

Workers' ACTION

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Tories' thugs ransack steel strike HQ

by John Dalton

WAR IS the continuation of politics by other means. The Tories' war against picket lines is the continuation by other means of their policy of cuts, closures, and devastation of working class communities.

The Tories' economic policy sees workers' livelihoods as incidental expenses in restoring and boosting profits. But the steelworkers are not willing to be the petty cash of the Tories' accounts. They are fighting back.

If the strike and the picketing were limited to British Steel, the workers could be ground down in prolonged trench warfare against the centralised power of the British Steel bosses, the State, and the Government. But the extension of the strike, the flying pickets, and the support from miners and other workers, have turned it into more of a class mobilisation against the Tories.

The Tories reply with their methods of class battle. Against the power of workers' unity, they are sending the power of the police and the courts.

The Tory Government has appealed to police to use 'intimidation' and other criminal charges freely against pickets. It has said it will make the Employment Bill even tighter, making it easier for employers to get injunctions or sue for damages against pickets. And it has called on the TUC to clamp down on pickets.

It is also likely to increase police powers to ban or restrict demonstrations.

Changing what the law-books say is not the most important thing. As it is, there are legal precedents giving employers at least a good chance of getting injunctions, with a helping hand from judges like Lord Denning. There are plenty of laws allowing police to tell pickets they are too many, or too obstructive, or too intimidating, and to find charges to arrest them on.

Dozens of steel pickets have been arrested in the present strike. There would have been more arrests, only the police cannot or dare not arrest hundreds of pickets at a time.

There has been violence
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DOZENS of police raided a steel strikers' headquarters in Birmingham last Tuesday night, 19th.

At about 9.30 police barged into the Birmingham Labour Club. They forced their way into the room being used by steel strikers and carried away documents.

The cops were obviously prepared for militant resistance. Outside the Club there were several police vehicles waiting, and handlers held dogs in readiness.

The bullies in blue will be disappointed with their haul. They obviously hoped to get a list of destinations for flying pickets and a list of the

different places the pickets were coming from. But this information was not left lying around at the Labour Club.

The Birmingham labour movement should immediately organise the strongest protest against this official gangsterism. An inquiry should establish as soon as possible who gave the orders for the blue-coated thugs to launch this raid.

And the incident should stop the nonsense about the 'poor police' being 'piggy in the middle'. The pigs aren't in the middle at all. They are right in the front line — on the side of our enemies.

SUPPORT THE STEEL PICKETS



Pickets defiant in Sheerness

Back the South Wales Miners!

TUC must call a General Strike

Inside:

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All out
May 14!
Start organising
now

EDINBURGH Trades Council Anti-Cuts committee is organising for the TUC Day of Action on May 14th to be a one-day general strike against the cuts.

This was the main decision agreed by all trade union and Labour Party delegates at the committee's meeting last Saturday, 16th. The task now is to take up the call for a general strike in all trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, and rank and file groups.

As a first step, Edinburgh Trades Council will convene a meeting of all trade union branch secretaries and chairmen and -women in South East Scotland on March 22nd to discuss how to mobilise the membership and make plans for the general strike.

A march and rally is planned in Edinburgh on the afternoon of the 14th. Scottish TUC General Council members will address the rally, and Mick McGahey, Ron Brown MP, local public sector trade unionists, and Lothian Regional Councillors have been invited to speak.

As the Cuts Committee realised, general strikes cannot be called by snapping your fingers. The labour movement must organise and prepare. The issues must be explained and discussed and workplace and factory gate meetings and on the housing estates.

If we are to win the battle against the Tory cuts, the call for a general strike on 14th May made by Edinburgh Trades Council must be taken up by all sections of the labour movement in the whole of Britain, and organised for.

As the miners showed in 1972 and 1974, the only way to convince a Tory government is through industrial action. Well-reasoned suggestions that the Tories should see the error of their ways don't work.

MIKE BROWN

In Dundee, a 500-strong meeting of shop stewards from all sections of industry and transport in the city has called for a 24 hour strike on May 14th.

The meeting was called by the Trades Council together with the local shop stewards' liaison committee and Dundee full-time union officials.

What ZANU wants

Lawrence Masundive, a publicity secretary of ZANU, talked to Bob Fine

Soames thinks he's some 19th century colonial governor with absolute powers. He has no conception of the strength of the political and military forces in the area. The Kenya precedent is misleading since the liberation movement was far less developed in that case.

This period has shown to the people of Zimbabwe what the ZANU political leadership already knew: that there is no possibility of an impartial British presence.

But Soames is caught in contradictions. For example, his refusal to allow the return of refugees from Mozambique means that the base of ZANU's political and military organisation outside the country is entirely intact and at present can't be touched by the Rhodesian/British regime.

There are over a quarter of a million refugees in camps in Mozambique, but over and above this there are whole villages which moved en bloc over the border, and form a much larger and unnumbered refugee population. These refugees are organised entirely by ZANU and many are politicised from their early childhood.

The British and Rhodesian authorities have conspired to

allow only the barest trickle to enter the country through two very distant entry points, thus preventing anyone from just walking back across the border at the nearest point to where they happen to be. Those that have been readmitted have been isolated in camps. They call them refugee camps, but they might as well be called concentration camps. What the refugees want is to return to their land and organise among the people there.

■ Aren't ZANU's military forces [ZANLA] vulnerable at present, concentrated in the so-called 'assembly points' and surrounded by

the Rhodesian/South African security forces?

Not as much as you would think, from this country. The strength of ZANLA is underestimated in Britain. For example, a few days before the Lancaster House talks opened, ZANLA shot down 16 Rhodesian planes, and this was not reported anywhere here.

The TV's praise for the 'smartness' and 'good drill' of the ZIPRA troops of Nkomo in comparison to ZANLA exemplified their total misunderstanding of the requirements of guerilla war.

A sudden attack on the assembly points could be

handled by these troops, who know the terrain well, have the support of the people and are well armed and trained.

The military situation in the north-east is well in hand though in the south-east, near the South African border, the situation is more dangerous.

It is ZANU, not the tottering regime, that has the momentum, despite the one-sided policies of the British governor.

Muzorewa is now largely seen for what he is: a stooge of the Rhodesian and South African authorities. His policy of terrorising the population by means of his 30,000 or so auxiliaries has backfired, to the extent that the people treated the auxiliaries as the enemy in exactly the same way as they treated the security forces.

Muzorewa is still heavily supported by the South Africans, to the tune of \$55 million in the current campaign. His private aircraft are provided by the SA government, and his wealth may allow him to engage in some election rigging through the bribery and coercion of officials.

But in areas where he used to win massive support, like Wedzas, Chinamora and Chipenza, the people are now solidly ZANU.

ZAPU, too, has lost ground. The areas east and south of Salisbury (Bindwa and Enkeldoorn) and around Gwelo, which used to be with ZAPU, have come over

to ZANU. Even in Bulawayo, Nkomo's stronghold, ZANU has made considerable gains.

■ Why did ZANU agree to so many political and military concessions at the Lancaster House talks?

Basically, under pressure from President Machel of Mozambique. Machel told them bluntly that Mozambique faced economic disaster if the war carried on, and this in itself is the result of actions of the Rhodesian and South African regimes. Their strategy had been aimed at taking the war into Zambia and Mozambique and squeezing them economically.

Though the concessions demanded of us by the British and Rhodesians were enormous, we were forced to accept their terms, since ZANU's arms are supplied through Mozambique and its base among the refugees is in Mozambique. In Zanu's view Machel was not bluffing when he threatened to cut off aid or when he spoke of a possible social upheaval in Mozambique itself. Either would be disastrous for the Zimbabwe liberation struggle.

On the other hand, the front-line states are taking a united and highly critical stand in the OAU and UN over the British governor's actions. They are winning international support (as witnessed by Britain's isolation in opposing a critical motion at the UN), and will again support the liberation

struggle militantly in the event of military-backed reaction in Zimbabwe.

There is no regret among the ZANU cadres for taking this course: the situation, they think, is moving in their favour.

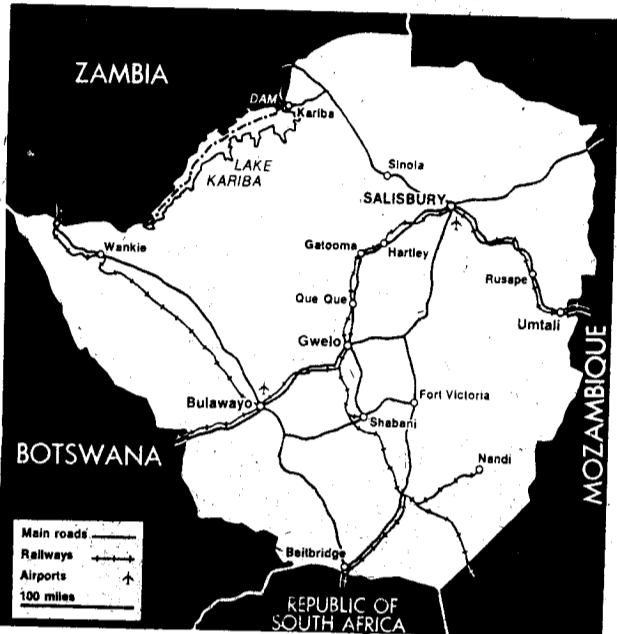
■ What does ZANU offer the rural population of Zimbabwe? It has approved the clauses in the constitution which entrench existing property rights and agreed not to nationalise land without compensation, or to nationalise land at all unless it is 'unused'.

The principal immediate goal of ZANU is to restore stability on the land. This is the major question for the mass of the people. There is to be no private ownership of land, only guarantees of use of the land so long as it is put to productive ends.

The vast areas of 'crown' lands, currently only used sparsely for cattle grazing by retired generals and the like, are not, in Zanu's eyes, adequately used.

The British and American governments have agreed to pay without strings any compensation required for the expropriation of unused land — this is part of the agreement.

If they refuse, then that is the concern of these governments: expropriation will take place regardless.



THE SANTA FE prison 'riot' has been written up as a carnival of death and mutilation. The press has been full of tales of terror; the prison administration has been able to make its case for better funding; and even the warders have got a word in edgeways about their poor wages and exposure to danger.

Meanwhile National Guardsmen at the New Mexico Penitentiary which was retaken a fortnight ago — without bloodshed, it is said — are still holding the inmates incommunicado. They alone are not allowed to speak.

Whatever the truth or falsehood of the official account — and, as we said

RACISM IN SANTA FE PRISON

Mirror of US life

by **Andrew Hornung**

two weeks ago, there is more reason to disbelieve it than otherwise — the prisoners' own story has been buried by the avalanche of sensationalism. It is a repetition of the judicial process: the sensational quality of the criminal act is used to obscure the real social causes for crime, as the investigation of these causes would lead to the finger being pointed at the system itself, including the system of justice.

The only detailed report appearing in the British press has been William Scobie's 'Horror Jails on the Brink' in The Observer of February 10th. Scobie accepts without question the authorities' account of what went on, but adds interesting material on the prison conditions.

"Officials", he says, "are playing down the racial aspect of the slaughter in this penitentiary built for 800 but housing 1,136, where 75% of the inmates are Hispanic or Black..."

Overcrowding forced men to sleep on icy floors in cells so cramped that their feet touched the cell bars, their heads the toilet bowl. And Scobie quotes a lawyer for the National Prison Project saying, "The vermin and cockroach problem was severe. The place was badly lit, ill-ventilated and cold."

Faced with these conditions, the prisoners took the only legal course open to them: they took the prison authorities to court with the American Civil Liberties Union acting on their behalf. Chief demands then were an end to overcrowding and to arbitrary restrictions on mail and prison visits and an end to mistreatment. The sole result — a federal court

order last year easing mail restrictions.

The 19 states presently under court orders to improve their prisons and the 12 other states with similar cases pending need hardly worry.

According to the American weekly 'Militant', the demands of the prisoners in this month's rebellion were almost the same as those in the ACLU suit. "These included demands for an end to overcrowding, for improvement in educational and recreational facilities, and for a change in the composition of the disciplinary committee. The prisoners also demanded that the news media be allowed into the prison."

'Militant' adds that "another big issue angering the prisoners was the mistreatment they had suffered as a result of informers used against them." This is probably the key to whatever violence occurred in the prison while the inmates had it under their control. The jail

seems to have had a special section for protected prisoners — informants and warders' lovers.

Unlike Scobie, however, 'Militant' writers Curtis and Geyer quote evidence from the forensic pathologist in charge of the medical examiner's office in Albuquerque, where all the bodies were sent for examination, which contradicts and discredits many of the more lurid press reports. They also quote the reactions of inmates' relatives like Joseph Jaramillo whose brother is a Santa Fe prisoner: "I blame the penal administration not the prisoners for all this."

None of the prison rebellions what have exploded in the US have managed to get the authorities to carry out any real reforms — just as in Britain, prison demonstration end with a huge file of charges against the 'ringleaders' and only minimal criticism of the authorities or the screws.

American prisons are increasingly being used as part of the machinery of racial oppression.

This is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the huge rise in the proportion of prisoners who belong to racial minority groups. Ten years ago, 30% of prisoners belonged to these groups — about twice their proportion in the population. Now they account for 60% of the inmates!

Malcolm X once told a Detroit audience, "Don't be shocked when I say that I was in prison. You're still in prison. That's what America means: prison." Now that stark metaphor has become a literal truth for hundreds of thousands of people — particularly Blacks and Hispanics. For black militants who gain any serious following

that fate — or death or exile — is almost certain.

Malcolm X was assassinated. So was the pacifist Martin Luther King. Scores of Black Panthers were assassinated, Robert Williams (author of the recently republished book 'Negroes with Guns') was driven into exile in Cuba, and, most blatant of all, George Jackson, author of 'Soledad Brother' and 'Blood in my Eye' — two books that he wrote in prison — was murdered in a prison yard by the screws themselves.

About ten years ago, the Report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice said, "Crime is a social problem that is interwoven with almost every other aspect of American life; controlling it involves changing the way schools are run and classes are taught, the way cities are built, the way businesses are managed and workers hired. Crime is a kind of human behaviour; controlling it means changing the minds and hearts of men."

But the hearts and minds didn't change. Nor could this liberal impulse contribute to such change, laudable though it is. All that changed is that the walls grew higher and the overcrowding in the jails increased as the prison population grew by 100,000 and the incarceration rate jumped up by a third.

Inevitably so, because "controlling it" is impossible without the working class controlling society, without the most oppressed finding their humanity in society. When the workers rise up to enforce that control, the chief source of opposition will be from those who now enforce law and order — the police, the judges, the jailers, the troops — on behalf of the capitalist class.

REHABILITATION AND TREATMENT

by **Joe Martinez**

The convict strolled into the prison administration building to get assistance and counselling for his personal problems. Just inside the main door were several other doors proclaiming: Parole, Counselor, Chaplain, Doctor, Teacher, Correction and Therapist.

The convict chose the door marked Correction, inside of which were two other doors: Custody and Treatment. He chose Treatment, and was confronted with two more doors, Juvenile and Adult. He chose the proper door and again was faced with two doors: Previous Offender and First Offender. Once more he walked through the proper door, and, again two doors: Democrat and Republican. He was a Democrat; and so he hurried through the appropriate door and ran smack into two more doors, Black and White. He was black; and so he walked through that door — and fell nine stories to the street.

[From "Black Voices from Prison" by Etheridge Knight, published by Pathfinder Press]



LABOUR'S NATO MOLES

WHEN THE LABOUR Party NEC's Organisation Sub-Committee decided to investigate CIA activity inside the party (alongside that of Militant), the decision was greeted with contemptuous laughter by the press. Yet no more than 10 days later, the Sunday Times published an article showing leading right-wing MPs — Mason, Owen, Hattersley and Rodgers — and union leaders — Weighell, Chapple, Duffy and Sirs — to be involved with an organisation largely funded by NATO.

The "Labour Committee for Transatlantic Under-

standing" issues a news digest free to papers and union journals. It is made up of articles by leading right-wingers — recent articles include an attack by Wilson on the NEC and by Rodgers on the need for more modern nuclear weapons.

The right has few qualms about where its money comes from. Weighell said that money from NATO was "the same as getting grants from the TUC or the government". NATO, he added, is "hardly a subversive organisation". For Weighell the TUC, government, NATO (and the monarchy too?) are all pillars of the sys-

tem — and he wants the Labour Party to be that too. Rodgers said, "The rot has got to stop if people are beginning to say NATO are the CIA".

You don't need to think NATO is the CIA to see that both have the same aims and get involved in the Labour Party for the same reasons. NATO is not a philanthropic organisation. Its money is going to ensure that the Labour right — who support Britain's membership of NATO and nuclear weapons — keep their hold over the party and give NATO a good press.

WHAT THE OLYMPIC BOYCOTT REALLY MEANS

PRESIDENT Carter's cold war drive hit a snag last week, with the International Olympic Committee's refusal to cancel the Moscow Olympics.

Unfortunately, the IOC's refusal was not a political stand against Carter's imperialist arrogance. The Olympics are big business: from the millions that the Kremlin bureaucracy is pouring in for prestige reasons, many capitalist corporations expect rich pickings. They don't want to sacrifice their own private profit for the general cause of Profit.

The general cause of Profit is what Carter represents. His moral outcry about Russia's invasion of Afghanistan soon dissolved into a drive for more military might to protect US oil supplies and oil profits in the Persian Gulf. The USA's economic interests are being defended against the Russian Army but also against any anti-imperialist popular movement in the area.

Now the US may organise "Free World Olympics". "Free World" will mean capitalist. The USA, fresh from bombing Vietnam and Cambodia; Britain, with

troops in Ireland and Zimbabwe; France, which has sent troops to Zaire and Tunisia, and propped up dictatorship in the Central African Empire; and a string of right-wing dictatorships in the Third World — those are some of the governments which could unite at the "Free World Olympics" and sound off against Russia's invasion of Afghanistan!

Behind the ballyhoo about the Olympics, the hard-core of Carter's policy is a big military build-up, aimed at keeping as much of the world as possible "free" for US capitalist exploitation.

Why we oppose import controls

AS THE TORIES' policies blunder into chaos, import controls are increasingly raised as an alternative.

Why do Marxists oppose import controls?

* The capitalist crisis is international in its causes, its dynamic and its scope. Steel jobs are being cut in France and Germany, in Japan and the USA, as well as Britain. Ford and Chrysler are faltering as well as BL.

Import controls can do nothing to come to grips with this crisis. All they can do is restrict international trade, and thus make the capitalists' problems of finding markets even more acute.

* International workers'

unity is necessary against the international crisis. German steelworkers have sent delegations of support to the British steel strike, but how much better if the German steelworkers had sent delegations of support to the British steel strike, but how much better if the German and French steelworkers' action for a shorter working week and against closures, last year, had been coordinated with the British action in a Europe-wide steelworkers' offensive.

The big obstacle to that unity is nationalism. Steelworkers led by the French Communist Party, during their protests last year, seized wagons full of German

steel and emptied them over the rails, blaming imported steel for the job cuts. Import controls cannot possibly be a programme for a united international fightback.

* Import controls look for a solution in "our" capitalist state taking action against other capitalist states. That's why, although import controls are sometimes supposed to be a left-wing demand, demonstrations for import controls are often joint demonstrations of workers and bosses.

The bosses responsible for job cuts in the British textile industry, for example, get off the hook by telling workers to unite to defend British industry against foreign industries. So the demand for import controls diverts workers into a fake fight. It encourages workers to petition the Government rather than relying on their own organisation and industrial action.

* Instead of the divisive, diversionary demand for import controls, our answer to unemployment should be a unifying demand: *cut hours, not jobs*. We call for a 35 hour week now, internationally, and work-sharing under workers' control without loss of pay.

The Socialist United States of Europe, and the Socialist United States of the World is our programme, not a "siege economy" in Britain.



Sweden vs Merseyside — or, workers vs bosses?

One law for the rich...

GO EASY ON tax evasion (mostly done by the rich), hammer social security claimants (mostly poor) — that's the Tories' programme.

1,000 extra staff are being taken on to chase after social security abuse. There are already 4,400, who between them detected £3.9 million of irrecoverable fraud in 1977-8 (0.2% of the total social security budget).

Meanwhile the Inland Revenue has only 260 staff working on tax evasion. They raised £49 million in 1977-8

and wrote off £62 million as irrecoverable. The tax people estimate that is only the tip of the iceberg of £2,000 or £3,000 million of tax evaded.

The Tories' attitude is a class attitude, like the attitude of the judge who ruled that everyone has a right to avoid as much tax as possible, as long as they keep within the letter of the law. Just as working class people regard getting a few pounds extra from the social security as no great crime, the bosses don't begrudge each other a few thousand or a few

million of tax fiddling.

But while few people — few people rich enough to hire accountants, anyway — pay more tax than they legally have to, a civil service workers' union has estimated that one quarter of all claimants miss benefits to which they are entitled.

And these are the poorest. The image of idlers living in luxury on the dole is pure myth. Supplementary benefit for a two-children unemployed family, for example, is less than half of average take-home pay. No-one

chooses to live at that bread-line level and suffer the demoralisation of unemployment rather than have a decent job.

The Tories claim they will save £50 million in social security payments by their new drive against "scroungers". Even if they're right, it is small change compared to tax evasion — even smaller change compared to the billions in profit which the bosses take quite openly from what the working class produces.

And by all logic most of the

"savings" will not be stopped fiddles, but even more entitlements will not be taken up. More people will feel it is just not worth going through harassment and inquisitions for the sake of a few pounds.

But the Tories are not worried about justice. They are not even primarily worried about saving money. They are trying to make the unemployed and claimants — the victims of their crisis — into scapegoats for the crisis.

Corrie can still be stopped

LAST FRIDAY outside Parliament the six-woman picket (the largest the police allowed) bearing placards which said 'No Return to backstreet abortion', was watched by hundreds of police, a police helicopter, and a number of members of the press hoping for some action.

Inside Parliament, the stewards leapt up every time someone in the Strangers' Gallery fidgeted, and even the nuns were thoroughly frisked.

QUIET

But inside the House of Commons it was as quiet as outside. It was barely one-quarter full for the debate on the time limit in the Corrie Bill, and most of those attending were on the Opposition benches. Several on the Government benches were already exhausted by one hour in session and were fast asleep. The vast majority of those who arrived to vote, at noon, turned up (or woke up) without having heard any of the debate.

And judging from the level

of the debate, most MPs are very poorly informed about the subject.

William Hamilton devoted a considerable part of a long speech to setting the record straight on the 'crying foetuses' which have been the focus of an anti-abortion press campaign. All the stories are false. Hamilton exposed one of the backers of the SPUC and LIFE literature, Mrs. Kellett-Bowman, Tory MP for Lancaster.

He read out a letter she had written to one of her constituents in which she asserted that many foetuses aborted at 20 weeks were alive and well. In fact, the earliest surviving baby was 25 weeks old when born, and is severely handicapped. At 20 weeks, the lungs of the foetus are solid tissue: it is quite incapable of breathing, let alone crying.

The main 'medical evidence' on which the anti-abortionists relied was also demolished in the debate. The week before, they had all quoted approvingly from Professor Reynolds, an expert in neonatal survival, who had written that 'sooner

or later' a foetus would survive at 24 weeks, and with medical advances survival even earlier would eventually be possible. This was taken as incontrovertible evidence for a 20-week limit, and was set against the recommendations of the doctors' organisations for a 24-week limit.

But Renée Short MP had received a letter from the very same Professor Reynolds in which he said he would like to see a 24-week limit 'and the rest of the Bill thrown out'.

LIMIT

Ian Mikardo argued for no change at all, strongly defending the 28-week limit of the 1967 Act — though he argued it on grounds of the wishes of the medical profession rather than the needs of women. He related his childhood memories of backstreet abortionists who were known to the whole community; a quarter of the local doctor's women patients came to him for help at one time or another after self-

induced or backstreet abortions.

Gerard Vaughan, Minister of Health, has been torn between the views of the medical profession and his own prejudices. He argued for 'maximum discretion' for doctors between 18 and 24 weeks; many subnormality tests cannot be done earlier. Yet despite confirming that doctors work with a leeway of one-two weeks (and others say this can be as long as four weeks) he recommended a 24-week limit — i.e. effectively a 20-22 week limit.

The amendment of the Corrie Bill's time limit from 20 to 24 weeks is a victory of sorts. The debate was fiercer and longer than most expected, and Corrie is reported to be 'discouraged' by the present rate of progress. The next parts of the Bill to be considered are the discretionary powers of the Secretary of State to lower the time limit virtually without debate, and the grounds for legal abortion.

With the time limit settled it is still not clear how many more Fridays are to be freed for the debate, or whether



While MPs slept on the benches or sauntered in late to vote, women rallied against Corrie in Central Hall

the rules of the House of Commons will be suspended to allow for a weekend sitting at the beginning of March, as Bernard Braine has pushed for.

FACTS

It is essential to continue to persuade MPs of the importance of fighting the en-

tire Bill, to keep up the pressure and publicise the facts and the arguments, and to continue the fight outside Parliament.

The police have limited pickets while the House is in session to six, but there will be a march each Friday that the Bill is debated. Phone NAC for details: 01-278-0153

MANDY WILLIAMS

BL: Stop the rot! Fight back now

AIDED BY the AUEW leadership, the BL bosses won a major victory on Wednesday 20th when a mass meeting of 10,000 at Longbridge voted about 10 to 1 against an AUEW District Committee call to strike for the reinstatement of convenor Derek Robinson.

The AUEW Executive sabotaged the spontaneous strikes when Derek Robinson was sacked last November for signing a pamphlet criticising the BL bosses' policy. Then they sat on the issue for two and a half months. Finally they put out a re-

port with yards of criticism of Derek Robinson which the bosses used in leaflets opposing the reinstatement strike. The AUEW Executive called for a strike — but said they would quite understand if Longbridge workers didn't strike, and take no disciplinary action.

And they made no effort to tie together Robinson's reinstatement with pay and conditions in a single united fightback against the BL bosses.

With BL boss Michael

Edwardes warning everyone that their jobs would be at risk if Longbridge struck, no wonder workers were not keen to go into struggle under the leadership of AUEW officials who obviously didn't want to win.

But anger is still strong against the 92 pages of strings tied to BL's insulting 5% pay offer, and even after this setback there can be a fightback in BL. In fact a fightback now may be the only way of stopping the BL bosses going forward from their victory over Robinson to purge other active trade

unionists.

According to Michael Edwardes, the 30,000 workers being laid off by BL at Cowley, Rover Solihull, Canley, and parts of Longbridge, may never get their jobs back. This latest threat is obviously an exercise in psychological warfare after the workers' rejection of the 5%-plus-strings wages offer in a ballot.

But jobs are at risk, and the only way to stem the tide of the Edwardes cutbacks is for workers facing lay-off to occupy their plants as part of an all-out strike for the

wage claim (£24 and cost of living protection) and for an end to the job cuts.

The 1978-9 Ford strike showed that, no matter how many finished cars the company has in stock, if they are tied up by effective picketing a strike can still win.

Unfortunately the union side of the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee is still shying away from any calls for action, despite BL's refusal to improve any aspect of their pay package.

After a meeting on Friday 15th, described by Greenville Hawley, chairman of the

union negotiating team, as a 'total disappointment', the unions put off any possibility of action for another two weeks, to Friday 29th, and even then they're only talking about overtime bans and token strikes.

These are the same tactics that led to such demoralisation during last year's Confed strike. Every BL worker knows that Edwardes' stand will only be defeated by a total strike across the whole of BL Cars.



Photo: Susan Glen

How to bring the fight for women's liberation into the labour movement? The Fightback for Women's Rights conference on March 22 will be discussing it. Rachel Lever reports.

IF the Corrie Bill can really be sunk, it will not have happened just by parliamentary manoeuvres, though the counting up of available Fridays now dominates our attention. The Bill's defeat would go down as a tremendous victory for the women's movement, for all those who have marched and spoken, leafleted, petitioned, talked, written and shouted, mustering all our forces to repel this latest attack on our scanty and hard fought rights.

But new attacks still face us on every front, with the Thatcher government determined to shore up all the barriers to women's independence and put up some new

ones.

Every attack on abortion rights has mobilised new forces to go on the offensive, so that the years of White, Benyon and Corrie have seen an unprecedented advance in support for a woman's right to choose. The question faces us: how do we make this into a general trend and turn all the defensive battles into a concerted offensive against the Tories' woman-bashing?

How, too, can the women's movement link in with the rising movement to stop the Tories in their tracks and deny them the right and ability to peacefully get down to the business of 'governing' us into poverty and servility? What connection has the women's rights fight with the massed steel pickets, the resistance at BL to Michael Edwardes' tyrannical blackmail, the water workers' strike, or the mushrooming hospital occupations?

And one more question: what use is the anti-Tory fight if all it produces is another Labour government like the last one?

The answers are not unconnected.

From the vantage point of any militant woman, the trade union and Labour hierarchy is one of the most blatant examples of the subjecting and exclusion of women. The labour movement environment has been rigid and incredibly slow to listen to what the women's movement has to say. Whether or not Labour's recent women's rights legislation was influenced indirectly by the women's movement, it is certain that rules, structures, traditions and attitudes have hardly budged. And you'd need a very short memory to forget that Labour set going many of the cuts that are so damaging to women's freedoms and rights.

But there's a lot else wrong with the labour movement — and there's a widespread mood for change.

In the unions, conflict between members and the bureaucratic leadership is endemic, and flares up at points of crisis into open warfare as workers see their struggles sold out again and again.

In the Labour Party, the Brighton conference signalled a desire for accountability

of the parliamentarians to the party; and the demand to control the party's leaders stemmed directly from the experience of a Labour government that set itself against workers' interests and struggles, and whose attitude to party conference was a simple 'up yours'.

The fight against past and future betrayals comes together in the here and now: the same people who made up both sides of the disastrous 'social contract' and 'concordat' now stand in the way of an all-out fight with the Tories. And if we don't clear them out, they and others like them will still be there to reap the results and take over where the Tories leave off.

It would be over-simple to say that the rank and file that is in constant conflict with the sell-out leaders is also clamouring for women's rights, or that the sexism of the labour movement exists only at the top.

But it is true that women make up a very large proportion of the rank and file, and a decent number of the militants. And it is true that the needs and aspirations of women coincide with the necessity to renovate the labour movement if we are to win against the Tories.

So, too, is it true that any renovation that ignored the rights and position of women would be a farce: what price accountability and responsiveness when a union with a two-thirds majority of women is led by an all-male executive? And how can the needs of the women members be understood, let alone prioritised and fought for, if union meetings are inaccessible and intimidating to women and there isn't even provision for them to meet together and formulate their demands?

The living struggles of women and the ideas and initiatives of the women's movement must be forced to the attention of the labour

movement. As it happens, there are the forces to do it: there are very many feminists in both the Labour Party and of course in the trade unions, many battling away as individuals or organised in small groups. A national campaigning framework can concentrate and magnify our voices and our confidence, and focus our actions.

These are some of the political ingredients that will be under review at the conference on March 22nd of Labour Movement Fightback for Women's Rights, in the context of the major struggles facing women — on abortion, cuts, maternity leave, legal rights and nationality & immigration laws. There will be a special workshop on women and the labour movement, and another to discuss how Labour women's sections and councils might be changed, now that the rules and constitution of the party are under review.

Fightback for Women's Rights

10p



OUT NOW:
16-page
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for Fightback's
conference

BULK RATES
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From: Fightback for
Women's Rights, 41
Ellington St, Lon-
don N7 (071 5286).

Turkey: 10,000 troops storm factory

LAST WEEK, 10,000 military gendarmes, backed up by tanks and armoured cars, smashed a 12-hour occupation of a state-controlled spinning mill in the Aegean city of Izmir, in Turkey.

One and a half thousand out of 11,000 workers at the plant had occupied in protest against the management's attempts to sack 790 workers who belonged to the militant left wing union confederation DISK.

DISK is closely allied to the illegal Turkish Communist Party, and is the major organised force within the Turkish working class, having led many of the major workers' struggles over the last ten years.

The brutal eviction of the workers and the subsequent detention of the men in a separate stadium (women were released after interrogation) has evoked widespread support in Izmir, a city of over half a million people, and a local general strike supported by all the municipal workers. Many businesses were completely shut down.

Solidarity action has also taken place in Turkey's largest city Istanbul. Workers have struck against the Izmir attack and against the recent massive price increases. Inflation is now calculated to be running at 80%.

In an attempt to prevent any action in Istanbul the authorities arrested about 300 left-wingers, many of them of secondary school age, on charges of 'terrorism' and 'intimidation'.

But it is clear that the real terrorists and intimidators are the Turkish bosses and the right wing Demirel government elected last November. Ex-Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit has accused the government of using Gestapo tactics and carrying out 'the worst repression the world has seen since the regime of Idi Amin'.

But the government's 'gestapo' tactics will continue, and even increase, if its attempts to salvage the bosses' bankrupt economy at the workers' expense are to succeed.

The devaluation of the currency by 33% last month, the 20% unemployment level, the shortages of heating fuel and other basic commodities, all have compounded the misery of Turkish workers, vast numbers of whom live below the official poverty line.

The Turkish bourgeoisie, in collusion with the international robbers of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are set on headlong confrontation with the working class. But they reckon without the militancy and self-sacrifice of the workers.

ANTONIO GERMARO

S. WALES STEELWORKERS SAY: FIGHT FOR JOBS. MINERS PLAN STRIKE

On to victory!

THE STRIKE committees at Port Talbot and Llanwern and the South Wales district committee of the NUB have declared that they consider the steel strike now to be about jobs as well as pay. If the wage claim is won, they will continue to stay out until the closures have been reversed.

Support for the fight against the closures is coming from the Welsh miners, who are holding a delegate conference on February 20th to discuss an all-out strike call from the 25th.

Steel strike committees in other areas should take the same stand. And they should demand that the national steel union leaders insist on saving the jobs as well as winning the 20%. Otherwise the door is open for a divisive deal, where the national strike is called off on the basis of a wage increase, leaving South Wales and other areas to fight on alone for jobs.

The Wales TUC initially called for an indefinite general strike in Wales from January 21st. Then they received appeals from the British TUC to postpone the date.

The TUC regards the calling of a general strike as a diversion from negotiations! The date was duly postponed to March 10th. If the BSC has not agreed to postpone the

closures for two years, replace their top management and hold an inquiry into the running of BSC and the import of coking coal by March 10th, the general strike will go ahead as planned.

BSC are not likely to agree to these demands so the TUC are looking for other ways of averting the planned strike. It has called on the Wales TUC to postpone it yet again, and the Wales TUC has put back a conference planned for February 27th.

Len Murray announced last week that in response to a letter he had written to Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Tories had made the "first tentative move" towards general negotiations on the rundown of the steel industry. The point of Murray's letter to the Tories, as reported by the Financial Times, was to "avert the threat of widespread industrial action starting in S. Wales."

Averting the proposed general strike in Wales or any escalation of the steel strike appears to be uppermost in Len Murray's and the other TUC bureaucrats' minds at the moment.

They realise that once a general strike starts in Wales, the logic is that it will be extended to the rest of the country and the bureaucrats will find themselves in a situation which they cannot

control.

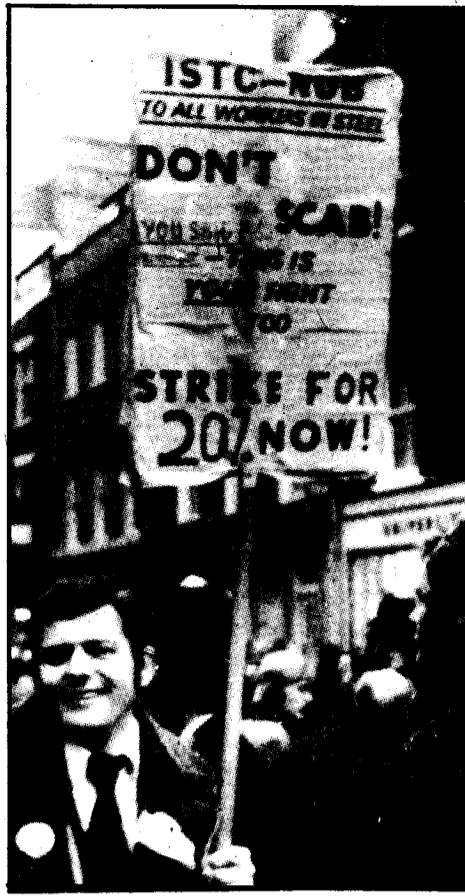
Len Murray and his bureaucrats continue to talk to the Tories at a time when the Tories' position has never been more shaky and they are preparing to launch the Employment Bill to restrict the picketing that has been the most effective weapon of the steel strikers against the bosses.

What the TUC should be doing is following the lead of the strike committees at Llanwern and Port Talbot and starting to organise an all-out general strike from March 10th to win the steel strike on pay and jobs, and to defeat the Tories' Employment Bill.

At rank and file level, we must start mobilising and preparing now — making sure workers know about the calls for action and the issues at stake, discussing how to organise.

Workers' Action supporters in South Wales are putting motions in union and Labour Party branches calling on the Wales TUC to organise a delegate conference to prepare for a general strike against the cuts. You can help by getting your branch to support this conference call and demanding that the Wales TUC organise now for an all-out strike on March 10th and that the British TUC takes up the call.

JO THWAITES



20pc and save the jobs: no less!

THE B.S.C. bosses thought they could split the steel strike by offering the craft and general unions 14% with the same strings. The craft union negotiators thought it was all over, too.

But the rank and file workers were having none of it. Last Thursday the delegates from the craft unions decisively rejected the offer which T&G delegates had already rejected earlier in the week.

What the bosses were hoping for was that the craft and general workers would accept a self-out deal and cross the ISTC and NUB picket lines even though no new production could be started.

But hundreds of steel workers outside Transport House on Thursday 14th made it quite clear what they thought of their negotiators, and what they wanted — 20% with no strings for all steelworkers!

Steelworkers join anti-cuts demos

SHEFFIELD

MAGGIE OUT! That was the message from a 4,000 strong demonstration through Sheffield on Monday 18th.

Thousands of public sector and private sector workers in South Yorkshire struck for the march and rally, called to protest against the Tory cuts by the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils. Large contingents came from NALGO, CPSA, NUPE and the T&G. Hundreds of striking steelworkers marched behind ISTC banners from Scunthorpe, Rotherham and Sheffield.



Firemen in Sheffield imposed a work to rule, and came out on the demonstration. Miners from the South Yorkshire pits were there, as were SCFS civil service workers from Leeds and Harrogate and a COHSE contingent.

Labour Parties were well represented with banners from Brightside, Hillsborough, Penistone and Barnsley.

"It's the biggest demonstration I've ever seen in Sheffield", said Pat Duffy, MP for Attercliffe. "It's not just the numbers, it's the spirit and the atmosphere."

As the marchers gathered for a rally on the steps of Sheffield City Hall, a roar of applause came for the striking steelworkers, who replied with shouts of "get the Tories out" echoing across the square.

Speakers at the rally expressed the anger felt by the demonstrators against Thatcher's government. "Thatcher should call an election", said NUPE speaker Ken Curran. "And if we get a Labour government which makes cuts, we will fight them."

ISTC District Organiser Keith Jones talked of the transformation the steel strike has brought in his union. "In the past we were moderates. We accepted

streamlining, even closures. But enough is enough. With the 2% offer the Tories wanted to make us crawl on our knees.

"They want to treat us like a dog. So we bit them. The Cabinet picked on us because they thought we were weak. We know they predicted the strike could not last more than five weeks because of splits in the union, but we're in our eighth week and still solid.

"And we will fight them until we win. We stopped Denning by using his own legal system against him, and we will stop the Employment Bill.

"This week is vital in the steel dispute. We have to make sure all sectors of the industry stay out, and make it clear that BSC workers will support the private sector in the future.

"The working class will fight anyone who tries to cut their standard of living. And the steelworkers will be in the lead. The workers united will never be defeated."

Sheffield's Euro-MP Richard Caborn argued that the May 14th TUC day of action should be brought forward, to before the May elections. And he stressed that we should support all workers threatened by Thatcher's attacks. "Whatever you think of Derek Robinson as a person, we should defend his right to be convenor at Longbridge."



But both Caborn and Joe Ashton, MP for Bassetlaw, had only nationalist solutions to offer the strikers. They called for money back from Europe to finance an end to public sector cuts. "Make the EEC pay!" was their slogan.

That slogan tries to blame the bosses' crisis on foreign workers. And because they focus not on the militancy of the rank and file, but on the starry heights of international diplomacy, neither MP had any perspective for the way forward after February 18th.

"Make the bosses pay" should be our answer, not "Make the EEC pay".

★ Stop the cuts. Demand Labour pledges itself to full restoration of the Tory cuts;

★ Nationalise the banks and finance companies without compensation. Lift the burden of interest payments on public services.

★ Millions for hospitals, not a penny for defence.

MANCHESTER

STEELWORKERS chanting "What do we want? — General Strike", led a 3,000 march against the cuts in Manchester on February 18th. The march, called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, was backed by AUEW District Committees in North Manchester, South Manchester and Stockport, NALGO, APEX, NSMM and SOGAT, as well as shop stewards committees at GEC, British Aerospace and Shell-Carrington.

Manchester city councillors said they were supporting the march, but deputy council leader Franklin was howled down with shouts of "hypocrite" when he tried to address an anti-cuts rally afterwards. His boss, council leader Norman Morris, didn't even bother to show up. He was preparing his plans for that night's council meeting — £30 million cuts and a 30% rate rise. In the end a dozen Labour councillors did vote against the cuts but they haven't worked to build a campaign.

The rally had much more time for steelworker militants than for Manchester's Labour leaders. An appeal by Brian Molyneux from Sheffield for support on a mass picket of Manchester steel on Wednesday 20th was enthusiastically received and even on the 19th pickets at Manchester Steel found the works locked up and no-one trying to get in.

M. WOODS

Sweet words won't stop the steel bosses

THE LATEST count shows over 85,000 people out of work in South Wales — nearly 8% of the workforce, compared to 5.5% for Britain as a whole.

George Wright, general secretary of the Wales TUC, reckons that the BSC plans for steel closures will put another 40,000 on the dole by the end of the year.

But George Wright's idea of a fightback leaves a lot to be desired. The Wales TUC has called for a general strike, but it demands only that BSC closures are put off for at least two years. George Wright sees this simply as a breathing space during which the Wales TUC will set up a 'planning group' involving top management consultants and bureaucrats from the Welsh Office and the Welsh Development Agency.

This group will work out a "blueprint for the reconstruction of industry in Wales" on a "socially responsible and economically viable" basis. Wright sees this as a move away from the "old fashioned attitude" of resistance to the Government and the bosses.

The general strike call has been put back to March 10th, but Wright is still trying to put down the demon he has unleashed. He is shaking in his well-heeled shoes at the thought of a stand-up fight by the labour movement against the Tories. These 'planning agreements' are only a diversion;

at best they would provide a 'socially responsible' mask for the ugly scars that the closures will leave on the face of the South Wales communities.

To rely on planning agreements and the goodwill of the Welsh Office to cushion the impact of the closures is like making a deal with your own executioner. The Welsh Development Agency has created less than 10,000 jobs since 1976, and now Wright is asking it to create over four times as many in the space of two years.

The labour movement ought to have learned from the lessons of the past Labour government and from the Wilson government in the 1960s, both of which substituted 'planning agreements' for a confrontation with the international capitalist system when faced with an economic crisis. They ended up making drastic public service cuts at the bidding of the IMF.

Wright talks about leaving behind the 'old-fashioned ideas' of confrontation and resistance, but it is precisely these traditions that we must rely on if we are to resist the Tory cuts. We have to show quite clearly that we have a different 'plan', one that is based on the fact that the crisis in steel is not of our making. It is the bosses' crisis, not ours.

Steelworkers should have a decent wage: 20% now and a clause guaranteeing auto-

matic pay increases in line with the cost of living. There should be no strings attached to the 20%, no productivity deals which simply speed up BSC's closure dates.

All of the steel industry should be nationalised, not just the unprofitable sectors, and it should be reorganised under workers' control. The present state-capitalist sort of nationalisation, under both Labour and Tory governments, has benefited the workers not one jot.

The drain of interest payments should be stopped through the nationalisation without compensation of the banks and finance houses.

If the bosses say that there is not enough work to go round, then the hours should be cut, not the jobs. The work should be shared out under workers' control and with no loss of pay.

Links should be made with steelworkers in other countries.

We have to extend the demands of the strike to win the fight on jobs as well as pay, through democratic rank and file control over the running of the strike, with full discussion among steel workers of the demands of the strike.

We have to make sure that the best remembered tradition in South Wales, the General Strike, is not pushed off the agenda by the likes of George Wright or Bill Sims or Len Murray.

MARTIN BARCLAY

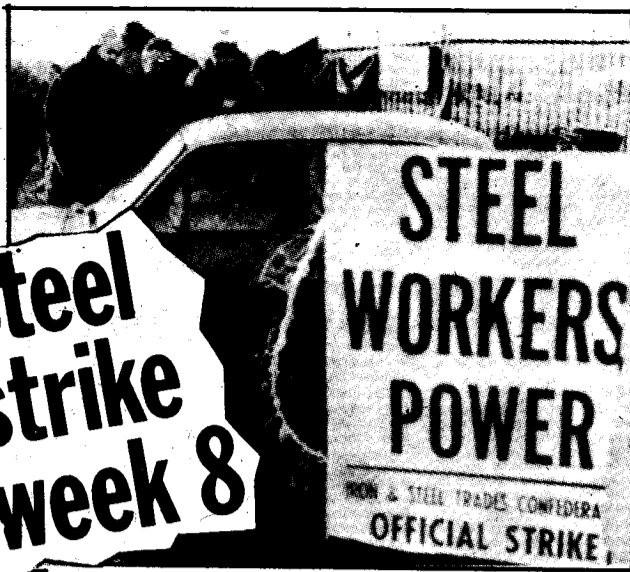
Wed. 27 Feb.

Workers' Action public meeting

STOP THE TORIES ORGANISE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE

Speakers: Pete Radcliff, Stephen Corbishley (CPSA Nat. Exec., in personal capacity).

7.30pm, 'Dusty Miller', Canklow Rd, Rotherham



SUPPORT THE STEEL PICKETS

continued from p.1

and intimidation on the picket lines, too — not scabs being beaten up by pickets, but pickets being injured by police and scabs. One picket was nearly killed at BL Castle Bromwich when police beat him up after arresting him. Another had his leg broken at Sheerness Steel when a scab lorry tried four times to smash through a picket line.

Strong militant resistance is the pickets' only defence against more of this violence.

The Tories' campaign aims to encourage the violence and step up the arrests — but at the end of the day it can work only by frightening workers off. Between 1971 and 1974, under the Industrial Relations Act, pickets were more vulnerable in law than for decades — yet militant picketing spread, and won great victories, without the Tories and the police being able to do anything about it.

If the Labour and TUC leaders tood up to the Tory offensive, then the anti-picket bluster would collapse into a whine. If they declared defiantly that workers have every right to mobilise maximum forces and organise maximum solidarity against the bosses and their system, if they called on the labour movement to defend every picket line against police and scabs, then ruling-class arrogance would quickly be humbled.

But they are doing just the opposite. The Labour and TUC leaders' "cam-

paign" against the Tories' proposed anti-picket laws does not assert workers' right to picket, but only snivels and moans about the unfortunate "confrontations" which arise from "bringing the law into industrial relations".

The TUC has not withdrawn the Guidelines on Picketing it put out last winter — Guidelines which hardly differ at all from the Tory plans except that they aim to limit picketing by union bureaucrats' pressure on the rank and file rather than by legal threats. To the Tories' letter demanding he enforce the Guidelines, TUC general secretary Len Murray just replied evasively.

Labour leader James Callaghan chose the middle of the Tory anti-picket campaign to attack the steel unions for not sticking to those Guidelines (just as Tory minister James Prior attacked them), and to attack the miners for their fine solidarity.

In Parliament the Labour front-bench cosily swap debating-points with the Tories. But in their attitude to the militant picket lines they are hand-in-glove with the Tories!

They have even refused to promise that the next Labour Government will repeal the whole of the Employment Bill — just as they have refused to promise to restore the Tory cuts.

The TUC leaders want repeal of the Employment Bill. But they themselves are still haggling and hawking in discussions with Tory ministers over the Bill. On the steel closures, too, they are just

talking to the Tories — and telling the Welsh trade unions they should put off the general strike action planned against the closures.

The rank and file in the labour movement must campaign for our leaders to break this collaboration with the Tories.

The Labour and TUC leaders should come out in full and open support of the steel pickets.

The TUC should bring its day of action against cuts and the anti-picket law forward from May 14th, and make it a day of general strike.

And the rank and file must take action now, without waiting for the official leaders.

Workers have a right to defend picket lines against the arrogance of the police and courts, just as we have a right to defend jobs and livelihoods against the arrogance of Tory economic policy. Workers who organise as they see fit to defend themselves on picket lines should have our full support. And the best form of defence is a mass turnout. The police can pick off or intimidate a picket line of six, but not six hundred or six thousand.

To show a united will to defy and stop the Tories' anti-picket laws, there must be maximum support for the official TUC demonstration on March 9th, more support than the bureaucrats want. On that demonstration, we must make sure the militant slogans are heard loud and clear: Stop the Tories! Break collaboration! Stop the cuts, stop the closures, stop the anti-picket law: General Strike!

A weak union—

THE BADGES worn by the steelworkers of South Yorkshire say it all, "Hadfields Massacre 14.2.80 — We were there".

After the biggest mass picket the strike has seen, the giant private steel plant in Sheffield was shut down. Over 1000 pickets — steelworkers, engineers and miners — besieged the plant, and in the early afternoon the ISTC members inside voted to come out.

The steel pickets had scored a victory and there were great scenes of jubilation when the result of the vote was announced. Sirs' attempts to exempt Hadfields were decisively squashed too.

Since Thursday, the picketing has quietened down in Sheffield, and the strike committee has been sending flying pickets out. On Monday pickets went over to Manchester Steel and Bridston Steel in Birkenhead, both small private firms defying the strike.

Now that Hadfields has been closed, the strikers are

going for the small fish. Those pickets who had not gone to Manchester or Birkenhead were concentrating on Joseph Gillots of Kiln-hurst (just outside Sheffield), where two van-loads of scabs had been escorted inside by 150 police.

DEFY

In West Bromwich, about 400 flying pickets from Corby, Rotherham and Sheffield blockaded J B & S Lees on Monday, and stopped a move by the workforce there to defy the strike. There had been a mass meeting of the workers at Lees on the Friday and they had voted to stay at work. Only a handful of scabs got into work on Monday, most of them by crawling through a hole in the fence at the back of the factory. After the mass picket, the workforce voted to come out again.

At Sheerness Steel in Kent, two steelworkers were taken to hospital last week after a lorry driver tried to mow down the picket

line. One of the men had a broken leg and the other suffered arm injuries. The drivers were charged with actual bodily harm.

Pickets told WA what happened. "The police were watching us and we were going to picket the dock entrance to stop the lorries getting in. A lorry driver just tried to run us down. He had four runs at us. One lad is in hospital now with a broken leg. The police saw it all and charged him, but it's lucky no-one got killed".

Another picket said, "The driver was so close, I could see the gap between his teeth". Despite this incident the pickets are hopeful. "More than half the lorries aren't going in now, and even though all the workers are going in, we've hit production there. We're having a real effect".

Many engineering firms have had to close down, and Austin and Pickersgill's shipyard in Sunderland will start three-day working this week.

In Sheffield, lay-offs at

most engine expected soon running out that have new stocks affected, workers have handle any comes in.

There are with lorry picket lines despite Mos to all T&G picket from Macready's WA, "Moss too ambiguous We haven't show the dri in the T&G areas where have, the d we haven't haven't bee their branch steel.

THE

"I suspect at Macread threatened with lay-off if they don't

WEDNESDAY UARY, NIK B PORTS FROM PICKET AT S

THREE thous swamp the tow Some have sta Ten coach-load overnight from Women steelw and girlfriends down from S Corby. Over 20 arrive to a mig half past seven This is the

PICKET POWER!



Women join picket line

30 WOMEN steelworkers and wives of steelworkers met in Stocksbridge, near Sheffield, last week to discuss their role in the strike.

As soon as the strike began, the women had signed up for picket duty and been told they could make tea and sandwiches for the pickets. The men on the strike committee said, "Good on you, you're giving us moral support", but as one of the women at the meeting in Stocksbridge said, "I wasn't going to give them moral support, I was going for myself".

Women pickets have been picketing the small private steel firms in Stocksbridge

and have stopped absolutely everything going in, even the laundry and the post. The women want to be included in the squads of flying pickets going out all over the country and to be taken seriously by the strike committee.

Two women were elected — one woman steelworker and one steel worker's wife — to go into the strike HQ and coordinate women pickets' activities. They have already organised a coach to go down to the mass picket of Sheerness.

They will be producing a newsletter for women strikers and wives, sisters and mothers of steelworkers, to

keep them informed about what is going on and what the women are doing in the way of picket duty, not just making tea and sandwiches and giving womanly support.

ROS MAKIN

OUTSIDE a steel stockholders in London, some steelmen discussed with a WA reporter what they thought of steelworkers' wives joining the picket lines.

At first, a picket from Jarrow expressed some doubt "If there had been women on the picket at Hadfields, the men might not have gone as far as they did. It was pretty rough there by

all accounts A picket disagreed. wives, sist had been The Jarrow he hadn't the women that if the asked the would be v A steel port said, support w picket line men's futu for, it's w and that i men, our children's we need t picket line



"South Yorkshire women hate scabs", said the banner at Sheerness Photos [these pages and p.1]: Nik Barstow

r a weak leader?

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still problems vers crossing many areas, Evans' telex officials. As a sside outside London told vans' telex is and vague. ot a copy to s, who are all but in other the pickets ers say, well en it. They nstructed by to black all

EAT

drivers here have been the bosses and sackings ep working."

ISTC officials have been down to Transport House to try to get Moss Evans to be more definite about blacking the movement of all steel.

Support on the picket line has been offered by miners in all parts of the country. At a 3,000 strong rally in Motherwell at the weekend, Scottish miners' leader Mick McGahey said, "If you want pickets anywhere, any time, just make the request and we'll be there". The steel workers there immediately accepted the offer, shouting, "Come to Samuels" (a local stockholder in Wishaw).

Miners in Kent have offered to help on the picket lines at Sheerness in the same way that the Yorkshire miners helped at Hadfields, and miners in South Wales are voting on Thursday on whether to come out on strike from February 25th over the threat to pit jobs posed by the BSC closures.

The craft unions' rejection of the 14% offer last week increased the pressure on

Bill Sirs not to settle for anything less than 20%. The bosses and the Fleet Street press obviously aimed to split the strike by offering the craft unions slightly more than they had offered the ISTC and NUB.

RALLY

But the rank and file continue to regard Sirs with suspicion. Hurried talks with the bosses at Teesside airport do not fill the rank and file with confidence in his abilities for leadership. When he told Scottish strikers that he would be ready to negotiate if BSC put money on the table, without insisting on the full 20% claim, he was heckled from the floor of the meeting. He was cheered when he prudently attacked productivity deals as a cause of job loss.

Let's hope he remembers that when he next sits round a table discussing talks about talks with the bosses.

As a picket told WA after the rally in Motherwell,

"Sirs hasn't mentioned figures. He said at the rally he wouldn't negotiate till there was money on the table. The next day he's having 'exploratory talks'."

"Sirs said the Tories picked on the steelmen because we were a weak union. I don't know if he realised it, but he's talking about himself. He's a weak leader".

Pickets from Teesside and Newport have also told WA that they don't trust Sirs. As one picket from Wales said, "This strike isn't just about pay for me and all the other at Whiteheads. It's about our jobs. If BSC is allowed to go on with their plans, I'll be out of a job in August."

JOBS

"I've worked in steel for the past 12 years. What else do I know? We've got to win on jobs too."

"If we don't, and the steel mills are closed anywhere in south Wales, there'll be nothing left but ghost towns. Sirs must declare himself for our jobs too".



PITTSBURGH 1892

When steel pickets acted like an army

A CROWD of 10,000 massing on the river bank to stop scabs breaking the steelworkers' strike, several hundred carrying carbines, rifles, shotguns and pistols, while the rest had sticks, stones and nailed clubs...

The vision alone should be enough to finish off those Tory fools who risk a seizure every time they read the words "secondary picketing" or "Arthur Scargill".

Yet that vision was a reality in the Homestead steelworkers' strike in America in 1892.

The importance of militant mass picketing had been proved to the workers at Carnegie's Homestead Works near Pittsburgh three years before. Henry Clay Frick, chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company, had tried to break the power of the Amalgamated Association, the skilled workers' union that virtually ran Homestead.

The company hired detectives and strikebreakers and tried to get the scabs into the works, but, as Frick himself described it, "The posse taken up by the sheriff — something over 100 men — were not permitted to land on our property, were driven off with threats of bodily harm, and it looked as if there was going to be great destruction of life and property".

Rifles

Frick saw his defeat as only a small setback and used the three years until the 1889 contract expired to organise the famous 1892 lock-out. Foremost among these preparations were a rebuilding of the works so that it was surrounded by a great wall broken every 25 feet by three inch holes through which rifles could be fired, and the stepping up of production so that enormous quantities of steel could be stockpiled.

Frick wrote to Robert Pinkerton of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency asking for 300 guards to protect strikebreakers who would be landing, Frick hoped, at the works shortly after July 5th.

By July 2nd, after the workers had refused the company's wage-cutting demands, the entire workforce was laid off. But the Amalgamated members — only 750 out of 3,800 workers at the plant — had been active.

As Jeremy Brecher says in his recently re-issued history of mass insurgency in America, *Strike* (published by Straight Arrow Books), "Military preparations began at once. Frick's plan of

landing Pinkerton men apparently became known to the Amalgamated men, for they chartered a paddle-steamer, the Edna, fitted with steam whistles to give the alarm.

"Day and night they cruised the Monongahela, supported by an armada of fifty two-man skiffs. Every road leading to Homestead was blockaded.

"Armed guards surrounded the railroad depots. Sentries patrolled the waterfront and watched from the peaks of surrounding hills. A communications system was created, using flags, sky-rockets and a steam whistle, with the telegraph at the strike headquarters.

Killed

"The picket line grew steadily, until 1,000 men were patrolling ten miles of the river on both sides".

The strike committee's own instructions give some of the flavour of the huge organisation. "The girdle of pickets will file reports to the main headquarters every half an hour... In addition to this there will be held in reserve a force of 800 Slavs and Hungarians [it was thought that immigrants might be used as scabs]. The brigade of foreigners will be under the command of two Hungarians and two interpreters".

By the time the Pinkertons and scabs drew up to the landing stage, a crowd of 10,000 was there to put them to flight.

One of the strikers rushed from the crowd and lay on the gangplank. When a Pinkerton tried to push him off, the man drew a revolver and shot him through the thigh. At this the Pinkertons raked the crowd with rifleshots and the crowd responded likewise. Several were killed on both sides, but the Pinkertons gave up their landing attempt.

"The strikers", records Brecher, "joined by large numbers of armed supporters from other towns, now tried to find a way to drive the Pinkertons from the barges. First they build barricades of steel and pig iron from which they could fire in safety on the barges.

"Skiffs swarmed round the barges, firing at point blank range. Half-pound sticks of dynamite were hurled onto the barges, blowing holes in their sides but failing to sink them.

"A twenty-pound brass cannot used for holiday celebrations and a smaller one residing in a veterans' hall were wheeled out and train-

ed on the barges. Workers flooded the river around them with oil, but were unable to set them afire.

"A flaming raft was floated towards them, but the current carried it past. A natural gas main was directed towards the barges and the gas was ignited by firecrackers, but only a small explosion was triggered".

After all this, the scabs themselves revolted against their leaders and the Pinkertons. When they had all surrendered, it was only the intervention of the strike committee that prevented them being massacred — instead they had to run the gauntlet, and two to three hundred were injured.

Frick faced another inglorious defeat. But he had one trick left: he resorted to the newly reorganised state troops, the Pennsylvania militia. When the militia marched on the works, the strike committee advised a no-resistance policy — hoping instead to break the militia's discipline through fraternisation. But the militia leaders were wise enough to order that the troops were not allowed to have any dealings with civilians unless under orders to do so.

With the militia inside the works, small groups of strike-breakers could be brought into the mills. Gradually skilled workers from other plants were brought to Homestead and, in the end, Frick was able to keep production going and utterly destroy the power of the Amalgamated Association.

Force

The American steelworkers drew many vital lessons from the struggle. Firstly, the willingness to fight fire with fire, to answer force with force, is vital to victory. Secondly, that the discipline and training of modern state forces is hard to break without forceful resistance — a fat cry from the popular militias of an earlier period of American history.

Thirdly, they recognised that with the development of technology, the skills employed in one plant were replicated elsewhere. For a strike to be successful, it had to link up with other workers in the industry — at least to stop transfers. They also learned that relatively small groups of managers who have been skilled workers can keep a plant going if the works is not occupied.

Fourthly, the defeat of the Amalgamated made many realise that an industrial union was needed in steel — one big union, taking in all the workers.

ANDREW HORNING

FEBR-STOW RE-HE MASS-ERNNESS.

shut down Sheerness — the main private steelworks still operating. The scabs get in early through side entrances. There are over a thousand cops there to protect them. The SPG are there in force. Some have been billeted in a nearby holiday camp since Monday. Even though the scabs have got in, the police know they're beaten when it comes to getting lorries through the picket line. They're turning lorries back five miles before

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Sheerness and nothing is going in or out of the works. But the police want to show who's boss. They start pushing people about, and make ten arrests when the pickets won't take it. The TV cameras are there too, filming six local farmers who have come along to back the scabs, carrying placards which say 'Right to work'. The spokesman for these specimens has blood pouring down his forehead... but he has to admit he cut himself accidentally on his placard.

The pickets ignore the cranks, but are angry with the TV men. "You're making money off our backs. You make out we're animals and lie about us. We're not going to let you stay". The TV men shuffle off. The coppers don't know what to do. "Maggie Thatcher's boot boys... out, out, out", go the chants as the police drill backwards and forwards — practising for next week. But they'll be even more outnumbered if we mobilise the support that's needed.

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The faith of citizen Eric

JOHN O'MAHONY looks at the ideas of Eric Heffer — a leader of Labour's left, an avowed Marxist of long standing... and a devout member of the Church of England, which has often been called 'the Tory Party at prayer'.



THOUGH I never met him, I always liked Eric Heffer, the subject of the first programme (Sunday 17th) in a new BBC1 series, *The Controversialists*.

He seems a decent man. A carpenter and joiner by trade, he is a solid, thoughtful and responsible citizen of the labour movement.

Of course, from the political viewpoint of *Workers' Action*, that is not an entirely flattering assessment. The 'citizens' are rather solid, ponderous, and sometimes politically slow. However important a part of the movement up to now they have been, the 'solid citizens' of the British labour movement have been citizens of historically privileged British capitalism, too.

It is warriors we need, to fight a way out of capitalism. To be sure, 'solid citizens', when roused, make good warriors, as successive Governments have learned over the last 15 years from the 'solid ranks' of labour, men and women who had seemingly become so conservative, who appeared to have been 'bought off' and become 'bourgeoisified'.

Eric Heffer has been a fighter, notably against the Wilson Government's 1969 attempt to legally hamstring the trade unions. He was sacked by Callaghan in 1975 as Minister of State in the Department of Industry (Tony Benn's no.2) for speaking against Government policy on the Common Market.

Left

In fact, Heffer has roots in the solid left going back to the late '30s, when, as an apprentice, he joined the Communist Party at the time of the Spanish Civil War. He broke with the CP after the war, to the left. That wasn't hard, for the CP in 1945 was a long way to the right of the official Labour Party!

It wanted a coalition government including Anthony Eden and Winston Churchill, not a Labour Government, and until 1947 it opposed strikes on all occasions.

Heffer remained a Marxist, and moved towards the Trotskyist movement. In the 1950s he was a leading member of a now forgotten group called the Socialist Workers' Federation, which lasted until around 1960.

The SWF does not deserve to be completely forgotten, for the political fate of its leading members has been instructive. Unlike all the other groups (*Socialist Review*, now the SWP, and the forerunners of the *Militant* and the SLL-WRP) which could trace roots back to the break-up of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist Party, the SWF refused to work in the Labour Party.

Open

It was an 'open party faction', on principle. Politically it was an orphan of the former majority of the RCP, led by Jock Haston and Ted Grant.

From 1945 up to 1949, Haston and Grant insisted on trying to build the RCP separate from and in competition with the Labour Party. In 1949 their policy collapsed, and so did the RCP. Of those members who remained in politics, most joined the Labour Party, but it was as reformists that many of them joined. Grant and a few others were an exception.

And when Eric Heffer joined the Labour Party, it was perhaps not initially as a reformist — he wrote for *Socialist Review*, for example — but he quickly became a reformist.

'Sectarians are frightened opportunists', as Marxists have always said. And when the sectarians' defences collapse, then the opportunist temptations they have been warding off take their toll.

In October 1964 Heffer was elected MP for Walton, in Liverpool. He became an MP reluctantly, pushed into it by 'the movement', and 'hated' the Commons 'for the first six months'. After that he 'loved it'.

Marxist

He considers himself to be still a Marxist. He is also 'a devout member of the Church of England', as he told the vicar-like character interviewing him!

Heffer was an atheist for a long time. Then, 'I went back to my earlier faith because it seemed better than the other answers' — presumably, the answers to questions such as the place of man in the universe, 'life after death', etc.

Even if you consider yourself an atheist, Heffer reckoned, you have not really left the Church of your upbringing if there are deep emotional roots. 'I don't think you ever divest yourself of your roots'.

But then how does a Marxist atheist divest himself of his understanding that religion is false knowledge, a false and therefore degrading consolation for the brutal transience of human existence, and that religion — pie in the sky, by and by — has served as a social force to reconcile the oppressed to oppression which they could overthrow? The vicar did not ask Heffer.

When Heffer said, 'I equate the concepts of Christianity with modern democratic socialism', and tried to argue that the (mythical) Christ had recruited poor people and was crucified because he wanted to

change things — because he was an early communist — the vicar did call him to order for his too presumptuous attempt to claim Christianity for the Labour Party.

Had not Margaret Thatcher recently quoted St Francis of Assisi? Indeed, Thatcher recently justified cuts by mentioning the Good Samaritan, who aided a wounded stranger on the roadside while others passed by. He couldn't have done much without money, said Thatcher...

Of course, you can justify almost anything — and most things have been justified — from the great bog of contradictory texts, written and collected over a long period, that is the Bible.

Eric Heffer insisted that from the Sermon on the Mount to 'modern democratic socialism' there is a historical development, through John Bull, the 'hedge priest' who led the Peasants' Rising in 1381, the Hussites in Bohemia (Czechoslovakia), the Lollards, etc, expressing a conflict between the established and the non-established. The old social objectives were formulated in religious terms, and are now formulated in political terms — but it is the same thread.

The last point is true. There is a development from primitive social revolt, expressed in the (religious) ideas to hand, lacking effective political means to express itself and to define and realise its goals (goals which are anyway impossible of realisation in the primitive condition of society), all the way to the modern labour movement. There is even a parallel between those who expect socialism through Parliamentary action, with only limited working class struggle, and the earlier Christian 'lower orders movements' with a social content. Both have a false appreciation of reality, a delusory view of

All religions are detestable, but the Church of England, whose head is Queen Elizabeth Windsor, is one of the most odious of the lot. The rebel traditions of British Protestantism — of Hugh Latimer, who cheerfully told a terrified companion on their way to the heretics' bonfire that they would light that day a fire which would be seen throughout England; of the religious sects which flourished and were the most radical element in the bourgeois revolution in the 17th century; even of the radical chapels of the 18th and 19th century — these are the opposite of the Church of England.

Ideas

It is the English State Church. Its ideas and dogmas and 'answers' have been shaped and limited to reflect and justify the interests of the ruling class for over three centuries. The canting 'divines' who filled the air with their disputations during the consolidation of the bourgeois revolution three centuries ago (the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688) had one eye on their theology and the other on their estates and 'livings' — and on other people's estates and livings, especially in Ireland, too. Since then it has developed securely entwined with the British State and Empire: the liberalism and anti-colonialism that sections of it display today reflect the dissolution of that Empire.

The Church of England's dogmas are as likely to contain philosophic truth and 'answers' as are the similar products of the cogitations of the dealers in pidgin 'Marxism' who fashion the ideology of the bureaucratic rulers of Russia and its satellites and replications — for whom Eric Heffer, the former contributor to *Socialist Review*, must have had a great deal of contempt and hatred.

It would be a remarkable thing indeed if the richly endowed State Church, exuding the spiritual and intellectual aroma of the Queen of the hunting, shooting and fishing folk, were found to have contained all along basic truths that are a closed book to Marxism.

But this is the remarkable discovery that Eric Heffer has made.

the road ahead.

But that parallel cannot be what Heffer had in mind... As well as accepting a description of himself as a devout Christian 'and a Churchman', he is the author of a book (about the battle against the Labour Government on anti-union legislation) called *The Class Struggle in Parliament*, and an avowed believer in reformist Parliamentary socialism.

Heffer also explained why he believes in workers' control, and is against bureaucratic 'socialism' of the Stalinist and Fabian variety.



'The characteristics of conservatism, religiosity, national conceit, will be found in varying degrees in all the (English Labour) official leaders, from the extreme right to the left'

Leon Trotsky

(Though originally he was influenced towards the CP by Sidney and Beatrice Webb's 1937 book, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation* — a Fabian book of praise for Stalinism). He stressed that socialists really have to believe that they are their 'brothers' keepers'.

If Heffer's mixture of avowed Marxism and Christianity is revealing for the nature of his 'Marxism', even more revealing is his specific choice of the Church of England.

off the head of the Head of Eric Heffer's Church, and in any case must surely find more useful work for her than her present occupation.

One of the most interesting moments in the programme was when the vicar, a serious man and not at all a 'swinging vicar', asked Eric Heffer, 'But what about sin?' Isn't socialism too optimistic, given the view of the nature of humanity held by Heffer's religion?

Socialism is optimistic, of course, said Heffer. He did not explain why then he needed the consolation of the Church of England, or why he needed to attempt to express socialism in the language of the religious mythology to which his emotions had become attached and bound as a child, but which his intellect had for many years rejected — the very same system of mythology which could be and was utilised by Margaret Thatcher to express her diametrically opposite social outlook.

It is of course true that an intensive religious upbringing which succeeds in linking emotional drives to the symbols and ideas of Christian superstition marks the victim for life. Often it is possible to understand and fight the early conditioning that has entered into the structure of your personality.

The reason why a Marxist with such a background does that (and fights also against the many and varied forms of 'Marxist' sectarianism which are anagrammatic, scrambled, substitutes for religion), is the central importance that a rational, materialist outlook has for would-be scientific socialist.

In Britain now, organised, more or less precise, dogmatic and intolerant religion is a weak force. That can be a misleading situation.

Religion and its dialects (including, for example, pseudo-Marxist surrogates like the 'Workers' Revolutionary Party'), arise because of the existential condition of humanity in nature, and because of the social uncertainties of capitalism, which can appear to have the force and power of 'Acts of God'.

In totalitarian Stalinist societies like Russia, religion attracts the people because it challenges the ideological and intellectual monopoly of the state, which tries to impose its own religious surrogate, based on the phraseology of 'Marxism'.

Debris

Religion has not disappeared from Britain. In most people's mind, the logical structure of religion, or its debris, remains. Events can breath life into the debris if it is not replaced by a scientific world outlook. Unless the working class can organise and take power, remaking society, all the conditions for the regrowth of religion will continue to exist.

Indifference to religion, when it is not rooted in ignorance of what religion is, is the moral equivalent of sanitary indifference to sewage in the street.

In his late reversion to the religion of Elizabeth Windsor, Eric Heffer, still subjectively a left-winger, is the carrier of a virus. The citizen of the British labour movement becomes a citizen of the inter-class spiritual fraternity at whose head stands the Queen herself.

It is not a personal quirk, but the latest expression of the backwardness of the labour movement in Britain, and its ability to encroach upon and engulf even a long-standing 'Marxist'.

Manchester adult classes cut

MORE THAN 80 students and trade unionists marched from North Hulme college to the city centre on Thursday 14th in protest against the cuts in Adult Education places.

This demonstration, organised in less than a week, was a magnificent response to the decision of the Training Services Division of the Manpower Services Commission to axe 60% of all preparatory courses in Greater Manchester and cut the length of these courses from a maximum of one year to a maximum of 12 weeks. How can basic education be given in reading, writing and arithmetic in 12 weeks? This cut, if successful will seriously reduce the possibility of retraining on TOPS courses for the illiterate and innumerate.

Although the banner of the Manchester Area National Union of Students was present very few students from either the poly or the university supported the march. It is essential that militants in the NUS look to unity with the weakest sections of their unions in the FE and Community colleges like Hulme, against the cuts.

400 march in Haringey

"NO IFS, no buts, we don't want the cuts", and "Kick the Tories out" were the slogans on a march against the cuts in Haringey, North London on Saturday 16th.

There were banners from the NUR, NALGO, the three

local Labour Parties, Hornsey LPYS, the SWP and the CP. Opposition has been strong in the local Labour Parties to Haringey Labour Council's policy of cuts and rate rises.

At 400, the turn-out was down on a similar demonstration last year. The cuts campaign must turn outwards to draw in people beyond organised political activists.

£3.50 a week for the school bus

A NEW TORY BILL means families may have to pay £3.50 a week or more per child for school bus fares.

The Education (no.2) Bill permits local authorities to charge for school transport. In a concession to Tory MPs from rural areas, the Bill insists that the charge must be a flat-rate, whatever the distance to the school.

Kent has suggested a £3.50 charge, Cheshire £1.40, Essex £2.50. Opposition spokesperson Ann Taylor said that the transport charges, together with increased school meal charges under the Bill, would cost the average family £5 a week.

Large families will pay more. Peter Richards, a farmer from Essex who was in a deputation on Wednesday 4th presenting a petition with 162,000 signatures against Tory education cuts, reckons he would have to pay £25 a week for school buses and school meals, for five children.

Strong campaigning is needed now to force local authorities not to make the transport charges and the increased meal charges.

HJB PLASTICS: START OF A FIGHTBACK

OVER TWO weeks have now passed since the management at HJB Plastics in Leicester first announced their intention of sacking over half the workforce (see WA 166). But it was only at the TGWU branch meeting held last Sunday 17th that a fightback began to emerge.

Until then it had been management and their agents on the shopfloor who had been making the running, and no help had been forthcoming from the full-timers of the unions involved (TGWU, AUEW, ASTMS).

Shop floor racism in particular had been a factor in hindering the building of a fight against the threatened redundancies. Racist "solutions" to the redundancies — "sack the wogs, keep on the whites" — had flourished among some sections of white workers, and shop stewards were divided into two categories: 'ours' (i.e. white shop stewards) and 'theirs' (i.e. the Asian ones).

Attributing their own perverted mentality to the TGWU Branch Secretary, who happens to be an Asian, some white workers claimed that his only concern in opposing the redundancies was to make sure no Asians lost their jobs. Prior to the union meeting on the Sunday a rumour was going round the shopfloor that the Asians were going to call a strike at the meeting. Under the slogan of "Stop the wogs — they're going to call a strike", the most reactionary of the white workers attempted to mobilise their workmates for the union meeting to prevent any strike occurring.

But at the branch meeting on the Sunday, the best attended ever, the balance of power began to shift. Admittedly the dissatisfaction and anger of those present focussed on the strings attached to the redundancies rather than the redundancies themselves:

- although the old pay settlement ran out on the 1st of January, management is not prepared to make a new pay offer until after the redundancies have been implemented. They recognise that if they can get away with sacking over half the workforce, they can get away with giving next to nothing as a pay rise;

- management is not prepared to use the "last in, first out" principle in carrying out the redundancies; instead they want to pick and choose their victims. So out go the Asians/women/militants and in stay the boot lickers;
- the new job descriptions involve flexibility and job mobility.
- the new job descriptions also involve agreement to do heavy physical work which few, if any, women would be prepared to accept;

- there are no guarantees for those who escape the axe this time round. With a very deep recession forecast for the plastic bag industry in the second half of 1980, the odds are that those kept on now will be getting the chop in a few months time too.

The key to preventing the redundancies is to transform the present passive dissatisfaction with the conditions attached to the redundancies into active opposition to the redundancies themselves.



Racism still hamstrings the Leicester labour movement, as it did in the strike of Asian workers at Imperial Typewriters in 1974 [above].

barricade

NO. 1 JAN 1980. TOP

YOUTH FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

BRITISH JUSTICE ?



ITS THEIRS NOT OURS

POTTERS GO FOR £15

46,000 POTTERY manual workers have submitted a claim to the bosses' federation, the British Ceramic Manufacturers Federation for a £15 a week rise, a 37½ hour week with no loss of pay, an extra day's holiday and significantly higher overtime rates. The union CATU is also calling for all productivity/attendance schemes to be abolished and the payments incorporated in the basic rates.

The claim is quite a significant one for CATU which has normally accepted rises below the 'going rate'. However, the effect of this on the falling living standards of its members, and the success last year of pottery engineers in securing an immediate reduction of the working week to 37½ hours and a basic rate of almost the £2 an hour they had claimed, has put pressure on the union's leaders.

It is extremely unlikely, however, that the claim will be met without a long and difficult struggle. The pottery industry is in one of its worst recessions for many years. Already many smaller firms have either closed, sold out or made hundreds of workers redundant. In addition, 6,000 workers are working a four day week. It is expected that after Easter many more thousands of workers will be laid off or made redundant.

The bosses have responded to the claim by calling for any increase to be tied to productivity, and appear to

be organising for the abolition of the average hourly rate. They are also trying to change the existing holiday arrangements making workers have all their summer holidays in one block, in order that the kilns do not have to be re-lit so often.

The pottery industry is dominated by two large companies, Wedgewood and Royal Doulton, though mergers and takeovers have produced a third large group Royal Worcester. Both the two biggest companies have interests outside the industry and both are linked with banking firms. Royal Doulton is owned by the massive company S.Pearson, which also owns the Financial Times. Thus in any long strike, both firms could rely on funds from outside.

Talks on the claim conducted by the National Joint Council begin on February 26th. If the claim is to be won workers in the industry must begin organising now at rank and file level, and ensure that there is full democratic control of each stage of the negotiations, as past experience has shown that the union leaders will sell out at the first opportunity. In the event of their being a strike, the workers must be organised to take full control with their own rank and file strike committees, and to build links with other workers in the companies concerned to prevent them funding a prolonged strike

ARTHUR BOUGH

Sacked for speaking out

A WEEK LAST Tuesday Leicester Workers' Action supporters put a leaflet into HJB Plastics as part of their campaign to help build a fightback against the threatened redundancies there. Three days later a letter was delivered by taxi to the home of WA supporter Stan Crooke telling him to report to the personnel manager the following Monday morning.

At the meeting on the Monday Stan Crooke was sacked on the pretext of irregularities in his application form. Despite the fact that he had been there four months already, and despite the fact that he was due to be made redundant on May Day anyway, management supposedly took it upon themselves, quite by chance, to suddenly check up on his references. And despite the fact that he was not entitled to it, he was given a week's wages in lieu of notice — to get him out of the factory right away.

Admit

Even though management won't admit it, the distribution of the WA leaflet and the sacking of the WA supporter are clearly connected. According to reliable sources, a shop steward who found out that Stan Crooke had been involved with the leaflet gave the tip-off to management. But rather than openly say that they wanted to get rid of any shop-floor militants to avoid problems in their current attempts to sack half the workforce, management latched onto the fact that Stan Crooke had failed to mention on his application form a period of employ-

ment at Dunlops at few months ago and used this as an excuse for the sacking.

The sacking underlines the corrupt nature of the TGWU in Leicester. At its peak stands George Bromley, who divides his time between selling out his members as a union official and sentencing anti-fascist militants as a magistrate.

Deals

Below Bromley comes the District Committee, which consists largely of Bromley's cronies. Their loyalty to Bromley is reflected in the fact that at the time of the Imperial Typewriters dispute they blocked attempts by the Regional Committee to get rid of Bromley because of the scandalous role he played in the dispute.

In the individual branches, convenors and, as at HJB, shop stewards do the bosses' job for them by trying to push through productivity deals and bad wage deals or by putting the finger on shop-floor militants. In the last six months WA supporters in Leicester have been sacked from Dunlops, the buses, and now HJB Plastics; in each case all the evidence points to collaboration between convenors or shop stewards and management.

The latest victimisation thus stands in a long and well-established tradition of collaboration between union officers and the bosses. Unless the rank and file acts to drive out the bosses' agents in our union, we will end up being defeated time and time again in our struggles over pay, jobs and working conditions.

workers' ACTION

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COMMUNISM AGAINST STALINISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

LAST WEEK we began publication in the Magazine Section of the analyses of the USSR and its role in Eastern Europe made by the Trotskyist movement in the 1940s.

These analyses explain and underline that the USSR bureaucracy is the usurper of the 1917 revolution, and a foremost enemy of its development and extension. Showing that state tyranny is not socialism, that Russian military occupation is not a substitute for workers' revolution, and that Stalinism is not communism, they are relevant to assessing what the USSR is doing now in Afghanistan.

This week we publish the remainder of the first part of the Trotskyist movement's 1948 World Congress document on *The USSR and Stalinism*, the part dealing with the USSR itself. (The second part deals with Stalinism outside Russia).

As we pointed out last week, the whole analysis is based on extreme instability of world politics and of capitalism — an assessment which made sense at the time, especially for revolutionaries struggling against the plans of imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy to re-stabilise the world after the war, but which with hindsight can be seen as exaggerated. The analysis is further weakened in section 10 by generalising too glibly from the chaos in the USSR immediately after the war.

The USSR suffered enormous destruction during the war. In Leningrad 630,000 civilians starved or froze to death in the winter of 1941-2. Real wages in 1945 were about 40% of 1940's. The great bulk of industrial capacity in the western, more developed part of the USSR was destroyed; so was almost half the urban housing and most of the livestock.

For reconstruction, the bureaucracy relied on brutal overworking of the working class (with large-scale forced labour), ruthless squeezing of the peasantry, and massive plunder of the occupied territories in Eastern Europe and Manchuria. Many peasants could only survive from what they could get from private operations outside the state-controlled economy; in 1948-50, on the average cash income from collective farm work, over 40 days' work was needed to buy one kilogram of butter!

From this chaos, the 1948 document derives the threat of "a total decomposition of collectivised economy". But it does not indicate which social forces would lead the violent counter-revolution necessary — according to the Trotskyist analysis of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state, and the Marxist theory of the state — for this decomposition, i.e. for the restoration of capitalism. It says there is no powerful restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, no strong peasant/petty-bourgeois movement. The threat thus remains empty; and surely the Trotskyist analysis of the strength and resili-

DEFEND THE USSR, FIGHT STALINISM

ence of the production relations of the USSR, stressed in the early sections of the 1948 document, would indicate that the USSR would be able to reconstruct (as it did), provided imperialism did not launch a new war against it.

The analysis is also weakened by an attempt to argue that its sharp anti-Stalinist conclusions are justified even in narrow terms of the best way to defend "what remains of the conquests of October", and not only in general terms of world revolution. This attempt leads to artificial assertions, such as that of the threat of bureaucratic mismanagement causing "in the years to come", "a total decomposition of collectivised economy".

The main point — that the defence of the basic economic structure of the USSR must be subordinate to the overall struggle for socialist revolution internationally — is, however, clearly stated.

The political conclusions of sections 12 to 16 must be

understood in the context of the time. In 1948, the Cold War was just getting underway. For one section of the left, the forced artificial radicalisation of the western CPs, and the Stalinist-led struggles in Vietnam and China, were giving Stalinism new credit as a 'revolutionary' force. For another, horror at the new revelations of Stalinist atrocities which came out in the 1940s and at the new expansion of Stalinism led to an emotional Stalinophobia which quickly shaded over into actual alliance with the imperialist cold warriors and into 'State Department Socialism'.

Between those two reactions, the 1948 document steered a sober Marxist course, arguing for a struggle against Stalinism, but a struggle on a working-class, anti-capitalist basis, and a struggle which took the defence of the nationalised and planned economy in the USSR as one of its objectives.

COLIN FOSTER

The USSR and Stalinism

Theses adopted by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International, April 1948.

The Politics of the Stalinist Regime

9 From an uncontrolled caste, alien to socialism, the bureaucracy has become an uncontrollable caste, mortally hostile to socialism both in Russia and on a world scale. It possesses all the reactionary traits of the old owning classes — parasitism, waste of the surplus social product, cruelty toward the oppressed, exploitation of the producers. But it does not possess any of their progressive features, connected with a necessary historic function of introducing and defending an economic system that is superior from the standpoint of the division of labour and the ownership of the means of production.

If its regime seems to be 'more stable' than the decadent capitalist regime, this is exclusively due to the fact that it has succeeded in using to its own advantage production relations which are infinitely superior to those of capitalism. In reality, the bureaucracy has, during the past twenty years, occupied a much less stable position in Russian society than even the most decadent bourgeoisie occupies in its society. It has no juridical or economic safeguards of its privileges. It is in constant fear, not only of losing its privileges but also of losing its individual freedom and life; terror weighs on its privileged layers just as heavily as on the masses. The success of every bureaucrat does not depend on his birth, wealth, personal capabilities or on the success of his work, but on the arbitrariness of the hierarchy. Not only has the bureaucracy not worked out a distinct ideology, not only does it not have the instinct or characteristic of every social class, but in the course of the unceasing transformations which it has undergone, and as a result of the terrible blood-letting entailed by the consecutive purges, it has become demoralised even before it could attain an understanding of its role.

The Stalinist dictatorship appears as a Bonapartist political regime, the function of which consists in defending the privileges of the bureaucracy in the framework of the given production relations. The tendency toward private appropriation of production and of the collective means of production, which again and again makes itself felt in the most favourably placed layers of the bureaucracy, has been system-

atically fought and restricted by the dictatorship. Under the weight of the dictatorship, under the permanent fear of foreign intervention which would rob it of all its privileges, constantly shaken up in its structure, demoralised and atomised by terror, the bureaucracy has been incapable of setting up conscious political tendencies, of orienting itself toward the restoration of the private ownership of the means of production for its own benefit. The most powerful centrifugal tendencies have been shown particularly in the lower and medium strata of the bureaucracy, intimately bound up with the peasant and artisan tendencies toward primitive accumulation.

The threat of the destruction of what has remained of the conquests of October does not in the first place originate from the striving of the upper bureaucrats to transform themselves into a 'state capitalist class', but from the *disintegrating* tendencies resulting from bureaucratic management. These threaten to remove more and more sectors of the population and their activities from the state control and domination which the bureaucracy is vainly endeavouring to make omnipotent.

In the given historic conditions of the present period of fierce social and international contradictions, the relative stability of the political dictatorship, therefore, reflects:

- The disorientation and prostration of the working class following the defeats of the international revolution and the Stalinist victory;
- The inability of the peasantry to put up an effective political opposition;
- The incapacity of the restorationist tendencies of the bureaucracy to oppose to Stalin an organised expression of its caste interests.

10 The economic policy of the Stalinist regime has been entirely dominated, for the last ten years, by the necessity of overcoming the crisis resulting from the tendency toward a lowering of the rate of accumulation and the growing difficulties in maintaining or increasing the average output. This means a long series of coercive measures by means of which the worker is to be tied to his place of work as the serf was tied to the land. The least breach of 'discipline' must be severely punished, the length of the working day must be practically extended to the maximum physical limit, the minimum real wage must be pressed below the minimum living wage in order to stimulate an increase in individual output. The war, with its dislocation of economy, the loosening of the ties between all sectors of industry, the growth of inflation, the development of the free market, the appearance of millionaire kolkhozniks, has largely weakened the bureaucracy's control over the whole

of economic life and removed more and more sectors from its direction.

The struggle for increased production in the framework of bureaucratic management is beginning directly to undermine collective ownership. In small handicraft and light industry, this struggle is at present being carried out on the basis of strengthening the tendencies toward private appropriation in the cooperatives. In agriculture, the introduction of piecework has been accompanied by the actual division of the kolkhozes into parcels of land on which the same families continue working, thus strengthening the trend toward the restoration of the bond between the agricultural producer and the land on which he works. Crowning all these empirical efforts there is the policy of plunder followed by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet 'buffer zone' which clearly shows the incapacity of the bureaucracy to further develop the productive forces on the basis of the mechanism inherent in Russian economy, and corrodes at the same time what is left of the conquests of October by an attempt at the cohabitation of Russian collectivised economy with the capitalist economy in these countries. The bureaucratic regime is today in Russia enemy no. 1 of all that remains of the conquests of October, and threatens in the years to come to lead Russia to a total decomposition of collectivised economy. A revolution is necessary not only for fresh progress toward socialism, but also to save the production relations inherited from October.

11 The foreign policy of the bureaucracy has undergone an essential and definite change following the Second World War. Before this war, that policy was based on the possibility of *neutralising* the pressure of the capitalist environment on the USSR by setting off against one another the antagonistic imperialist blocs, and to a lesser extent, by manipulating 'national' Stalinist parties. The subjective reflection of this policy was the theory of 'socialism in one country' which was based on the conception of a more or less gradual development of productive forces in Russia, independently of the development of the capitalist world.

The disappearance of German, Japanese, Italian and French imperialisms as first-rate powers and the extreme weakening of British imperialism, have placed the Soviet bureaucracy face to face with American imperialism. The latter has more or less succeeded in setting up a 'capitalist united front' against the USSR. The united front is not based on the 'fear' of the 'revolutionary' nature of Stalin,



COMMUNISM AGAINST STALINISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

but on the necessity of reconquering one-sixth of the world market for capitalist exploitation.

The bureaucracy at first tried to meet this new situation with a policy of *compromise* with imperialism, by offering its services in suppressing the revolutionary movements and aspirations of the masses in most countries of Europe and the world. In exchange, it was given a 'free hand' for its expansion in Eastern Europe (policy of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam). It has endeavoured to consolidate its sphere of influence through the establishment of governments with Stalinist allegiance and an ever greater hold over the economic resources of these countries. The stiffening of the attitude of American imperialism, profiting from a favourable relationship of forces, has rapidly put an end to Soviet expansionism, while at the same time the attempt at 'neutralising' the bourgeoisie in certain countries (France) outside the 'buffer zone' proved bankrupt. This forces the bureaucracy to seek security ever more in a policy of armaments and of military preparations while counting upon the unceasing economic and political crises — the outbreak of which the Stalinist parties must aid as far as possible — to paralyse world imperialism for a time, and make a compromise possible.

It can already be said that military intervention is unavoidable unless the world proletariat succeeds in winning decisive victories and thus really paralyzes imperialism. Stalinism is obstacle no. 1 for the world proletariat on its road of revolutionary mobilisation. In this sense, too, the struggle against Stalinism comes to the forefront for the defence of what remains of the conquests of October.

For the New Russian Revolution!

12 'Defend what remains of the conquests of October' is a *strategic* line for the revolutionary party, and not alone a 'slogan'. This strategic line has its historic justification; it must also be seen, in each concrete situation, in what tactical form it is to be applied within the framework of the Fourth International's *general strategy* of world revolution.

The historic justification of this strategy derives from four fundamental considerations:

a) The historic superiority of the Russian production relations vis-a-vis those of the capitalist world;

b) The objective weakening of world imperialism resulting from the exclusion from its market of the Russian sphere;

c) The crushing of the USSR by imperialism would historically signify an enormous step backward; for the great mass of the workers, this would not signify a defeat of Stalinism as such, but of Communism itself.

d) The necessity of preserving what is left of the conquests of October as a condition — not sufficient, but necessary — for a socialist development of economy.

By defending the remnants of the conquests of October, we do not in any way consider the USSR as a whole. On the contrary, we believe that the policy and the very existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy constitute a permanent threat to all that is, in our opinion, still worth defending. The struggle against Stalinism and all its monstrous manifestations, including the fields of foreign and military policies, was already before the war one of the essential elements of our defence of what remains of the conquests of October. Beyond the frontiers of the Soviet Union, this strategy found its essential expression in the struggle for the world revolution, the only practical means for preventing in the long run a breakdown of the productive relations bequeathed by the Russian Revolution.

The German-Russian war broke out — and not accidentally — at a moment when the working class movement in Europe had reached the lowest point of its regression and prostration. Under these conditions, the *military* defence of the USSR, in spite of Stalin's reactionary war policy, remained the only means of preventing the immediate re-introduction of capitalism in the USSR and the country's transformation into a colony crushed by imperialism. Any other policy would have meant, in practice, to abandon to Hitler the historic mission of the proletariat, of overthrowing Stalin.

The cynicism with which German imperialism exterminated broad layers of the working population and took over the factories, the mines and the best collectivised land, aroused the unparalleled resistance of the Russian working class. This resistance became the decisive turning point stimulating a large-scale flare-up of the revolutionary class struggle in Europe. In this sense, the policy of defence of the remains of October in fact proved to be an integral and indispensable element of revolutionary strategy of the world proletariat.

With the beginning of the revolutionary upswing in Europe, the importance of *military* action to defending the remnants of October rapidly declined. The reactionary and bankrupt policy of the bureaucracy in Russia itself, immediately upon the liberation of the territory, and its openly counter-revolutionary role in the 'buffer zone', became threat no. 1 to the remains of October. As from this moment, the struggle against Stalinism became the primary task within the framework of the strategy of the defence of the Soviet Union. This struggle is even more necessary in view of the subordination of this defence to the struggle for the world revolution, where Stalinism constitutes the main obstacle.

A third world war, in the form of an attack of world imperialism — under American leadership — against the USSR, is inevitable if successful socialist revolutions do not materialise in the interim. If the contest between the USSR and world imperialism is confined, however, to military means,

the defeat and destruction of the USSR is certain.

Therefore, in the event of a new war, the fate of the USSR is tied in a more immediate sense than ever before, with the fate of the socialist revolution.

Furthermore, in the present situation, Stalinism is a mortal foe of the socialist revolution, not only through the counter-revolutionary activity of the Stalinist parties, but also through the use of military force by the Kremlin to stamp out all revolutionary manifestations in Eastern Europe, which would be repeated tomorrow on an even larger scale in Europe and Asia. This necessitates the greatest preparations and efforts to protect the future revolutionary uprisings from the Stalinist counter-revolutionary violence.

It follows from all these considerations that even in case of war, we continue vigorously to pursue the struggle for the political revolution inside the USSR and everything it implies: Overthrow of the Stalinist regime. Struggle for the independence of Soviet Ukraine, the Soviet Baltic countries, etc. This does not mean that we alter in any way whatsoever our *strategy* of unconditional defence of what remains of the conquests of October. But it means for the Russian proletariat that the struggle to protect these conquests against imperialist attack will necessitate with ever greater urgency the elimination of the Soviet bureaucracy with its reactionary policy. It also means for the world proletariat that the task of defending the conquests of October will be completely identified, so to speak, with the task of intensifying the revolutionary class struggle in all countries, and that the question of the use of military means behind the imperialist lines to aid the Russian armies will completely recede into the background.

It will be necessary to continue this revolutionary class struggle consistently and uninterruptedly in the case of the occupation of any given country by the Russian army, even though the revolutionary forces clash with the Russian army, and also in spite of the military consequences which this might entail for the Russian army in its operations against the imperialist military forces. In any case, the use of military means remains subordinated to the necessities of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat in whatever countries it may be. Thus, our defence of the USSR remains identical in all cases with the continuation of the revolutionary class struggle.

13 This turn, necessary since 1944, was not effected by the whole International with the same ability and tactical flexibility. Serious self-criticism on this subject is necessary. It is particularly important to stress the following points.

a) It would be the gravest mistake to apply the strategy of the 'defence of the USSR against imperialism' to the different tactical diplomatic or military manoeuvres of the bureaucracy, to its temporary retreats, to the concessions which it is forced to make to imperialism within the framework of international power politics. 'Defend what is left of the conquests of October' means, in the face of these problems, to denounce the reactionary character of the Stalinist policy which lays the most solid bases for a concentration of petty bourgeois, peasant, etc. forces in the camp of imperialism and fundamentally discredits the very notion of communism in the eyes of the proletariat. This means, under all circumstances, not to remain silent on a single crime of the bureaucracy, not to offer an apology for a single one of the monstrous manifestations of its policy, which constitutes the main break on a revolutionary development of the workers' struggles.

b) All formulas along the line of 'last bastion of the revolution', 'socialist economy', 'factories belonging to the workers', 'workers' and peasants' power', which constitute gross deformations of a Marxist definition and tend to create illusions regarding the nature of the Stalinist dictatorship, thus discrediting the Fourth International, must be expunged from our vocabulary.

Even more harmful are mistaken and vulgar formulas such as 'red fascism', 'Russian imperialism', etc., created by petty-bourgeois journalists, which sow as much confusion and do not help advanced workers in any way toward a better understanding of Soviet reality. Particularly reprehensible are those formulas placing the policy of the bureaucracy on the same level as that of imperialism, ascribing to it 'a striving for world domination' which comes straight from the vocabulary of propagandists of the Truman Doctrine. Even when our explanation is complicated and demands great efforts to be correctly placed before the workers, we must speak in exact terms rather than use 'simpler' formulas, which are scientifically false and facilitate the propaganda of the Stalinists or the imperialists.

14 The premise for the power of the bureaucracy was the passivity of the proletariat. The discouraged masses 'tolerated' the bureaucracy because they saw no other way out. The war itself has even emphasised this attitude of the masses who consider Stalin as the 'lesser evil'. A radical change in this attitude could only take place following decisive victories of the world revolution, which have not so far occurred. With the end of the war, profoundly different tendencies have come to light. The dissatisfaction of the masses with their extremely low standard of living has exerted strong pressure on the bureaucracy. Contact with the more 'prosperous' life of the capitalist countries has deeply shaken the attachment to the regime of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

New workers' generations are appearing, which feel less the weight of demoralisation and discouragement of the past. Important middle layers of the bureaucracy are trying, at all costs, to escape the nightmare of terror and police suspicion. US imperialism offers to these layers a much more powerful source of attraction than German imperialism did previously. Thus, a third Russian emigration has rapidly taken shape, consisting of deported workers and peasants

who refuse to return to Russia, of soldiers and officers who have deserted, and of refugee bureaucrats and diplomats. The existence of this emigration is a signal which clearly shows that there has been a rapid decline in the masses' attachment to the regime. In the face of these most recent phenomena and of the tightening of the police dictatorship in all fields, to speak of a 'stabilisation' of the regime is to operate with the most vulgar impressionistic notions and to abandon the class criterion which indicates, precisely, that the weight of the dictatorship is in direct proportion to the sharpening of the contradictions which it must hold down.

15 In view of the historically unique power of the repressive apparatus, the gradual development of a working-class opposition or the political coordination of the restorationist petty-bourgeois tendencies, which is refuted by the entire development of the last decades, is extremely improbable. The forces which can bring about an explosion in the Stalinist totalitarian system are, on the one hand, the internal contradictions in the apparatus itself — which may suddenly erupt to the surface following a grave economic crisis, or a possible withdrawal from the 'buffer zone', etc; and, on the other hand, a violent outbreak of the masses' hatred at any moment of crisis, encouraged by an abrupt change in the international situation. History will probably show a combination of these processes. It is, however, more than likely that the fourth Russian revolution will not assume at the outset a clearly Bolshevik-Leninist character, but that it will start with a general uprising against the vile dictatorship by the workers and peasants, who will be joined by various privileged strata. The task of the Bolshevik-Leninists will be to introduce a political differentiation into this uprising, so that the overthrow of Stalin benefits Soviet democracy and not the restorationist tendencies.

'Defend what remains of the conquests of October' means, in the face of the inevitable downfall of the present regime, patiently to prepare the cadres who will be able at the next stage, to play a decisive role in the mass struggle; who will be able to gain the confidence of the masses and thus prevent the overthrow of the bureaucracy from serving to open up the road to imperialist intervention and the restoration of capitalism. This is why, today as yesterday, we remain for the unconditional support of all workers' struggles, of all manifestations of workers' opposition, against the Stalinist dictatorship, by means of which the new generations will be able to rediscover the road of Leninism and prepare the long underground struggle based on dissatisfaction with the regime, which has already started.

16 The tasks of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists were defined as follows in the *Transitional Programme*:
'A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour!
'The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy.
'The bureaucracy replaced the Soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights — in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the Soviets not their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the Soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the Soviets. In the Soviets there is room only for the representatives of the workers, rank and file collective farmers, peasants and Red Army men.

'Democratisation of the Soviets is impossible without legalisation of Soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognise as Soviet parties.

'A revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organised consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

'Reorganisation of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!

'The reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. Down with secret diplomacy!

'All political trials staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy to be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection — the party of the Fourth International!

'Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin! Long live Soviet democracy! Long live the international socialist revolution!

This programme of struggle in the USSR remains in the main valid for Russia today. The Bolshevik-Leninists will on this basis work out specific slogans corresponding to the concrete development of the situation.

They will demand above all the immediate withdrawal of the Russian occupation troops and the application of the democratic right of self-determination, including that of complete secession for the national minorities living in the USSR, fighting for independent socialist republics of the Ukraine, Byelo-Russia, Esthonia, Lithuania, etc.

T&G DOCKERS BACK BLUE UNION STRIKE

LONDON'S enclosed docks have been shut down by strike action since 11th February. Over 1,000 members of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (the Blue Union) are on all-out strike in support of their 30% wage claim after rejecting the Port of London Authority's 12% offer to dockers covered by the "Enclosed Dock Agreement".

Over 3,000 TGWU dockers in the enclosed docks and at Tilbury also rejected the PLA offer and are refusing to cross Blue union picket lines.

At first an idea for T&G members to book on for work but then to refuse to work because there wouldn't be a full gang was put forward. But T&G members decided at mass meetings if there was a picket line they simply would not cross it.

However, T&G officials

haven't backed up this solidarity. The T&G's official call not to cross Blue union picket lines applies only to members covered by the "Enclosed Dock Agreement". That agreement covers the India-Millwall and Royal groups but only those dockers at Tilbury directly employed by the PLA. About half of the Tilbury dockers work for private firms with which they have separate agreements and last week they were still working because they had no official instructions to obey the Blue picket lines.

The Blue has now called out its members on the riverside wharves, who in their own negotiations settled for 17%, in order to back up their members in the enclosed docks. Pickets have been put on the riverside wharves since Monday February 18th.

Solidarity by T&G members in respecting Blue union pickets — with or without official instructions — in order to shut down Tilbury and the riverside wharves is vital to winning the strike.

But the strike goes beyond just the wage claim — the PLA is planning even more job cuts and a defeat in the strike would open the way.

A T&G member from the Royal group told *Workers' Action*, "When there were 37,000 dockers in London, a docks strike here meant something. Now with less than 7,000 dockers and the PLA planning to close the Royal group and the West India Dock, we need national negotiations and action to be sure of winning — if all imports and exports were stopped, the country would be closed down."

GEORGE BROTHERTON



3,000 TGWU dockers are supporting the 'Blue Union' strike by refusing to cross picket lines.

WORKERS' ACTION

Shipyards: Let rank and file vote on this deal!

ON TUESDAY and Wednesday of last week (12th-13th) British Shipbuilders bosses and the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee (SNC) of the Confed. held reconvened talks over this year's national wage claim.

After two days in which only six of the twenty-odd selected lay delegates were allowed into the discussions, a deal was worked out to be recommended to the Confed unions by their national officials. It includes:

- A lump sum payment of between £125 and £200.
- A 10% wage increase from April 1st;

- A further 5% wage increase from October 1st.

But several conditions have to be met — otherwise there will be no payment! Some of these conditions are:

- Reduced manning levels,
- Greater interchangeability and flexibility between all trades,
- Getting rid of overtime practices which say, one in, all in.

Also, the 10% and 5% increases will be payable only on the normal working week, not on any overtime.

Holidays have not been increased, the working week

has not been reduced, incentive schemes are in the pipeline.

Obviously the original claim is being kicked out by both British Shipbuilders and the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee. It now seems likely that the SNC will try to get acceptance of this deal without any mass meetings and probably without recalling the constituent unions' lay delegate conferences.

This is a sell-out which workers in British Shipbuilders cannot afford — a recipe for more redundancies and a cut in real wages by not keeping up with inflation.

Water deadline is February 25

WATER AND sewage workers — most of whom are in the GMWU — are demanding a 46% wage increase to keep up with inflation and to bring them level with power and gas workers' wages.

The bosses offered them 13% which was rejected and then 19.2% which was also rejected by a GMWU delegate conference and a NUPE branch ballot. The unions have called for strike action from February 25th.

Water and sewage plants are largely automated and most water workers are employed on maintenance and installation. So if the 15,000 troops on stand-by are brought in to strike break the most they could do would

be to drive tankers of fresh water into the streets for people to fill buckets from.

Since the water supply is extremely capital intensive, any increase in wages, even in the bosses' terms, has a minimal effect on charges. So they can't claim the price of water (i.e. the water rates) will soar because of 'exorbitant' wage rises.

What they are worried about is that if the water-workers win 46%, that will set the pace for other local authority workers. Other workers in the water industry, such as the clerical staff and chemists, and all local authority workers, should declare their support for the water workers.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

SATURDAY 23 FEBRUARY. Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee: picket of the Foreign Office, Downing St, 1pm to 2pm. End British collusion, no rigged elections! Solidarity with the liberation movements! All South African troops out of Zimbabwe!

WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY Workers' Action public meeting: 'Stop the Tories, organise for a General Strike'. Speakers: Pete Radcliff, BSC Stanton, Stephen Corbishley, CPSA National Executive (in personal capacity), 7.30pm at the 'Dusty Miller', Canklow Road, Rotherham.

SATURDAY 8 MARCH. Day school on Ireland sponsored by Leicester South CLP. Includes sessions on historical background and the media and Ireland, and debates on Troops Out Now and the British Government and Northern Ireland. 10.30am to 5pm at Highfields Community Centre, Melbourne Rd. Creche provided. Further details: 'Irish day-school', c/o 1 Florence St., Leicester LE2 8EN.

SATURDAY 22 MARCH. National anti-cuts conference, called by Liverpool Trades Council and District Labour Party, 11am, St George's Hall, Liverpool. Credentials: 50p from T.Harrison/A.Dodswell, 70 Victoria St, L'pool 1.

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The National Front march in South London planned for Sunday 24 February has been moved to Sunday 2 March. Look out for details of counter-demonstrations.

'BUILDING WORKER' — latest issue out now. Articles on: Wandsworth, the right to picket, bonus schemes, Warrington direct labour. 10p from: 30 Horton House, South Lambeth Estate, Meadow Rd, London SW8.

MANCHESTER Workers' Action supporters send their condolences to Steve Cooper on the death of his mother.

Our fund drive is sagging at the time we can least afford it. Only £10 so far this month, from Haringey! Send money to Fund, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Education cuts: unite the fightback!

Teachers' strikes against education cuts are to be stepped up. The National Union of Teachers, the biggest of the teaching unions, is already taking strike action in four areas and operating industrial sanctions in 13 other local education authority districts. Now the NUT has added Northamptonshire and Leicestershire to its list.

Mark Carlisle, the Tory Education Minister, is asking the local authorities to cut 5% off their estimated bills for 1980-1 on top of the cuts already being made. The cuts in education are causing such a public outcry in some areas that the local Tories have retreated.

For example, Oxfordshire County Council's controlling Conservative group has decided to withdraw its plans to abolish nursery education in the county and 13 Tory MP's voted against the Government's plans to charge for school transport.

Throughout the country there is militant opposition to the Tory cuts.

In Avon, 13 secondary schools, with over 13,500 pupils have taken part in three weeks' strike action by teachers protesting at job cuts and worsening work conditions. Schools are being brought out on a rotating basis and the determination is there for a long fight. On February 25th, after half term, the fourth week of strikes will begin against the proposed and actual cuts.

In Coventry, the Local Education Authority intends to cut teaching posts by 247, shut down a nursery school, and reduce all nursery education in the city to part time.

On February 11th, 2,500 teachers came out on half-day strike to lobby a special council meeting on the cuts. All the comprehensives and half the primary schools were shut down.

Now the right-wing local NUT executive is balloting teachers on further action, having designed the ballot to confuse. Five options for action are proposed, "Strike action with pay" is apparently the most militant, but if members vote for it the union will of course reply that there are not enough funds!

In Trafford council leaders and local teachers' representatives have begun another round of talks to try to find a solution to the six week dispute which has caused thousands of children to be sent home from school.

The dispute, which has already led to well-supported strike action, is about the loss of 110 teaching posts, axed at the end of last year.

In Nottingham, teachers have temporarily called off strike action to allow talks to proceed about the suspension of nursery teacher Mrs. Eileen Crosbie. Mrs. Crosbie was 'sacked' for refusing to teach a class of over 35 with only one helper. The official recommended ration for one to five year olds is one adult to 13 children!

The bigger class size follows from a decision by Nottinghamshire County Council to cut £1.8 million from education last year, which left 144 nursery nurses without jobs.

The issues in education are now becoming glaringly clear. Instead of using falling rolls to begin to improve education, the Tories are

using them as an excuse to cut the number of teachers.

In contrast, the Tories intend spending £3 Million buying places at private schools.

When their scheme is fully operational, it will cost £27.5m a year and provide between 6,000 and 7,500 places. (Recent estimates in the *New Statesman* estimated that 'private schools' are already subsidised by the public to the tune of 20%).

The Tories want one education for the rich and one for the rest of the school-going population.

Union activists must argue now for a concerted fightback against the Tory onslaught. 'The Teacher', paper of the NUT, stated on February 15th that class size has been voted top priority for discussion at annual conference. The class size policy of 1:30 in primary and 1:27 in infant reception classes should be activated now.

So too should the call for a minimum of 1/5th marking and preparation time for all schools, which is part of the same resolution. Coupled

with these demands, the union should have a policy of no cover for absences longer than one day and a campaign now for a substantial flat rate salary increase for all teachers.

Unless the NUT leadership takes nationally coordinated action against the cuts and begins the fight for a large flat rate increase, demoralisation at the paltry interim settlement and worsening work conditions will lead to an exodus of members to other teaching unions.

The recent victory of the left-wing candidates in the Inner London elections, winning the position of Treasurer and Vice President illustrates the undercurrent of resentment against a leadership which has not been prepared to fight. Within Division 4, Hackney, the left won all but one of the officers' positions in a postal ballot.

These signs augur well for the left in London. Activists must campaign vigorously within the NUT to force the leadership to fight.

MIKE FOLEY