

By Steve Appleton and Frank Bonner
(CPSA NEC—deposed)

The CPSA members now need to be more vigilant than ever to ensure that their interests are secured. The past week's machin-

ations are absolutely unprecedented, even given Kate Losinska's past record of dragging the union through the courts.

The gutter press have predictably latched onto the row. Clearly they are out to imply ballot rigging and left-wing manoeuvres.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but clearly all kinds of innuendos and lurid suggestions will be made by the Fleet Street barons in their zeal to whip up CPSA members against the left-wing leadership. They will undoubtedly attempt to orchestrate a right-wing victory at the forthcoming elections.

To answer the distortions of the press and the right wing and to ensure that the membership is armed with the full facts, the left wing

members of the NEC have set up a committee which will circulate material and spearhead the campaign for the re-election of an NEC with a left wing majority.

What gave the right wing the chance to over-turn the NEC elections?

A new rule, 14.3(d), in the union constitution (adopted at the November Rules Revision Conference) stipulated that branches must vote for the candidates they have nominated.

Clearly, this rule was not fully understood by some of the branches and cross voting occurred in both directions. Some of the switching favoured the right-wing! In any case, only 20 branches out of a total of over 1,000 were involved, including Kate Losinska's own branch!

The right wing claims that if this rule had been followed by all branches in the Vice-Presidential elections at the May conference, then Kate Losinska and not Peter Coltman would have been elected. However, after a thorough investigation, the chartered accountant who acts as the union's returning officer found otherwise.

His conclusion was: "You will see that the net effect of this enquiry is to narrow the margin of votes between Peter Coltman and Kate Losinska but not to change the result of the election."

Double standards

CPSA President, Len Lever, however, found in favour of Kate Losinska by deducting from the total votes allocated by the chartered accountant the votes of those branches who had nominated a candidate but had then failed to cast a vote in the elections. It seems that the left-wing candidates alone lost votes by this device. Only votes cast in a way different from the branch nominations were re-allocated by the President. This double standard gave a slender majority to Kate Losinska.

Surely, at the very least, a re-election for the offices of Vice President should have been held! Len Lever even conceded in answer to NEC member Pat Byrne, that this was a "moot point". Certainly this would have been consistent with the ruling of the President following a similar controversy in the union's Land Registry section immediately after their Section Conference in May.

So Kate Losinska, who has engineered the ousting of the NEC escapes election herself. What an utter denial of democracy!

After an NEC broad left meeting, Peter Coltman said he was prepared to come off the NEC until the next

conference if this would leave the NEC intact when the pay battle is looming.

The accountants had stated that: "The extension of the enquiry to other elections would be costly and time consuming and from our experience in the Vice Presidential enquiry would be unlikely to materially affect the result."

But under threats from the right wing of further legal moves and more demands for enquiries, Len Lever stated that the NEC no longer existed.

He offered the NEC a powerless "caretaker" role in the run up to the elections. NEC members felt this was a charade that they could not accept, and suggested that the President should consult the members on the situation. As President, he could—in the NEC's view—simply instruct the officers to carry out each decision of the NEC.

Lever turned down this offer, however, and the union was left without an NEC. The CPSA will be run by the senior officers, now including Kate Losinska, until the election result is declared, probably around Christmas!

The majority of the NEC were firmly pledged to championing the pay demands of the members. The press will therefore work assiduously for a right-wing victory in the hope that their friends will repay by holding back the rank and file.

Interviewed by the Tory 'Daily Mail', Kate Losinska said: "The chances are that people like me will vote Conservative in election." If her faction get a majority it will be a cruel set-back for the members.

Every effort must be made to return the left wing majority!

All CPSA members who want to help the left's campaign should contact the campaign secretary, Kevin Roddy, 30 Wakerley Road, Barnsten Village, Washington, Co. Durham.

HUNDREDS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST SHAH

An angry demonstration on Saturday 14 October marched to the Iranian embassy in protest at the imposition of martial law in Iran and the massacre of 3,000 Iranians on September 8th. At Speakers Corner, many labour movement organisations were represented and the London LPYS and 'Militant' banners were prominent. Before the March, a number of speakers condemned the Shah, and those in Britain, including a Labour Prime Minister, who identified more with the US and British imperialism's desire to exploit Iran's oil resources than with that country's working class. Bob Labi [London Labour Party executive, speaking in a personal capacity] showed the feelings of ordinary Labour

By Dave Todd

Party members in support of the struggles of Iranian workers for decent conditions and democratic rights. There was a warm response when Bob stressed the need to take over the monopolies controlling the resources of Iran, which ensure that workers have as little economic and political freedom as possible. The British labour movement must support their brothers and sisters in Iran; and fight to end arms sales to Iran, end SAVAK [secret police] activities in Britain and support the struggle for the right to strike. Over 100 copies of 'Militant' were sold.



Photo: Julian McKittrick

Militant

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MILITANT: Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan. Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Tel: 01-986 3828. Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU], Mentmore Works, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.