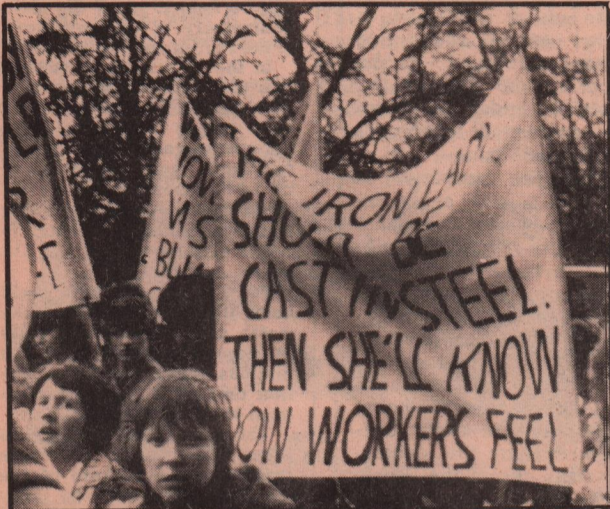


# WORKERS' ACTION

8 pages  
10p

No. 173  
April 19th 1980



March 9: Len Murray waffled and dithered. He is still waffling and dithering, but the fightback is growing.

## May 14th: Yes, we want to kick the Tories out

"OUR AIM is to bring this government down. It vexes me when Len Murray is asked about this and he does a soft-shoe shuffle that Fred Astaire would be proud of", said a Rolls Royce shop steward at a meeting of 600 shop stewards in Glasgow on April 2nd.

"This meeting", he went on, "is fundamentally about bringing this government down. Who else is going to do it for us?"

The meeting was jointly organised by the Clydeside district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, with representatives from Glasgow

Trades Council, and it agreed unanimously on all-out strike action on the 14th.

Nationally a number of unions have already agreed to support the Day of Action with strike calls: the NUR, GMWU, SOGAT, NUPE, National Union of Teachers, National Union of Journalists, National Union of Seamen, Furniture Timber and Allied Trades union, Fire Brigades Union, Tobacco Workers' Union, CoHSE, the TGWU's bus, motors and construction groups, and a number of NUM areas.

In every major city trades councils will be organising marches and meetings. The

Scottish TUC is backing the strike call and organising six major demonstrations in Scotland — in Dumfries, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Dundee and Aberdeen.

Murray, of course, has spent more time trying to reassure the Tories that the TUC does not believe in using industrial action to kick out the government than in trying to organise a massive turn-out for May 14th.

But the message on May 14 must be: 'Industrial action can be used for political ends'. Industrial action, if linked with political organisation, can bring down this government — and provide

the basis for a struggle to replace it with a real workers' government which takes action against capitalist power, rather than meekly executing capitalist instructions as all previous Labour Governments, not under the control of the labour movement, have done.

Socialists should not wait for their unions to decide on national action. They should push for a national call, but also organise locally.

In each area Labour Parties and Trades Councils should get together to arrange marches and meetings and to swell and co-ordinate the mobilisation.

SINCE FRIDAY 11th, when the TGWU honoured its promise to give official support to the strikers, the tide has been turning in Leyland.

As we write, twelve plants are on strike against the BL bosses' ultimatum of a 5% pay rise and 92 pages of strings: the Solihull site and other Rover plants in Birmingham, the Castle Bromwich and Swindon body plants, the two Jaguar factories in Coventry, and the Common Lane plant in Birmingham. The Cowley Assembly plant has a mass meeting this week and may come out. In some plants many AUEW members are out despite their leaders' instruction to scab.

### Flying

Flying pickets from Common Lane are stopping all lorries in and out of the Drews Lane Tractors and Transmissions plant. Pickets from Castle Bromwich have tied up the Selly Oak depot. As a result lay-offs have already started at Longbridge.

Rover Solihull is the strongest centre of the strike. Against the opposition of some of the plant leadership, a site strike committee has been formed, including directly elected representatives from the strikers. Rover workers are planning to leaflet Longbridge, calling on workers there to join the strike.

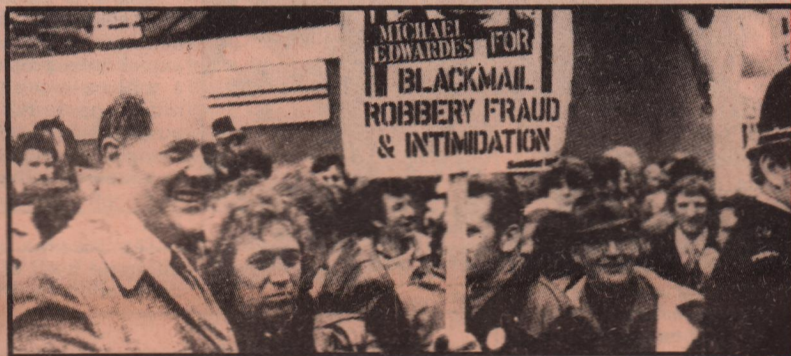
### Flat

The TGWU's role has not been specially good — it has not yet actually called out its members. However, it has recognised that unions cannot go on dealing with the bosses' attacks in the manner of the AUEW leaders — by running away faster and faster until they fall flat on their face in the mud.

The BL bosses are out to crush the strength of the unions. They are not softening the blow: in fact the strike at the SD1 plant in Solihull was partly provoked by BL's statement that they would not pay the back money due until they were 'satisfied'.

Clearly the bosses are willing to provoke strikes and go for a showdown. In this situation, the line of the Com-

# BL: Spread the strike



munist Party dominated plant leadership at Longbridge that an all-out strike is too risky, and guerilla tactics are best, is blind irresponsibility.

### Vote

Until recently, the would-be revolutionaries of the Socialist Workers Party went along with the CP on this. When the Longbridge Joint Shop Stewards Committee met before Easter, SWP stewards voted against the motion by a WA supporter

for a mass meeting and a recommendation for an all-out strike.

The SWP's own motion was just for a mass meeting to consider whatever decision the JSSC made. And Socialist Worker of 12th April didn't mention Leyland at all!

Now, tailing behind the working class as usual, the SWP (in a leaflet of Tuesday 15th) has come out for a strike. The CP still has its head in the sand.

But while even militant leaders or would-be leaders

flinch from a fight, the rank and file are beginning to find their feet.

•The strike must be spread and strengthened, with flying pickets to all BL plants and depots.

• The strike should go for the full claim — £24 increase, inflation-proofing for wages, and a 35 hour week by 1982 — and the safeguarding of existing rights and conditions.

• It must also demand the scrapping of the Edwardes plan and the scheduled closures in BL. BL workers should reply to threats by Edwardes to close down the car plants by occupying the factories and fighting for the reorganisation of production under workers' control, with work-sharing without loss of pay.

• The need for rank and file organisation in BL has never been greater. The union 'leaders' and the (unelected) Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee have been selling BL workers out for years. Now their cowardice has brought them to the verge of disaster.

A new set-up is needed. Negotiations should be controlled by stewards elected from each plant, and the membership must be consulted at every stage of negotiations. The first step would be to reconstruct the Combine Committee as a truly representative body covering the whole BL workforce, with regular meetings and thorough report-backs.

In short, BL workers must kick out the 'leaders' who ignore and betray them, and replace them with a leadership that will fight for their interests regardless of the bosses' blackmail.

## Labour must launch the attack

CALLAGHAN'S attempts to get the Labour Party's special conference on May 31st called off have failed. Representatives from Labour Parties all over the country will gather to protest against the cuts being pushed through by the Tories.

Unfortunately there are no plans for the meeting to give an opportunity to hammer out a programme of action against the Tories.

Instead, the conference will be faced with a statement prepared by the Party's National Executive, to which no amendments will be permitted. The press has been raising howls of horror at the prospect of this being a very 'left wing' statement. But the most 'left wing' demands look like being import controls and withdrawal from the EEC — demands for a pseudo-fight against a vague and remote 'enemy' overseas, not for a fight against the real enemy at home, the Tories and the bosses.

The conference should be laying plans for a campaign to break collaboration with the Tories, to organise for a General Strike to stop the Tory attacks, and to gear the labour movement to drive the Tories from office and replace them with a workers' government — a government under the control of the labour movement which takes decisive action against capitalist power and privilege.

CLPs and trade union branches should pass resolutions demanding the conference is opened up for amendments and debate.

### FUND

With £61 collected at the YS Conference, and £100 from Birmingham, we totalled £260 last month, a bit over the top of our £200 target.

But from now on, rising costs mean we have to set a monthly target of £300. Send contributions to Nik Barstow, WA Fund, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

# No support for Carter's threat against Iran

PRESIDENT Carter has decided on new measures against Iran to try to get it to free the American Embassy hostages. He has also called on Western nations to take firm action in line with the US economic sanctions.

Carter's latest statement even threatened military action — something he has been careful to reject explicitly up to now. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in an ABC Television interview: "If we are not effective with the sanctions which are in place now, and if the allies don't join us, and if the subsequent non-military actions we might take do not work, then we'll have to consider other options, and those may be less attractive to us than the options that are open to us now."

"We have a breadth of options open to us — economic, diplomatic, military options as well," he said. And Carter in another interview said, "We prefer to keep our actions non-belligerent in nature, but we reserve the right to take whatever action is necessary to secure the safe release of our hostages."

The latest measures — closing of the Iranian Embassy in Washington, tighter economic sanctions, the

by **Andrew Hornung**

ejection of more Iranians from the US, and the refusal of entry to Iranian nationals — come on top of the sanctions imposed last autumn, which already cut down drastically the export of food and medicine, the import of oil, and other trade. If the gov-

ernments of the EEC and other Western nations respond to US pressure to cooperate, the effect on Iran could be serious.

Iranian president Bani Sadr wants to be rid of the hostages. But he cannot rally sufficient authority against the students and sections of the clergy to insist on their release. The holding of the

hostages has been the focal point of an 'anti-imperialist' campaign, which has mass support despite being overlaid with religious backwardness, and Bani Sadr feels it is too early to go out on a limb against this mood.

He is waiting for the election of the majlis, the Iranian parliament, sometime in May. By operating through that body he hopes to suppress what he has called the rival "centres of power".

So why is Carter suddenly stepping up the stakes now? Why not wait till May and see then? Because in the primaries now being held in the US he is afraid of losing ground. He is being taunted with doing nothing and letting America get pushed around.

At the same time he is doing all he can to get an Olympic boycott, giving Russia's invasion of Afghanistan as a reason.

Whatever criticisms we have about the holding of the hostages, especially without any serious preparations for a trial or inquiry, socialists must oppose Carter's big-power ploy — both the war-mongering and the attempt to create greater economic and political instability in Iran.

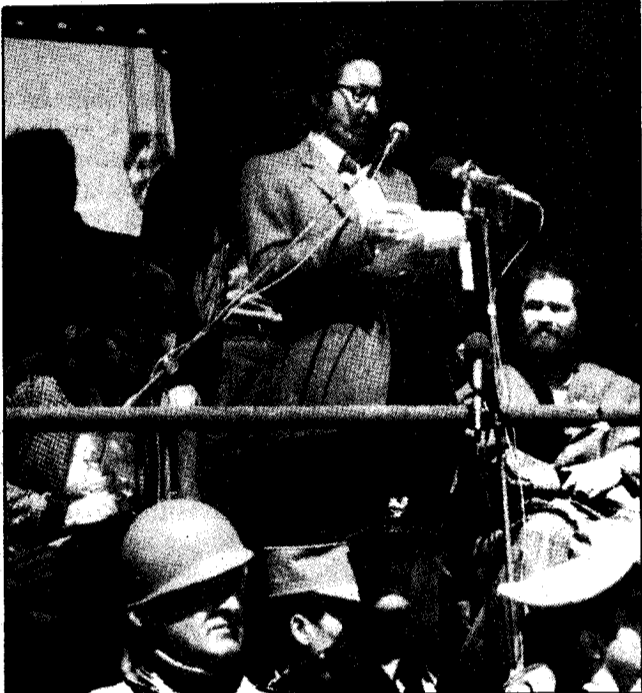
The last time Iran made a bid to rid itself of imperialist domination — in the early

fifties, under Dr Mossadeq — the embargo campaign was led by Britain. (The US did not completely back Britain up: it continued to supply arms and give military training — the better later to conduct the coup which ended the Mossadeq movement and re-imposed the Shah.)

Today, the embargo is being advocated again by the most powerful imperialist force in the region: no longer Britain, but America.

Most probably there will be no direct military intervention — though the possibility cannot be excluded — but the anti-Iranian and anti-Russian campaigns are being used in America and in Britain to reinstate the ideological status quo of the fifties. Particularly since British withdrawal from "east of Suez" and America's defeat in Indo-China, the imperialist powers have found it more difficult to justify any military intervention.

They want very much to regain their old room for manoeuvre. And if the present imperialist outcry over the hostages and over Afghanistan gives them some of that room back, it will have strengthened imperialism greatly. Socialists must campaign against the US sanctions and against any British support for them.



Bani-Sadr talks — but the clergy decide

## Troops Out march defies Loyalists

LOYALISTS pelted Troops Out marchers with bottles, coins, cans, lumps of earth and eggs in Stirling on Saturday 12th. About 200 loyalists, mostly from Glasgow, attacked a demonstration of 300 demanding troops out now and political status for Republican prisoners. Marchers on the edge of the demonstration were punched, kicked and spat at by the loyalists.

Despite attempts to prevent it, a rally was held with speakers from Sinn Fein and Tameside and Edinburgh Trades Councils, who stressed the common interest that British and Irish workers have in smashing British rule in Ireland.

Given the level of opposition, the fact that the march took place was a success. But it is essential that we take the question of Ireland up in the broad labour movement, to build solidarity with the Irish people and force the troops out.

## Media censors strike again?

LAST WEEK BBC2 showed the first of two programmes on Irish history and politics called 'The Republican Tradition'. It consisted of a rather simplistic history of Republicanism, along with interviews with every bankrupt Free State politician the BBC could find.

One after the other we heard John Hume of the SDLP, Neil Blaney and a Fianna Fail member of Parliament, all of whom are proud to be 'Republican' and support a United Ireland at some point in the indefinite future. Right now, they concentrate on attacking the Provisionals.

The programme described Fianna Fail and the others as 'verbal Republicans', but no one was invited to put the view of the Provisionals, who are fighting for Irish unity here and now.

It was left to Conor Cruise O'Brien — violently opposed to any kind of Republicanism — to point out that if anyone deserved to be called 'Republican' it was the Provisionals.

The conspicuous absence of the Provos can only be the latest example of media censorship of the Irish issue. Every time either BBC or ITV has given any coverage to the Provos, they have been jumped on by the Government and much of the press.

Many films trying to get a serious perspective on what is happening in Ireland have been banned. Until the BBC stop this policy, they will keep producing shallow and biased programmes like 'The Republican Tradition'.

## When the West backs Islam

"IT IS YOU who keep this regime in existence... You have helped stamp out every progressive movement in the Arab world".

These words — addressed to the British journalist in Antony Thomas' film 'Death of a Princess' — have been strikingly confirmed by the events following the film's showing on ITV last Wednesday, 11th.

Saudi threats to cut off oil and trade brought an immediate apology from Carrington, who regretted that the film had been shown.

Thomas' film dealt with the execution of Princess Mishal and her lover for adultery in Jeddah in 1977. After the news of the execution broke in the West, Thomas was determined to find out what had really happened. The film was a dramatised reconstruction of how he gradually pieced together the truth.

It was not an anti-Arab or anti-Islamic film — as the Saudi regime and much of the British press claim. Thomas used incidents in his travels to show the conflicts within the Arab world and very effectively destroyed many of the stereotypes current in the West.

He showed the reactionary fundamentalist Islam of the

Saudi regime not as just something 'uncivilised' meekly accepted by the population, but as an integral part of the regime's policy of repressing any progressive movements at home and abroad.

He showed how for the rich and powerful in Saudi Arabia all the strict Islamic laws are thrown to the winds as soon as they are out of the country, and how in Jeddah women can shop for expensive western clothes in boutiques — but have to put their veils back on before going into the street.

Usually outrage at the horrors of Islamic reaction is used to justify the manoeuvres of imperialism, for example in Iran. Then there is no protest from the Saudis and no apology from the British government.

The diplomatic row caused by 'Death of a Princess' is the best compliment that can be paid to it.

## Euro-reformists fall out

FOR THE Communist Party of Italy, 'Eurocommunism' is a thing of the past: now they are engaged in "a search for the Euro-left".

Enrico Berlinguer of the PCI has already held a meeting with French Socialist leader Mitterand, to the fury of the French Eurocommunists, who are set in bitter competition with the French SP.

The Italian CP and also the Spanish CP have refused to attend an international Communist meeting on disarmament, called by the French and Polish CPs. They say it is just an attempt by the Kremlin to re-establish its leadership of the 'Communist Movement'.

Berlinguer says he always disliked the Eurocommunist label, and that the time has come to persuade the West that the "Euro-left" is both respectable and realistic.

The British CP has called on the French and Polish CPs to make the meeting less formal, saying that otherwise they will not attend.

## Iraq fights the USA's war

WHILE President Carter makes increasingly warlike noises to frighten Iran, Iraq has actually taken up arms.

Since the overthrow of the Shah 14 months ago, there have been several disputes between Iraq and Iran. Iran re-asserted claims on part of the Shatt-al-Arab area at the northern end of the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf, along with other areas in other countries.

And Iran accused Iraq of inciting and assisting the Arab population of the Iranian oil province of Khuzestan in their struggle for autonomy, of arming the Kurds in the north west of Iran, and carrying out armed acts of sabotage against oil installations.

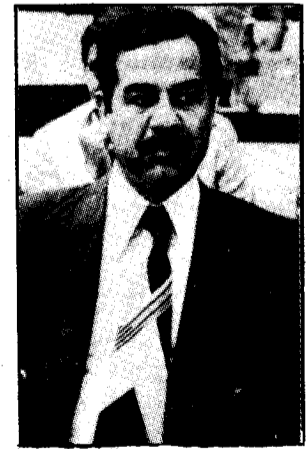
Iran's President Bani Sadr recently attacked the ideology of Arab nationalism and of the Ba'ath Party (which rules in Iraq) for its anti-religious content.

In fact Iraq gave no real support to the Arab autonomists in Khuzestan. Probably Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was more afraid of the possibility that the new Shiite government in Iran would support the rebellious Iraqi Shiites of the South. Iraq at that time was in considerable crisis, with the Sunni minority feeling more and more threatened and with Saddam Hussein himself in fear of being ousted by rival groups within the Ba'ath Party.

There is some truth to Iran's accusation about Iraq helping the Kurds. The Kurds' struggle for self-determination — in Iran as elsewhere — is completely justified. But Saddam Hussein, himself the butcher of Iraqi Kurds, saw in the war between the Iranian Kurds and the Iranian government a possibility of

servicing his own ends. (In the same spirit, with the roles reversed, the Shah some years ago backed Iraqi Kurds against Iraq.)

Still, none of this is the real cause of the border war between Iran and Iraq. Iraq is



Saddam Hussein: riding the stalking horse

most probably acting as a stalking horse for the US. In recent months there has been an acceleration in Iraq's gradual drift away from ties with the Soviet Union to links with the West, in particular with France and more recently the US.

One of the possible targets for Iraqi attack is the group of islands in the Straits of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf, the Tumbs and Abu Musa — exactly the target recommended by the more warlike organs of the western press as a pressure point to force the release of the US hostages in Iran.

ANDREW HORNUNG

## PORTUGUESE WORKERS DEFY RIGHTIST OFFENSIVE

NEXT FRIDAY celebrations will be held to mark the sixth anniversary of the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship.

In the 18 months of revolution that followed the coup of 25th April 1974, the banks and most major industries were nationalised and large tracts of farmland were collectivised by farm labourers. However, these gains for the working class have been constantly under attack over the last 4½ years.

Portuguese workers will have little to celebrate as they watch army officers and state functionaries go through the motions of praising the revolution they have done their utmost to check and stifle.

The most sullen response to these state rituals will come from the farmworkers of the Alentejo. Oppressed by landowners for decades and denied the right to form trade unions before 1974, these workers quickly saw in the April 1974 revolution an opportunity to get rid of the landowners and establish collective farms.

By the end of 1975, the vast majority of farms in southern Portugal were under workers' control and the landlords were in exile.

Since then, however, the landlords have attempted a comeback through the good offices of successive Portuguese governments.

The Socialist Party government (1976-8) began this process. Given political orders by James Callaghan and Helmut Schmidt, and economic orders by the IMF, it set about 'stabilising' the country's economy for capitalism.

The enshrinement of nationalisation and collectivisation in the 1976 constitution was undermined in practice by attempts to restore land in the Alentejo to its former owners. The drive against the agricultural collectives was further accelerated when a conservative government took office in December of last year.

Since then, there have been at least two deaths of farmworkers resisting the restoration of landlordism. A lot of livestock and machinery has also been destroyed to stop it falling into the hands of the class enemy.

The state has backed up the landowners in two ways. Firstly, it has increased the presence of the National Guard in the Alentejo and paid them a special danger allowance to conduct evictions. Since National Guard pay is at least twice that of an Alentejo farmworker, and most National Guardsmen are recruited in predominantly right-wing Northern Portugal, this shows how a situation of high unemployment in the country is being used to divide the working people.

Secondly, there is evidence of bribery of Ministry of Agriculture officials to make them provide 'evidence' for takeovers.

However, these attacks have not lessened the agricultural workers' determination to preserve the gains they made from the revolution. Workers' demonstrations last month against the conservative government's policies were followed by a total stoppage of work for two days on the collective farms and co-ops in the South in defence of land reform. Demonstrations took place throughout the Alentejo and even in the small Northern towns which have not traditionally been radical.

The verdict being given by Portugal's land-workers is that the revolution is not dead. The forthcoming elections to the national Assembly in August should show a gain for the left-wing parties. And in direct class struggle too the workers will fight against any return to the days of Salazar.

BAS HARDY

# HOW BRISTOL YOUTH FOUGHT THE POLICE

ON Wednesday April 2nd, the black community in the St Paul's area of Bristol reacted with such speed and ferocity to a police raid on a local café that the law was forced to pull out of the area for four hours until it had been reinforced enough to go back in.

During that time, Lloyd's Bank was set on fire and several shops were looted, the looters ranging from black youths to white old-age

If looting was the effect, what were the causes of April 2nd? Unemployment, bad housing, police harassment and poor education facilities are the main root causes of unrest in the area. The press has tended to concentrate on the first two, mouthing bland generalisations about "more resentment", but people in the area are just as concerned about the role of the police and the local education

intimidation, violence and forced confessions. Such treatment could only go on for so long before there was a response like April 2nd.

The St Paul's area is used as a training ground for young policemen, so that over-zealous behaviour is the norm. But socialists should beware of the argument that calls for more mature "community" policemen, and remember "community" PC Ian Benn-

two grammar schools and Bishopston Secondary Modern School — which is 90% black but is being closed due to "falling rolls". Incoming children are diverted, not to one of the grammar schools in the same area, but to a comprehensive in the adjoining administrative area.

Small wonder that this situation, aggravated by Avon's swingeing cuts in education, which had teachers on the streets last term, has resulted in a massive build-up of resentment.

The Labour Party had been active in St Paul's some time ago, but work there had tailed off since the election. Even so, a joint meeting of the two party branches covering the St Paul's area was quickly set up on Tuesday 8th April.

The two branches concerned, Ashley and St Paul's, are in different constituencies. At the meeting it was decided to get a leaflet out advertising an informal meeting over drinks with residents in the area. Members who had been in the Party for some time testified to the necessity of this informal approach, though formal organisation may come out later.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH



pensioners in wheelchairs. The press naturally made great play of the looting angle, but could not disguise the fact that during the four hours of "lawlessness", there was no racial violence. No-one was hurt, and in fact a system of community self-policing came into force.

Indeed, it was precisely because black aggression was aimed directly at the police that they were forced to withdraw for four hours to avoid bloodshed.

Police brutality has become a regular occurrence in St Paul's, with threats,

and a friend to the people second."

As regards education facilities, St Paul's comes under the North Central area of Bristol, which is the only area of Avon to retain grammar schools. There are

## LIFE IN ST PAULS "As long as you're black, it's trouble"

Gloria, a qualified nurse, and Pam, a social worker, are both black, and they have lived in the St Paul's area for a number of years. They told a local Labour Party member what they thought about what happened in St Paul's on Wednesday night, April 2nd.

GLORIA As a matter of fact, I was not on the scene when it all started, I went over to the scene about 15 or 20 minutes later. But my opinion about the whole thing: I think that it is a rebellion against the police for the treatment that they give to the people.

A lot of young kids in our neighbourhood are being molested continually by the police when they go out walking, maybe in the town or in the neighbourhood. They are being taken to the station and being told to say things that they know nothing about, and then [the police] take these things and press charges against them.

This has been going on for a very long time, and they have complained many times. There have been many complaints and enquiries, I suppose, into these things. It has got so far that these kids just couldn't take any more and they were just letting out their frustration.

PAM I think also what has to be taken into account is that a lot of talk has been going on as to the different entertainments and the different things that a young black needs. What has not

been spoken about is that better education is needed in this area.

A lot of the youths are walking about without jobs and without anything to do. Nobody asks if they are capable of doing jobs. They may be physically capable of doing jobs — but you confront them with a situation where they have to apply for a job, and a lot of them are not capable of doing this because of their experience with the education system.

Now, with so many education cuts and what-have-you, what is going to happen to the young blacks and in general, not only the young blacks but the poor society in this country?

which is something I dread.

I wouldn't really like to see it happen, but it will unless something is done about this education system and something is done about the way the police are treating young blacks in the area — the way they are always lumping everyone together.

As long as you are black, it is trouble. That is what is felt and as long as the police retaliate in the way and with the attitude that they use towards these youths, these sorts of things will always happen.

So I think the whole case needs to be reviewed, attitudes, the society, the way they run things, the education

workers, welfare officers, combine together, work as one unit, just go and see the kids and discuss these problems — find out what they really want instead of thinking for these people. They do not want people to think for them, telling them what to do day after day.

PAM I think this is very important because everybody is just jumping to conclusions and deciding what they think the youths want. It is time people really investigated what these youths are really thinking, stop assuming what they want without taking any notice of what the youths are saying.

Even without this outburst, how many of the youths are really getting a chance to voice their own opinion? Everything is being distorted, the press are distorting everything. The real initial problem is not a racial problem, yet it has become a racial problem.

It started off as a community thing, it was something that was happening to the community. Suddenly we



They are going to suffer. These are the people who are going to feel the worst of it all and this incident. I feel it is a perfect example of what will happen even more so and worse in the future.

ation system in general, not just for the young blacks but for the young people in general.

GLORIA In this present crisis what I would really like to see is all the social

have a situation where the blacks are against the whites.

It is nothing of the sort. It has been distorted all the time and I think that it is time that was stopped.

### Labour Party wards in St Pauls have put out this leaflet.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S WRONG.

The troubles in Bristol didn't start on April 2nd, and they didn't finish then either. Unemployment, bad housing, poor education, police harassment... all these things have been with us, and they will stay with us unless we do something about them. And it's not just Bristol, it's all inner cities.

THIS IS WHY.

Why are these bad things with us? It is because the system this country is part of, the capitalist system, is in crisis. Big business wants more profits, so they've told their friends the Tories to put the squeeze on working people. As a result, we are being made to pay to lift the bosses out of their crisis.

CUTS in jobs and a clampdown on retraining courses.

CUTS in housing and hundreds of thousands of building workers on the dole.

CUTS in education and money transferred to private schools.

This plan is succeeding. Take Lloyd's Bank. Their profits went up last year by 49% to £277 million! These high profits come as a result of record high interest rates. High interest rates boost the council's repayments to the loan companies and the way the council gets them back is to increase your rent, rates and mortgage.

So when some politicians say we've got to have cuts because there's not enough money to go round, we say "No! The money's there, but it's in the hands of the wrong people!"

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

How can we move the wealth of this country to where it's supposed to be — with the working people who create it in the first place? (For example, if you're an unemployed printer your benefit drops, if you're an unemployable princess, you get a 30% rise!)

Just as putting the squeeze on working people is a political attack, so it demands a political fight-back. We must turn our anger to political activity and organisation.

Labour Party workers in your area believe in an organised political fight-back against the pressures of capitalism, at national and local level — a fight-back that won't finish, whatever government is in power, until the anarchy of big business has been replaced by a planned socialist democracy.

Resistance can take many forms, both inside and outside the Labour Party, and we support the self-organisation of all oppressed people. We face a common enemy. We can learn from and reinforce each other. As a first step we must talk, to look at the situation, swap ideas and plan action. That is why we say come and talk over a glass of beer at an informal meeting.

It is vital also that there is now a full and proper public enquiry — no white-wash! — into the real causes of the problems. Add your weight to this demand by putting pressure on your MP.

### Why the community exploded

NOTHING LIKE the uprising in St Paul's has happened in Britain for a long time.

The nearest thing recently was in Ladywood, Birmingham, in August 1977: as an anti-fascist demonstration, after clashing with police, marched to a local police station, local black youth swarmed out onto the streets. For a while, Soho Road was completely out of control of the police.

But many times over recent years black youth — and often white youth too — have faced police violence on demonstrations and other gatherings. After Southall, Lewisham, the Notting Hill Carnivals, police violence on picket lines, and several deaths in police custody, it could only be a matter of time before hostility exploded.

In Bristol it did. And the community won. The fighting started with a violent police raid on a café. According to detailed testimony by a white resident, published in the *Guardian*, the street battles then started with police stoning black youths.

After three hours of battles the police had to withdraw. With the police out of the area, several shops were looted. But even the looting was not indiscriminate, and — again according to the *Guardian* — it was regulated by "a kind of self-policing".

There was no racial violence, or any other violence, while the police were out of the area. It's nothing racial. We are just fed up with the police — was a typical comment from a local white youth quoted in the press.

The revolt was not against all law and all order, but against capitalist and racist law and order — against a police force specially recruited and organised to defend property and privilege.

Even the Fleet Street press located the root cause of the revolt in social oppression: the fact that capitalism has nothing to offer many working class youth but the dole or filthy jobs at miserable wages. Their answer is to seek for some reforms to patch over the resentment.

But in Tory Britain, wallowing in crisis, there is no money for that sort of reform. In any case, many working class kids are too angry and too bitterly aware of the reality of the system to be bought off by a few condescending concessions.

They need a programme and a strategy to organise their anger into an ongoing fight against the system. The labour movement must find ways and means and forms of organising to draw in the young militants, to fight for a revolutionary transformation of the labour movement and then of society.

The most urgent demands are:

- A public inquiry into the police action on April 2nd.
- Labour movement support for community self-organisation.
- Reverse the cuts. Make the bosses pay. Start an urgent house-building programme.
- Work-sharing under workers' control and without loss of pay: cut hours, not jobs!



by CLIVE BRADLEY [delegate from Manchester Central LPYS].

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists are faced with a big problem. The severity of the attacks being made by this Tory government on the working class demands a vigorous campaigning response by an organisation prepared to relate to and to organise working class youth, and it also forces many young people to look to political answers to the questions facing them.

In the struggles against the Tories which have already begun to develop, the YS could grow into a mass socialist youth movement, organising thousands of school and college students, unemployed youth and young workers.

The problem is that the YS is crushingly dominated by a tendency — the *Militant* — that is completely incapable of building such a movement. The LPYS is still miserably small — yet standing on the sidelines when thousands of young people have been organised in the women's movement or in the Anti Nazi League, the YS majority in rather pathetic sectarian arrogance seems to believe itself to be the labour movement.

YS Conference, held in Llandudno over Easter weekend, was probably the worst for many years, despite the opportunities which should be open to Labour's youth organisation. The standard of debate was abysmally low; the National Committee is probably the least dynamic for some time; and the *Militant* tendency demonstrated over and over again just how unprepared it is to give YS members a political lead for going back from the Conference to build their branches, in the factories, schools, colleges and on the dole queues.

Actually, YS Conference is not really a conference at all. It is a rally for the *Militant*, who are simply not interested in actual debate. The reason for this is quite simple.

As *Militant* showed in the 'debates' on women's oppression and racism, they



do not recognise the need for specially oppressed sections of the working class to organise independently to fight their oppression, and to force the labour movement as a whole into action over issues of concern to them.

The fundamental contradiction facing the YS is that the reason we need it — or the reason that we need junior workers' committees in trade unions (which *Militant* supports) — is that youth also need to organise themselves in the same way. Given *Militant's* attitude towards women and blacks, however, they can provide no reason, no real justification for the existence of the YS.

The actual reason *Militant* supports the existence of the YS is that it provides a vehicle for their propaganda. That, in practice, for them is its only purpose. Consequently, they are not able to actually build the YS — even though many, or all, *Militant* supporters may want to do so — because their whole political conception of the YS is merely as a stepping-stone to *Militant*, rather than as an organisation which relates to the actual concerns of working class youth, attempting to win them to revolutionary politics in the course of joint struggle.

Consequently also, there is no debate at YS Conference. There is the odd token opposition speaker — but they are only taken begrudgingly or by accident. Because even the Conference itself is just a vehicle for *Militant's* propaganda. So long as it is seen in that way, debate — to politically arm YS members — is simply irrelevant. What is provided instead of debate is good, rallying, intoxicating verbiage.

*Militant* have this strange idea that debate is between numbers of people — before

you can speak, you must first be counted, and woe betide you if they judge you too few. Since any opposition obviously has no support, why bother giving it valuable rally time when it might win support for its ideas?

In the debate on women, one *Militant* supporter told us enthusiastically: "We're not women workers, we're workers". One male *Militant* supporter, arguing with a *Workers' Action* seller, had obviously got the message. "I don't feel intimidated by the male-dominated labour movement", he told her.

*Militant's* so-called 'class position' — a class position that led the YS nationally to do nothing about the Corrie Bill — actually means not taking up women's issues seriously, and not recognising how women workers are doubly oppressed. It also means not fighting reactionary ideas within the labour movement — and even reproducing those ideas.

Another issue on which *Militant* fails to fight reactionary ideas is that of Israel. *Militant* is prepared to support national liberation movements in places like Zimbabwe or Vietnam, but when it comes to the Palestinian (or the Irish) when the predominant view in the labour movement is pro-Israel (or pro-Britain), *Militant* capitulates. The *Militant* motion on the Middle East reproduced the Zionist argument that all people have the right to self-determination, in practice denying that right to the Palestinians.

Of course, *Militant* retained their majority this year — though, as the NC is not elected at National Conference, you have to go by the figures for NEC delegates. Tony Sauniois was returned with 204 votes. *Workers' Action* candidate Anna Twentyman came third with 13 votes.

But the *Militant* cannot dominate the YS for ever. *Workers' Action* has launched a new youth paper, *Barricade*, to build a current in the YS that is oriented towards organising working class youth for a fight, not an annual rally. Either the YS is transformed into a revolutionary youth organisation in the period ahead, or it will stagnate. We are committed to its transformation.

# Militant: Still from the sidelines

by NIK BARSTOW

"MAY 14th should be a warning shot across the Tories' bows, preparing for the battle to come", declared Labour Party Young Socialists chairman Kevin Ramage as he opened the LPYS conference in Llandudno.

The rhetoric about 'battles to come' was heady. The LPYS was 'mapping the way forward for the next ten years', during which time it will become the mass socialist youth movement, declared Ramage.

But the practical proposals for action today did not keep pace with the promises for 1990. The sum total of the 'warning shot' to the Tories proposed by the LPYS National Committee was to press for the May 14th TUC day of action to be turned into a one day general strike.

According to the NC, this call will serve to educate the movement about its own strength, and *Militant* supporters speaking from the floor seemed more of the

speaker Tony Sauniois, in contrast, looked forward to a future when a "Labour government is prepared to go outside the framework of diseased capitalism and these economic reforms can take place". In the meantime — don't be too rash!

Brewer pointed out that a Labour Government initiated massive cuts, presided over a level of unemployment of 1 1/4 million, and tried to curb wages. Only if we fight to restructure the labour movement in the struggle against the Tories can we avoid a future Labour Government on the model of the last one.

## Action

Clive Bradley from Manchester Central LPYS took up this point, arguing that the Tories' attack is a generalised one on the whole working class movement. It needs a generalised response, all-out general strike action.

A one-day protest action would be a step forward, but such actions are repeatedly used by reformist union leaders in France and Italy to derail militant action. They lead workers in a 'Grand Old Duke of York' march that cannot actually bring victory, and thus keep their hold on the movement intact.

Though the Edinburgh Central resolution on fighting the Tories was defeated, the debate on the General Strike was continued at a WA fringe meeting. Stephen Corbishley, a member of the CPSA National Executive, spelt out why we need to fight for an all-out general strike without putting bureaucratic limits on the fight.

## Flexibility

"Democracy and flexibility is what our movement needs, not prescriptions against unofficial bodies or sticking to procedures that will hold back the building of these bodies and the mobilisation of the working class". In his own union, *Militant* supporters on the NEC had actually opposed calls for General Strike action on

May 14th. WA, he said, has a different conception of how to build. We call for a General Strike to put the fight against the Tories into the hands of the rank and file and take it out of the hands of the bureaucrats.

We demand that the leaders take action, but unlike *Militant* we do not wait for them to act. We have confidence in the rank and file.

Similar arguments came up in a debate on the cuts. Andy Dixon moved a resolution from Huyton LPYS calling for a fight against the cuts based on policies of no cuts and no rent or rate rises.

The resolution called for the LPYS to "initiate local anti-cuts campaigns". "The YS", said Dixon, "must get involved in such local campaigns, not just stand on the sidelines saying 'We've got the right programme'."

"The YS must do the type of work the SCLV has done.

tee in their debate, though were given — identical resolution by the dominated National Conference

G Mick Cash (YS) used this graphic illustration of the grip over the n't elected (ence) is und NC decided motion, apparently had not elected supporters as they railroad vote on the their recomm er than \$ appreciation. In the debate, an am Moss Side I



Mick Cashman: Troops Out!

opinion that a one-day general strike will be all that's needed to bring down the Tories.

Gordon Brewer from Edinburgh Central YS outlined *Workers' Action's* alternative to *Militant's* policy of protest action plus demands presented as just "good ideas for the next Labour government". He noted the 'educational' value of the demands contained in the NC's main resolution — a 35 hour week, increased public expenditure and a national minimum wage — but stressed that we have to lay down how to fight for these demands now. NC



in Lambeth the SCLV and a very few activists helped launch the council into a fight. It might have retreated from that fight now by putting up the rates, but it did show the way to start". The resolution was opposed by the National Commit-

the attack o calling for a right of soci to organise Party was defeated af Committee i from Tony S give reasons,

## Afghanistan: backing the Stalinist 'lesser evil'?

"THE REGIME in Afghanistan carried out the reforms without explaining them to the masses. That is why it's been isolated", said YS NC member John Cantwell in the conference debate on Afghanistan.

"We did not support Soviet troops going in", he said, "but to call for their immediate withdrawal would lead to the installation of a reactionary regime and the overthrow of the reforms".

These arguments were countered by Andy Dixon (Huyton LPYS), supporting an amendment from Edinburgh Central which opposed the imperialist outcry and war drive but also opposed the pre-

sence of Soviet troops. Dixon attacked Cantwell's view that what was wrong with the Afghan regime was a failure to 'explain' reforms. To have a real progressive content, such reforms need to be implemented and fought for by the direct activity of the masses, not just 'explained' to them.

He also challenged Cantwell's view that the presence of Soviet troops had necessarily and automatically overthrown capitalism and landlordism. But that wasn't the main point, stressed Dixon.

The Soviet bureaucracy is counter-revolutionary. Its

invasion of Afghanistan not only crushes the independent life of the Afghan masses and institutes bureaucratic tyranny but also sets back the fight for socialism on a world scale, strengthening the war drive preparations by Carter and Thatcher.

By contrast, *Militant* supporters attacked criticism of the bureaucracy as being "on Thatcher and Carter's side".

The debate showed up a fundamental difference between those who see bureaucracy as an inevitable and almost necessary evil, and those who fight for an independent working class perspective.

## Ireland: YS minority fights

"THERE IS no difference between being Catholic and unemployed and being Protestant and unemployed in Northern Ireland". "Protestants no longer have a guarantee of a house or a job".

"In Northern Ireland there is no sectarian split in the trade union movement". *Militant* supporters from Garston and Cardiff LPYS branches were trying to prove their theory that industrial unity has been created in Northern Ireland by conditions of equal misery and that all we need now is to achieve 'political unity' by building a Labour Party in the North.

This simple theory omitted one important fact. Discrimination and division in the working class still exists in the North because the Bord-

er still exists and can't be wished away, replied Mick Cashman, moving Wallace YS's alternative resolution calling for Troops Out Now and support for the forces fighting British imperialism in Ireland.

Rob McGonigle (Coventry North East YS) explained that as someone from a working class Protestant family in the North he knew he could always go back and get a job, though much worse paid than in England. He could go back and get a house, though a slum... A Catholic could expect neither.

The difference may seem small to us, he said, but the difference between 0 and 1 is a very big one.

Bill Prenderville (Tottenham YS) asked, "*Militant* say that privileges don't

exist any more. Do they mean to say that discrimination has ceased to exist?" "The Labour Party, by ignoring the question of Ireland, has failed to raise awareness about the torture there... We must campaign against repression... We can't allow it to be swept under the carpet".

*Militant* supporters replied to this by claiming that they did fight repression. They called for a 'trade union inquiry into political prisoners', because, as a speaker from *Militant's* Irish group said, "Only the labour movement can decide who is a political prisoner and who is a sectarian psychopath. We will do our best to smash the bigots".

This sort of mealy-mouthed 'support' (?) for the H-Block and Armagh prison-

ers was followed by Comr Nick Toms. He thought: "were sectarian 'who will divide class into th



# preaching nes

Summary of the  
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ally Militant  
th West reg-

We don't need to 'campaign' to defend *Militant*, he said. Asserting the right of socialist tendencies to organise can only play into the hands of the Right wing. All that is necessary is to contrast *Militant's* policies and programme to those of the Right wing.

Resolutions calling for more democracy in the YS, with an end to NC recommendations and summaries of debates at conference and election of the NC by national

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Gordon Brewer: Fight now!

*Militant* and fight for the  
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a National  
commendation  
nois. He did  
however.

conference, were supported  
by over 50 of the 260 branches  
present at the conference.  
The movers of the democ-  
acy motions were attacked as  
trying to divert attention  
from politics to organisation  
because "they have lost the  
debates time and time

ley and the reactionary big-  
ots", and why he was ag-  
ainst the immediate with-  
drawal of troops.  
"Troops out now would be  
a disaster. It would lead to a

Charlie Sarell (left) spoke for the  
executive of the Labour Comm-  
ittee on Ireland at a large fringe  
meeting on "Why Troops Out  
Now?"  
He also reported on his local  
experience: Leicester South CLP  
and Leicester Trades Council  
sponsored a dayschool on Ire-  
land in early March which at-  
tracted over 100 activists in the  
movement and overwhelmingly  
supported calls for Troops Out  
Now. Leicester Trades Council's  
Irish sub-committee has also  
begun to publish a newsletter,  
"Ireland Unfree".  
Why, challenged Sarell,  
hasn't the YS taken similar  
initiatives?

again". As Mick Cashman  
from Wallasey YS pointed  
out, though, the issue of  
YS democracy was tied up  
with the way to build the YS.

"The extension of labour  
movement democracy as a  
way to build mass involve-  
ment is not a fringe idea. It  
is central to all the debates  
going on in the Labour Party  
at present".

Anna Twentyman from  
Moss Side LPYS, standing  
for the YS place on the Lab-  
our Party NEC, outlined  
*Workers' Action's* view on  
how to build the YS.

## Relate

"At present it simply isn't  
fulfilling its potential to be  
a mass socialist youth org-  
anisation. We stand for  
turning the YS outwards to  
relate to the concerns and  
problems of young people.

"That is something the  
YS didn't do when the ANL  
was at its height. Instead of  
going into that movement  
and fighting for a principled  
programme, it stood on the  
sidelines.

"It stood on the sidelines  
of the growth of the women's  
movement. *WA's* involve-  
ment in campaigns like *Wom-  
en's Fightback*, which on  
March 22 held a conference  
attended by 500 women  
active in the labour and wo-  
men's movements, shows  
what can be achieved.

## Impact

"The YS cannot ignore  
issues like Ireland either. In-  
dividuals like Joan Mayn-  
ard who have spoken out in  
the movement have made  
more impact on this issue  
than the whole of the YS  
has done. It has ignored its  
own formal position of sup-  
port for Troops Out".

Twentyman said *WA* sup-  
porters had launched the  
new youth paper *Barricade*  
to play a real part in turning  
YS branches out to import-  
ant struggles — to all the  
issues affecting working  
class youth.

Her optimism about the  
launch of the paper was jus-  
tified by the sales at the con-  
ference. Almost one in five  
of the 1,500 attending bought  
a copy.

ed up by Nat-  
tee member  
plaining why  
e Republicans  
e psychopaths  
e the working  
ands of Pais-

civil war and the slaughter of  
Catholics". He went on:  
"The civil war would spill  
over into Britain. That is  
why the British troops stay  
there even though the capi-  
talists would like to with-  
draw them".

Toms' alternative to the  
fight being waged for Irish  
national independence was  
the fight to build a Labour  
Party in Ireland based on a  
'socialist programme' that  
ignores the existence of the  
Border.

*Militant's* view was voted  
through the conference, but  
YS chairman Kevin Ramage  
felt it necessary to remind  
the press that they should  
report conference policy not  
"some speeches they might  
have heard". Who is it in the  
Labour Party who is agree-  
ing to keep Ireland swept  
under the carpet?



Anna Twentyman: turn the  
YS outwards

## Women's self- organisation? 'They must be queer'

Just how far we have to go to  
get rid of the sexist and chau-  
vinist attitudes in the labour  
movement — and just how  
much the supposedly-Marxist  
*Militant* panders to backward-  
ness — was quite clear all  
weekend. When Anna Twenty-  
man spoke to the Composite,  
arguing for women's self-  
organisation, she was whistled  
at, and *Militant* supporters  
nudged each other, saying  
"She must be queer".

At the Campaign for Labour  
Party Democracy meeting,  
the Labour Abortion Rights  
speaker who criticised the  
sexism of the 'Ditch the Bitch'  
slogan and the *Militant's*  
'Plunder Woman' poster  
(which shows Margaret That-  
cher as an obese bikini-clad  
Wonder Woman) was sniggered  
at by a *Militant* supporter.

*Workers' Action* supporters,  
after long explanations to the  
*Militant* about the sexism of  
these posters, were harassed  
and intimidated by *Militant*  
heavies for writing on the pos-  
ters "Attack Thatcher for her  
politics, not as a woman".

## The women's rights debate

*Workers' Action* supporters  
backed Composite no. 20 on  
women's rights, while not  
agreeing with every dot and  
comma.

Three different resolutions  
had been cobbled together,  
and due to YS procedure, the  
movers had to accept this  
composite, or see their resolu-  
tions never reach the confer-  
ence floor. Thus *Workers'*  
*Action* supporters were push-  
ed into an apparent common  
front with Merle Amory of  
Brent East YS — who said she  
saw women's oppression as a  
sex question before a class  
question. And with the debate  
run in the usual style, *WA*  
supporters had no chance to  
get back into the debate and  
make our views clear.

We supported the Compos-  
ite because it laid the basis  
for a campaign for women's  
rights in the YS, but obviously  
*WA* supporters did not agree  
with the paragraph on wo-  
men's sections, which con-  
demned "their apparent  
lack of a feminist perspec-  
tive... their role should be to  
bring into the Party the ideas  
which are currently being  
developed in the women's  
movement and to fight for  
them to be supported by the  
mainstream Labour Party".

We do not support the ideas  
of the radical feminists, since  
they deny a class analysis of  
society, not those of many  
socialist feminists which we  
see as an illusory attempt to  
build a halfway house between  
radical feminism and Marx-  
ism.

New issue of  
**BARRICADE**, out now!  
22 pages, 10p plus 10p  
postage. Order from 16  
Glen St, Edinburgh.

National meeting for  
**BARRICADE** supporters  
SATURDAY MAY 10th  
BIRMINGHAM.  
Further details from 16  
Glen St, Edinburgh.



Photos: Callum McRae

# YS women start to organise

by JO THWAITES

SINCE the time allotted to  
the debate on the Women's  
composite amounted to less  
than an hour on the YS Con-  
ference agenda, the usual  
screams of frustration could  
be heard in Llandudno.

Every year the *Militant*  
tendency in the YS tells us  
that the fight for women's  
liberation is inextricably  
linked to the fight for social-  
ism, forgetting that if we  
didn't agree with that then  
we wouldn't be in the YS,  
but then they interpret that  
as meaning that nothing can  
be done by the YS to fight for  
women's rights and against  
sexism in the labour move-  
ment except to recite the  
programme of nationalising  
the commanding heights of  
the economy.

## First

Consequently, the YS  
played practically no role in  
the fight against the Corrie  
Bill — though even the TUC  
was drawn in to the extent of  
organising an official march  
against it — the first of its  
kind in the world!

The *Militant* also tells us  
that women's caucuses and  
women organising separately  
divide and split the labour  
movement.

But this year's YS Confer-  
ence was different, after all.  
Women in the *Fightback for  
Women's Rights* campaign

decided that something must  
be done. The *Militant's*  
politics have been driving  
women from the YS for long  
enough.

On Saturday lunchtime,  
we organised a women's  
caucus to discuss what to do.  
Much to our surprise, con-  
sidering how few women  
there were at the conference,  
over 40 women turned up,  
including some *Militant*  
women.

There was an initial dis-  
cussion about why we should  
have a women's caucus,  
taking up the YS record on  
the fight for women's rights,  
why it was so bad, the need  
to overcome the isolation felt  
by many women in the YS  
and the difficulty of getting  
the YS to take the question  
seriously.

Two of the more experien-  
ced *Militant* women said that  
all these objections were  
untrue and that the YS had  
a record second to none in  
the fight against the Corrie  
Bill.

This response was not un-  
expected — and neither was  
the lack of evidence for the  
*Militant* supporters' assert-  
ions!

We went on to discuss how  
we could change the situ-  
ation in the YS.

First we decided to put out  
a *Fightback* leaflet for the  
debate on Sunday, arguing  
for Composite 20, which  
called for the YS to suppor  
women's self-organisation  
to organise a dayschool on  
women in society, to encour-

age YS branches to discuss  
women's issues, and to  
affiliate to the *Fightback*  
campaign.

As we expected the Com-  
posite to be defeated, the  
women's caucus also made  
plans for what we would do  
after the Conference. Sugg-  
estions for a national net-  
work with a regular news-  
letter were agreed. The aim  
is to organise for a national  
conference of YS women,  
and a real campaign for  
women's rights, whether  
the YS majority agree or not.

Finally we discussed how  
to take up the fight against  
sexism in the broad labour  
movement outside the YS.  
Following on from an initi-  
ative of the *Fightback* con-  
ference, we agreed to join or  
set up campaigns through  
the local YSs, to approach  
Trades Councils and the  
organisers of the demon-  
strations and events on May  
14th and request that they  
don't use sexist slogans like  
'Ditch the Bitch', or 'Marg-  
aret Thatcher has one, Keith  
Joseph is one'...

## Class

The labour movement  
should attack Thatcher on  
the basis of her anti-working  
class politics, which have  
nothing to do with the fact  
that she is a woman. The sex-  
ist slogans simply reinforce  
the traditional stereotypes of  
women that have gone un-  
challenged in the labour  
movement for decades.

One main reason for the  
survival of this sexism is the  
small number of women  
active in the labour move-  
ment, so we also need to  
make a special effort to get  
women out on the May 14th  
demonstrations by leaflet-  
ting and holding meetings in  
local estates, and organising  
women's contingents on  
the local marches. We will  
also need to organise trans-  
port into the assembly points  
where transport workers are  
on strike, and make arrange-  
ments for children on the  
day.

Over the weekend, many  
women came to the *Fight-  
back* stall, bought the books  
on women's liberation  
which they couldn't get on  
the *Militant* stall, put their  
names down for the *Fight-  
back* mailing list, discussed  
their experiences in arguing  
with the *Militant*, and  
handed out leaflets.

This year's YS Conference  
was different in spite of the  
*Militant*. We made a start in  
organising a real campaign  
on women's rights, one that  
will involve and draw young  
women into the YS.

# for Troops Out Now

ed up by Nat-  
tee member  
plaining why  
e Republicans  
e psychopaths  
e the working  
ands of Pais-



Charlie Sarell (left) spoke for the  
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ittee on Ireland at a large fringe  
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experience: Leicester South CLP  
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Now. Leicester Trades Council's  
Irish sub-committee has also  
begun to publish a newsletter,  
"Ireland Unfree".  
Why, challenged Sarell,  
hasn't the YS taken similar  
initiatives?



SMELT  
DOWN  
THE  
TORIES



WITH SHARP class battles in prospect, the time has come for revolutionaries to raise the slogan of a Workers' Government.

We must put forward the necessary measures to assert working-class control over society. But we cannot just spell out a blueprint-programme and call for that blueprint to be carried through by the existing structures of the labour movement, as they are, adapted to quite different politics — or by some future revolutionary labour movement, to emerge somehow and somewhere separately from today's labour movement.

Along with revolutionary social measures, we must fight for a restructuring of the labour movement to make it capable of enforcing those measures — for serious rank and file control over the political leadership of the labour movement. The strands are tied together by the struggle for a Workers' Government — i.e. for the Labour Party and the labour movement to break with the bourgeoisie, to restructure and reorient itself, and to form a government which takes serious measures against capitalist power.

### The decay of Britain

A CATASTROPHE threatens the working people of Britain. Rising inflation; steadily growing unemployment; a process of de-industrialisation which threatens to destroy the job possibilities of the workers in whole areas of Britain and to reduce them to pauperism; Government cuts, savage and vindictive, motivated by economic quackery and middle class spite, and so extensive that they amount to a drive to take back much that the working class has gained since 1945. The prospects ahead are that things will get worse, not better.

It is unlikely that world capitalism will pick up sufficiently to lift Britain out of the doldrums. The world capitalist system is in a state of crisis and decay reminiscent of the depression that lasted for the decade before World War 2. Most commentators believe a new world slump is imminent.

All the policies of the Thatcher government add up to a drive to cut working class living standards to such an extent that the rate of profit will rise and — they hope — British capitalism can begin to heal itself. In a vain drive to recapture the vigorous youth of a now decrepit, moribund and reactionary capitalism, millions of working class women, children and men must suffer poverty and malnutrition, be diseased or grow up sickly because medical care is too expensive, must waste their days and their lives in unemployment, must forego the possibility of education. Women must be driven back into the home and into servicing roles.

The Tory government is attempting to carry through the reorganisation of Britain in the interests of the capitalist class and at the expense of the working class. And in truth there is not even a glimmer of hope for the future of British capitalism as a going concern except by cutting the standards of the working class — drastically. By our assertiveness over the last 15 years, the working class has made it difficult to the point of impossibility for the capitalist class to run capitalism according to its own needs, the needs of profitability. We have hamstringed the capitalists and their loyal politicians without finishing them off and replacing them.

The ruling class can settle for nothing less than a decisive defeat, perhaps a fundamental and crushing defeat, of the working class.

# FIGHT FOR A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

The Liberal-Labour method (under Wilson and Callaghan) of controlling the working class, which achieved a relative success for most of the life of the last Labour government, has not even succeeded in arresting the decline of Britain, let alone begun to repair its situation. More drastic measures are needed and are being attempted.

The pressure on the ruling class is tremendous so do something to arrest the precipitate decline. Repeated failures have led to the capture of the Tory party by its present leadership and now add desperation to their efforts.

The prospect ahead is one of bitter class struggle. To imagine that in the next period the class struggle will not escalate is to imagine that the working class will bow down before the life-destroying Tory offensive and accept defeat peacefully. Nothing in the post-war history of the working class suggests that is even a possibility.

Already before the defeat of Callaghan's government in the May 1979 election the working class had started to fight back. Already the great struggle of the previously passive and even backward steelworkers — who last had a national strike in 1926 — has shown the tremendous reserves of strength the working class possesses and will use. Less than a year after Thatcher's electoral victory the call for a general strike has been taken up by layers of the working class who understand the power of direct action and who recall how we stopped Wilson's attack on trade union rights and what the weapons were which allowed us to drive out Heath's government.

Millions of workers — including many who did not vote Labour in 1979 — already understand that the most important task the working class faces now is to kick out the mad-dog Tory government of Thatcher and install a Labour Government. Decisive class confrontations are absolutely unavoidable in the period ahead.



The crisis of British capitalist society can be summed up in the following formula: The ruling class for 15 years has been strong enough to hold on (partly by grace of its lieutenants in the Labour Party), but not strong enough to rule effectively from the point of view of capitalism. The working class, using its industrial strength, has been strong enough to veto and to stop successive ruling class attempts (using both Labour and Tory governments) to hamstring and beat down the trade union movement, but it has not been politically able to impose a working class solution to the crisis of British society — that is, to carry through a working class reorganisation of British society. Its own political organisation — to which it turned after it crippled the Heath government in 1973-4 — proved under the leadership of liberals and reformists to be no more than a fall-back government for the ruling class. The stalemate and the crisis continue. The new Tory attack on trade union rights is the third in a decade...

The social-political impasse is an extremely dangerous situation for the working class. If it continues it will place in question the continuance of parliamentary democracy in Britain — at least as it exists at present. The combination of working class political weakness and enormous (and for the ruling class, crippling) industrial and social strength is the classic source of ruling class drives to destroy the organised labour movement, using fascist bands or the regular military and police forces — or a combination of both.

Serious people should not rely on "Britain's democratic traditions" to fend off such dangers. Chile, where an army coup in 1973 led to the destruction of the labour movement and the massacre of its militants, also had an exceptional history of stable bourgeois democracy (longer than many European countries). The agents of the ruling class did what they needed to do to defend it.

A major danger for the labour movement is to assume that things can go on indefinitely as they are. They simply cannot. No country and no social system can continue to decline, to rot and fester indefinitely, year after year and decade following decade without at some point reaching the stage where the ruling class and their agents attempt drastic action. It is impossible to know and predict how long the stalemate can last. But it is certain it cannot last indefinitely.

Here the recent exchange at a debate in Cambridge between Pat Arrowsmith and former chief-of-staff Field Marshal Carver should put the labour movement on its guard. Carver confirmed that army officers had discussed a coup in February 1974. "Fairly senior officers were ill-advised enough to make suggestions that perhaps, if things got terribly bad, the army would have to do something about it".

Carver said that top army commanders had put down the coup talk. But the higher ranks of the army cannot always be relied upon to stop the disciples of General Kitson, now chief of the Army training establishment. President Salvador Allende of Chile relied on the armed forces leaders to control the middle-rank officers — right to the day they mur-

dered him and unleashed a holocaust against the Chilean labour movement. The working class must rely only on itself.

First of all its must face the fact that British capitalist society — and therefore the labour movement — is in an impossible position, and if there is not to be a working class, necessarily a socialist, solution to the crisis of British society soon, then there is a real danger of an ultra-reactionary 'solution' in which the most powerful labour movement in the world is crippled or completely destroyed.

It is probably that the 1980s will see either the conquest of power by the British working class or the destruction of the British labour movement by the forces of capitalist reaction. Only the political rearming of the labour movement with the programme, ideas and methods of class-struggle revolutionary socialism, together with its organisational renovation, can guarantee the better of these two alternatives.

### We need Socialist Answers now

IF THE WORKING class movement rouses itself and fights back, then it will defeat Thatcher's onslaught. *Workers Action* has argued for full-scale industrial mobilisation to achieve just that — a General Strike. But unless the General Strike is the beginning of a socialist revolution, then it will be no more than a necessary defensive response to the present Government's plans for reorganising Britain.

As well as an industrial fightback now we need a positive working class alternative to the Tories, to move forward, to break the social-political impasse, and to begin to solve the crisis of British society which threatens the livelihood of large sections of the working class. Nothing less than working class control of society is adequate — that is, working class power. We must set an immediate socialist solution, and the struggle for it, as the immediate goal of the labour movement.

There is no other alternative which the working class can accept or tolerate. There is no other way of arresting the decline of the society in which the British working class must live, but to break out of the capitalist system, to dismantle its fundamental mechanism (profit as the regulator of the economy), and to replace it with our own mechanism — working class need — and thus to destroy the power of the ruling class and take the control of our lives out of their hands. We must begin to reorganise production and gear it to our needs — to break the yoke which the power of the vested interests of capitalists, landlords, and bankers imposes on the working class.

• Living standards must be protected against inflation. Automatic wage increases each month in line with price rises, as a minimum. A national minimum wage of at least £70.

• Work-sharing without loss of pay, organised on the broadest scale under workers' control, to end unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs!

• To enforce these measures, the labour movement must establish its monitoring and control over the economy. Trade unionists' and housewives' committees should work out a working-class cost of living index. Business secrecy must be abolished. Workers' control must be established over production, to ensure decent jobs for all and proper conditions of work.

• The cuts in social services must be restored and reversed. Education, welfare and health services must be put under control of the workers, the users, and the communities. We need an expanded and integrated public transport service, at low fares, and free for local services. A major programme of house-building and renovation is urgently necessary.

• To gain the resources for this programme, capitalist waste, luxury and profiteering must be eliminated. The productive resources of society must be mobilised according to a rational, democratically-decided plan, ending the huge waste of unemployment. The banks and financial institutions, and the major industries, should be nationalised, without any compensation for the big exploiters.

• To protect the socialist transformation from the ravages of international competition and sabotage, a state monopoly of foreign trade must be established.

• But this demand cannot be confused with the nationalist demand for import controls on a capitalist basis. Nor can we see socialist transformation as confined to Britain. Together with a programme for the labour movement to transform Britain must go a programme to link up with the working class throughout Europe (West and East) and fight for the Socialist United States of Europe.

That fight will mean the destruction of the bosses' Common Market. But the call for withdrawal from the Common Market on a capitalist basis, or the attempt to blame a remote enemy (the Brussels bureaucrats) for British capitalism's crisis, is as misleading as the demand for import controls.

• For the working class of different countries to unite to fight for socialism first requires that the working classes of oppressor countries should fight for the freedom of oppressed nations. Support for the struggle for Irish unity and independence and immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops are therefore urgent tasks.

Moreover, no nation which oppresses another can ever itself be free. The draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, through which Britain's repression in Ireland spills over into Britain, must be repealed.

• Support for the struggle of the black working people in Zimbabwe and South Africa is also among the central tasks of the British labour movement. South African goods and services should be blacked.

• The labour movement also needed to rally the most oppressed sections of the working class in Britain itself. Women must have full equality in the right to work, in pay and opportunity, in law, and in the labour movement. Positive discrimination is also needed to transform formal equality into real equality. Free contraception and abortion on demand and free 24-hour nurseries (state-financed and community-controlled) are vital for women to play their full part in the struggle and in society.

• All immigration controls must be ended, together with the whole system of state racism based on them. The labour movement must deny fascists the right to organise.

• Not only in their constant harassment of black communities, but also in their increasingly-frequent assaults on picket lines, the police have shown that they defend only capitalist and racist law and order. The Special Patrol Group, the political police in the Special Branch, and the police detachments trained in anti-picket or para-military tech-

## UPW: more strings than a puppet show

WHEN MOST UPW members heard that the executive were going to management with a 20% wage claim this year they were sceptical of how strongly the leadership would push it. And they were right!

The details of the settlement that was reached have just been released, and it seems the executive just caved in without a shot being fired.

For a start we're only being offered 15%. With inflation running at over 20% and allowing for deductions it means we'll be something like 10% worse off by the end of the year. But if that isn't bad enough, there are more strings than in a Punch and Judy show.

In return for what amounts to a wage cut, the management expect us to agree to such measures as the right to alter work patterns, the diversion of mail from office to office and the cancellation of second deliveries if they think that there's something more important to do, and the introduction of casual labour in the summer months.

All the measures are designed to weaken the union's control over work practices, and they've all been rejected before by the membership. As late as the middle of last month the postmen and PHG's voted down a package deal which contained most of the measures and yet, incredibly, here they are again with executive approval. We call them rubber ball clauses — the harder you knock them away, the quicker they bounce back.

The management are taking the proposals very seriously and at least they are clear about what their objectives are. In a confidential summary

of the presentation of "Postal Action Plan" to the corporation board by Sir William Barlow, the chairman, one of the aims is stated as being, "to remove excessive concessions and wasteful provisions". And they're prepared to face the consequences of this. "Management stance required to get things done will be defined. Possibility of localised industrial action or overtime ban — perhaps spreading, will have to be faced."

What this means is illustrated graphically in an open letter they've issued to the staff. "Local union representatives will be invited to support the measures needed." No consultation, no negotiation — just invited to support!

We've got to show the management that we're not prepared to be pushed around like this. They've learnt the lessons of British Leyland and so must we. Militants in the UPW must start mobilising the membership now to reject the offer. In every branch meeting that's called to discuss it we've got to get over just what accepting it would mean and demand that the leadership fight for the full 20% with no strings attached, plus protection from inflation.

But any campaign to reject the offer and to fight for a better one must also lead to a fight against Jackson and the present leadership. They've hung around our necks like lead weights for far too long. It's high time that rank and file militants in the union started to organise nationally to replace this rotten crew with a leadership that will fight for the interests of the members.

A UPW MEMBER



## TROOPS OUT OF THE HOSPITALS!

IN BELFAST you can't even get away from the British Army in hospital. The buildings of the Royal Victoria Hospital are constantly patrolled by armed soldiers.

Last week 1,200 NUPE workers walked out on unofficial strike after a soldier's rifle went off in a hospital corridor. They were demanding the removal of all troops from the hospital site and the abandonment of a plan to install closed-circuit television. They refused to carry out emergency duties.

The workers didn't just face scabbing by members of other unions and volunteers crossing their picket lines. They were denounced by Paisley in the House of Commons, who claimed that the strike was orchestrated by the Provisionals.

The strikers also had nothing but opposition from their own union. NUPE General Secretary Alan Fisher has called on them to return to work and the local official agreed to the use of volunteers. The strikers were also demanding that they should take back responsibility for negotiating about 'security' at the hospital from the full-time official who took it over last November.



After the return to work, on Tuesday 15th, Royal Victoria NUPE branch secretary Brian Sullivan was warned that the union might take disciplinary action against him or expel him.

For ten years the official trade union movement in the North has turned its back on the struggle to get the British troops out. It has tried to carry on "business as usual" and to maintain unity between Protestants and Catholics in the trade unions by sweeping the issues of the troops and partition under the carpet.

Yet these are not just 'divisive' or 'religious' issues, but issues that affect workers in their everyday working lives. The workers at the Royal Victoria Hospital are fighting to get the troops out of their workplace. The Republican community in the North is fighting to get the troops out of their country. Both deserve the active support and solidarity of the British labour movement.

## CPSA: NEC broad left accepts cuts

UNDER BROAD Left leadership, the CPSA National Executive Committee (NEC) has voted 18 to 4 to recommend acceptance of the Tory Government's offer of staging of the agreed 'Pay Research Unit' (PRU: pay comparability) figures giving an average increase of 18.75%. The pay-out date will be postponed from April 1st to May 7th.

This offer is based on a figure of 14% topped up with an extra 2.75% (on average) paid for by cutting the equivalent of nearly 20,000 jobs.

The Tory Government has won an important victory over Civil Service trade unionists. It celebrated the fact

by leaking to the *Sunday Telegraph* (13th April) its plans for another 70,000 jobs to go. And this after 80,000 job cuts (or equivalent cuts in manpower spending) have been made already!

The NEC, with Militant supporters in the lead, bowed down to the calls from the full time officers to be 'realistic' and accept whatever the Tories throw at us.

All the argument about 'realism' was based on the fact that no campaign against cash limits, against the Tory cuts, and in support of

the steelworkers, has been organised. The CPSA NEC majority reaped their own reward, where the full-time officials had sown. The PRU bargaining system, with its confidential figures and control of bargaining by full-time officials, creates a passive membership, wide open to Tory propaganda.

The full time officials' absolute faith in PRU, and their defence of their own privileges as non-elected officials, will dominate the forthcoming CPSA conference in Southport.

The failure to do anything over pay in 1980 will also affect any mobilisation, for May 14th. There were two

moves on the NEC, one by a Communist Party member and the other by a *Workers' Action* supporter, to call on the TUC to organise a one-day general strike, saying that the CPSA should support it. But Militant supporters, together with the right wing and the *Tribune* left, blocked it.

Given the mood and determination of other unions, it looks like further steps may be taken at an emergency meeting of the NEC to back efforts to pull out not only CPSA members but workers in other civil service unions.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY  
(CPSA NEC, in personal capacity).

**niques, must be disbanded.** This is only attainable by *disbanding the whole police force*, for any capitalist police could quickly be trained in special anti working class techniques. Crime prevention, crowd and traffic control, etc., can be handled by the organised working-class communities.

• *The Army — a professional army, whose officers openly talk about 'counter-insurgency' being central to its role — must be disbanded.* As far as there will be a need for defence, the working class movement can itself organise defence from its own ranks. The flying pickets of recent years show the power of the working class to enforce its 'law and order'. The extension of that sort of organisation into a workers' militia is necessary to counter the reactionary threat from the Army and enforce its disbandment.

• *Revolutionaries fight for a state based on workers' councils. But we would give full support against capitalist reaction to any Parliamentary government taking decisive measures in the workers' interests (while believing and arguing that the committees of struggle necessary to enforce and defend those measures would necessarily have to develop into workers' councils providing a higher sort of democracy than Parliament).*

We must however demand immediately the abolition of the House of Lords and the Monarchy. Without that abolition any sweeping measures against privilege and entrenched interest are idle dreams.

The abolition of official secrecy, the replacement of top civil servants by elected and accountable functionaries, and the election of judges, are likewise necessary.

### A Workers' Government

THIS PROGRAMME, its parts and its entirety, is necessary and essential immediately. But *who*, which *organisations*, what *government* will carry out such a programme? The trade unions as trade unions cannot. Nor can these measures be achieved factory by factory. They can be implemented in the whole of society or *not at all*. Only a central government can carry the programme through. Only if the strike struggle and other battles can be made to culminate in a working class government can the measures be carried out.

To put this programme forward as an option now is to day dream unless we can point to the forces that could — and can be organised to, more or less quickly — form a government. Do such forces exist in the British working class movement now? We think they do.

The dilemma of the revolutionary left is that it is not itself anywhere near the possibility of aspiring to form the government: neither any part of it, nor all of it together. And so far the Labour Party in office has never been other than a capitalist government based on the reformist organisations of the working class.

In 1922 the Communist International discussed how revolutionary groups which were a minority in the labour movement should approach such a situation — of capitalist crisis and an unready mass labour movement — as we in Britain

have today. The revolutionaries would put forward an action programme based on what was *objectively* necessary and would be seen to be necessary by many as yet non-revolutionary workers. The central idea was to pose the task of working-class self-defence and the reorganisation of society to a movement which, despite its leaders and even its widespread reformist prejudices, had every direct interest and motive for fighting for those demands. The 'keystone' of that programme, the precondition for even a possibility of the realisation of its demands, was a *workers' government — that is, a government based on the organisations of the working class and seriously fighting to at least win some of the measures the working class needed.* 'Workers' government' was an algebraic formula, with the concrete details having a number of possible forms.

The Theses of the Communist International on the Workers' Government explained it thus:

"... As a topical political watchword the workers' government is the most important only in those countries where the bourgeois society is particularly very unstable and where the balance of power between the workers' parties and the bourgeoisie makes the decision on the question of government a practical necessity... The reformist parties in these countries endeavour to 'save' the situation by propagating and bringing about coalition between the bourgeoisie and the social-democrats... To such an open or disguised bourgeois/ social-democratic coalition, the revolutionaries oppose a United Front of the workers, a coalition of all the workers' parties on the economic and political field for the struggle against the bourgeois power and for the final overthrow of the latter. Through the united struggle of all the workers against the bourgeoisie, the entire State machinery is to get into the hands of the workers' government, thus consolidating the positions of power of the working class.

"The most elementary tasks of a workers' government must consist in arming the proletariat, in disarming the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, in introducing control of production, in putting the chief burden of taxation on the shoulders of the rich, and in breaking down the resistance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

"Such a workers' government is only possible if it arises out of the struggle of the masses and if it is based upon the support of active workers' organisations involving the lowest strata of the oppressed working masses... It is self-evident that the formation of a real workers' government and the continued existence of such a government whose policy is revolutionary, must lead to a bitter struggle and eventually to civil war with the bourgeoisie...

"... The revolutionary party [must] maintain its own character and complete independence in its agitational work... Every bourgeois government is at the same time a capitalist government, but... not every workers' government is a really proletarian, i.e. a revolutionary instrument of the proletarian power...

"The revolutionaries are willing to make common cause also with those workers who have not yet recognised the necessity for proletarian dictatorship, with Social-Democrats and non-party workers. Thus, the revolutionaries are prepared,

under certain conditions and with certain guarantees, even to support a merely ostensible workers' government (naturally only insofar as it represents the interests of the workers). At the same time, the revolutionaries say to the workers quite openly that it is impossible to achieve or maintain a real workers' government without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. One can only describe as a true workers' government one which is resolute in taking up a serious struggle at least for the fulfilment of the most important day-to-day demands of the workers against the bourgeoisie. Revolutionaries can only take part in such a workers' government...

"[These] are not proletarian dictatorships, nor are they inevitable transition forms of government towards proletarian dictatorship, but where they are formed may serve as starting points for the struggle for dictatorship. Only the workers' government, consisting of revolutionaries, can be the true embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat"

The major problem with raising the call for a workers' government in Britain is that the Labour Party has been the massively predominant force in the working class movement and the Labour Party, dominated by agents of the ruling class, has produced nothing but bourgeois governments. To spread the idea in 1973-4 that the Labour Party could be a workers' government would have been to spread confusion.

TO BE CONTINUED

Why We Need a General Strike

A new pamphlet from Workers' Action. 20p plus 10p postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

# NUT cuts strikers plan meeting

THE NUT CONFERENCE at Easter in Blackpool failed to prepare for a serious fight against the Tories. Resounding speeches by the Executive against the Employment and Education Bills, and a belated go-ahead for local associations to organise for a half-day strike on May 14th, won them another year's grace.

Promises of a new salary structure next year deflected support for a basic scale and flat rate increases, proposals which were put forward by militants to narrow differentials and simplify the present divisive and complex structure.

Motions on racialism and women's rights, voted high on the agenda, were diluted by EC amendments. Speaking against the EC amendment which labelled abortion rights as "divisive", Carol Regan

(East London) said, "The EC has lost more members over salaries than we'll ever do over a woman's right to choose." But the EC won.

Further, the EC manoeuvred off the agenda what would have been the union's first-ever discussion on gay rights.

Not everything went the EC's way. It proposed to do away with special conferences to ratify salary agreements, and to use the strike fund for administration costs. Conference voted overwhelmingly against both.

Another overwhelming vote amended the annual report, which omitted to mention that the union called for a full public inquiry into the killing of Blair Peach in Southall last year. The heckling and walkout when Tory Education Minister Mark Carlisle addressed the conference was

highly successful.

Two important motions were passed, one opposing the Assisted Places scheme, and the other restoring the right to strike for teachers in special schools.

Delegations from Avon, Trafford and other Divisions asked for a national meeting of all areas taking action against cuts, and asked for time to address the conference. The EC denounced this as a Rank and File manoeuvre, which it was not, and blocked these proposals.

This so incensed those delegations that they are determined to organise a national meeting independently of union HQ. This could prove to be an opening for the left's views to be taken up by many union members who are being radicalised by industrial action. CHEUNG SIU MING

# Workers' ACTION

## BITTER BUT UNBOWED

BILL SIRRS may well be 'tremendously proud of the qualities of the iron and steel workers that have emerged', but quite clearly the majority of steelworkers are not tremendously proud of him.

After 13 long weeks on strike, each steel worker losing over £1,300 in pay, the report of the Lever Committee is miserable. With inflation running at 20%, steel workers are expected to accept 11% with another 4½% if local productivity schemes are agreed. Sirs claimed the deal was worth 17% after additions for pensions and holidays.

Also, the Lever inquiry calls for restructuring, changes in working practices and the guaranteed working week, and de-manning — all different ways of saying sackings. Sirs is simply lying when he says there will be no enforced redundancies — he has already agreed to them.

Steel workers all over the country were outraged when they heard the news of the deal being accepted. Many refused to go back until the Thursday or Friday, and some did not go back until after the Easter break.

There were mass walk-outs within hours of restarting work in South Wales and

South Yorkshire, as steel workers refused to load scab lorries whose drivers had tried to break the strike from the beginning and had injured pickets by speeding through picket lines. But with the ISTC giving these disputes little backing, all steel workers are now back at work.

Despite the leadership's sell-out, the steel workers are not defeated. The ISTC was singled out by the Tories for its history of moderation. No-one expected the steel workers to fight back as they did.

As Bill Sirs was fond of pointing out, the ISTC had never been on strike since 1926. It had no tradition of militancy. But this strike saw from the very beginning a level of organisation and militancy which was unprecedented. It was run by the local leaders, especially from South Yorkshire, not by Bill Sirs.

Every steel worker on the picket lines knew exactly who they were fighting against — and it wasn't just the BSC, it was the Tories and their anti-working class politics. It wasn't just the money they were fighting for, it was the jobs too, and that battle is far from over.

The steel workers have

learnt a lot from their strike, and that is a victory. They will not forget who supported them and who didn't. No steel strike activist will forget about the Denning judgment; or the police violence on the picket lines; the way Bill Sirs continually tried to head off the most militant actions and handed out dispensations; or the way TUC leaders refused to call a general strike to back the steelworkers and continued to talk to the Tories.

The strike meant a complete change in many steelworkers' lives, not just the financial hardship, but the continual political arguing and discussion that took place all over the country as pickets went from steel stockholders to the docks to car plants and engineering works.

All that can't be brushed under the carpet by Bill Sirs. He will come up against it in the form of a fight for union democracy.

That fight for union democracy will now get going, and it will be linked to the fight against the job losses and closures.

Bill Sirs reckons he is in a job for life. Steel workers will show him he's not!  
JO THWAITES

## Who's next for a knighthood?

YET AGAIN the leadership of the Confed trade unions have managed to push through a wage deal which is totally against the interests of workers in the shipbuilding industry. Before any national delegate conferences had been arranged to say yes or no to the latest wages and conditions offer, the deal had been signed.

This deal that Chalmers and Co had been so eager to sign was one, they said, that they did not really agree with but which they felt compelled to sign due to the 'time factor'.

This so-called 'time factor' was that the lump sum payment, varying between £100 and £200, had to be accepted, along with the rest of the deal, in this financial year, or we would get nothing. Obviously, our leaders think we are as easily led by management as they are.

The pay deal is:  
■ £100 to £200 lump sum;  
■ 10% supplement to wages (not payable on overtime) as from April 1st 1980;  
■ 5% supplement to wages (as above, and worked out on pre-April 1st rates) as from October 1st 1980.

As a joint statement from the Confed and British Shipbuilders states: "These increases are subject to agreement on a package, within the framework of the joint statement of intent, which involves productivity, reductions in overtime working, a sensible

[?] ban on recruitment and limited reductions in manning levels by calling for volunteers in yards hitherto unaffected by major restructuring. The pay increases will be linked to acceptance of the package."

All talk of reducing the working week and improving workers' living standards have gone by the board in the attempt by our trade union leaders to show that they can outmanage management. I wonder which of them is next for a knighthood?

LOL DUFFY

AT A mass meeting of Boiler-makers at Cammel Lairds last Friday it was decided to strike on 14th May in support of the TUC Day of Action. A collection was also held for the Massey Ferguson workers who are occupying their plant against closure and job loss.

Unfortunately, the link between these actions and the threat to jobs and conditions at Cammel Lairds is all too real. A number of contributions from the floor condemned the national wage deal as a sell-out, but despite a call from one speaker to link our struggle to that of the British Steel workers, no vote was taken on any proposal from speakers.  
L.D.

## EVENTS

SUNDAY 20 APRIL. Islington Labour Parties' Socialist Forum on 'State Racism'. Speaker from Southall Youth Movement. 12 noon at the Hemingford Arms, London N1

WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL. Picket of Southall police station to commemorate the anniversary of Blair Peach's death. 6pm to 8pm, followed by memorial meeting, 8pm Southall Town Hall. For details of activities elsewhere contact local ANL branches.

**MAY DAY 1980**  
Send greetings in  
*Socialist*  
*Organiser*

Rates: one-eighth page £10, one-sixteenth page £5, 2 col. inches (40 words max.) £2, 1 col. inch (20 words max.), £1. Send copy to *Socialist Organiser*, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16, to arrive before Monday 28th April.

SATURDAY 26 APRIL. Islington Campaign against the Cuts trade unionists' conference against the cuts. 2pm Manor Gardens Library, N7. Details and credentials from 41 Ellington St, N7.

SATURDAY 26 APRIL. Southall Anniversary Benefit. 7.30, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Admission £2.

SUNDAY 27 APRIL. 'Can Socialism come through Parliament?' South London WA supporters' discussion meeting, 8pm. Details of venue from WA, PO Box 135, N1.

THUR. 24 APRIL. 'Revolutionary organisation in the labour movement'. Islington Workers' Action supporters discussion meeting, 8pm. Details of venue from WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

SATURDAY 10 MAY. National meeting for BARRICADE supporters, in Birmingham. Details: 'Barricade', 16 Glen St, Edinburgh.

SATURDAY 31 MAY. 'Southern Africa after Zimbabwe'. National Action conference called by Anti-Apartheid. 10.15 at the Logan Hall, Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1.

SATURDAY 14 JUNE. Voices for Withdrawal, a forum on Northern Ireland. 10am, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. Delegates' credentials £2 from Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, c/o Youth Office, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Pl, London SW1.

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## The return to work in S. Yorkshire

AROUND 2500 steelworkers attended a mass meeting in Rotherham's Clifton Park after news of the sellout was received. The mood was one of bitterness and anger, though many of the strikers were relieved to be going back after 3 months with no money.

John Shaw (ISTC), from the strike committee, opened the meeting. "This is not the last fight, only the first. It has been a victory. Our executive has been beaten. We haven't!" The meeting wasn't particularly impressive. Cries of "What do we want — 20%! What have we got — fuck all!" rose from the meeting.

Anger grew as it became increasingly apparent that the local strike committee was going to accept the executive's call for a return to work the following morning.

Many of the strikers turned their anger on the next speaker, Bernard Connolly of the South Yorkshire craftsmen. He was booed and shouted down at virtually every point and eventually he gave up.

The boos turned to cheers however when Keith Jones, strike coordinator for South Yorkshire, got up to speak. The basic problem was that the decision had been made by the ISTC executive, and that was that!

"We are not pleased with the result, but we have got to live with it." It now became clear to everyone that there was and is no provision for the rank and file to revoke the decision.

Jones made a rousing speech which was well received, but he left Stan Sheridan, the press officer for the strike committee, to do the dirty work. Sheridan summed up the dilemma for the strike committee when he said, "The only position we can put is the official position".

To shouts of "put it to a vote", Sheridan could only reply that acceptance or rejection was to be on a purely individual basis. If you accepted, you went into work. If you didn't, don't turn up!

Sheridan suggested a show of hands (for the benefit of the media) on whether the meeting thought the settlement was a sell-out. A sea of hands gave a resounding Yes, with only a very small number disagreeing.

But another show of hands (again for the benefit of the media) demonstrated that the strikers were roughly divided 50/50 on whether to go back or stay out.

Tempers began to get a bit frayed. It was now clear to everyone that the meeting was basically to rubber stamp the executive's decision to go back. Cameramen and film crew had to beat a retreat as the strikers turned their anger on them. The meeting started to break up as disgruntled strikers drifted away.

Bernard Connolly regained the platform and shouting and yelling broke out again. Connolly was obviously incensed at his earlier rough

treatment. He pointed out, with much justification, that he had led the craftsmen out in South Yorkshire from day number one of the strike, with no official backing, and had kept them out.

The meeting only calmed down when details of the return were announced, together with details of when payments were being made. After this, the meeting closed.

Many of the strikers walked away disgruntled, as no amount of speech-making could hide the fact that it was a sellout. The 20% hadn't been won and there were many strings attached to the deal (some of them still unknown).

When the crunch came, the strike committee had no answer to the executive's dictate to go back. Despite all the good work done by the local strike committee, despite all it had learned and inspired others to do, it couldn't, or didn't feel able to, put an alternative to the ISTC scabbing Executive. That shows the amount of work which still needs to be done.

As the meeting broke up, many of the strikers filed past the old ISTC HQ on Doncaster Road, firebombed during the course of the strike. Outside the building stands the insignia of the ISTC, a phoenix rising out of the flames.

Militants and socialists in the industry now have the job of seeing that the phoenix rises again: that the lessons of the struggle are learned, and that the bad old days never return. 'Treated with contempt — not ever again' was the slogan of South Yorkshire.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM

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