

WORKERS' ACTION

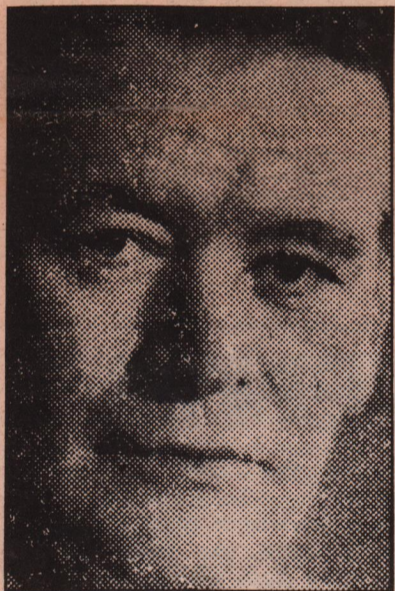
No. 32

October 14th to 21st

10p

MOBILISE FOR NOV. 17

ANTI-CUTS DAY OF ACTION



Jim Slater

Resolution adopted (54 votes to 4) by Newham Teachers Association at the end of last month:

This Association notes with approval the decision of the CPSA to call a one-day strike and a national overtime ban on and from November 17th in protest against social services cuts.

This Association therefore calls upon the Executive of the NUT to:

a) Call all members of the NUT out on national 1-day strike on November 17th.

b) To show solidarity with and follow the lead of the CPSA's overtime ban by a national ban on all cover after one day.

c) To call upon all other unions but particularly NATFHE, NAS, Nalgo and NUPE to follow suit and call a national 1-day strike on the same day, November 17th

d) To cooperate with the unions named in (c) and any others in calling for and organising a mass demonstration against the cuts on November 17th.

Furthermore this Association calls on West Ham Trades Council to campaign to gain support for this strike and the

REJECT THE IMF CUTS!

NATIONALISE THE BANKS!

OBEYING the instructions of the IMF, the Government is getting ready to lash the working class again with its three-tailed whip: unemployment, cuts and wage curbs.

This isn't exactly calculated to make the financial dictators of Manila top the popularity charts. But we should remember, as we aim our darts at their faceless portraits, that these men are only the more highly placed gauleiters of the system that James Callaghan, Denis Healey and the Treasury 'experts' run in the interests of the bosses, the bankers and the landlords.

Denis Healey has in fact just been elected chairman of the IMF's Group of Ten.

IMF director Witteveen can keep his position only because the Dutch working class allows him. The bigger potentates of the the International Monetary Fund got their positions only on the backs of the US working class. It is international workers' action that will break the IMF; and that action starts for us in Britain with a fight against the British bosses, not whining about 'foreign' bankers.

The credit squeeze imposed

wipe out any deluded hope that this Government was going to embark on a programme of reducing joblessness. The squeeze on investment funds will, experts calculate, add up to 300,000 to the dole queues, bringing the official figure close to the 2 million mark.

Certainly, the decision that the Labour Party Conference took just two weeks ago that the Government should act to bring down unemployment has already been rendered null and void.

The rise in the minimum lending rate means an immediate bonanza for the bankers. While workers' mortgage payments will rise by two to three pounds a week, the investors' interest rate-off is raised from 6.5% to 7.8%.

This is a straightforward wage cut for millions of workers. And as if that were not enough, Callaghan, during the economic policy debate in Parliament on Monday 11th October, casually slipped into his speech a reference to further wage restraint to follow up the present strait-jacket on collective bargaining. What Labour militants

policy to safeguard wages — which must include the nationalisation of the banks and finance institutions without compensation. The flow of funds to capitalist parasites through mortgage payments, local authorities' interest burdens, and the banks' cream-off from industrial profits, should be stopped immediately.

And the trade union leaders should couple such demands with a militant drive for wage increases at least keeping pace with inflation.

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NOEL JENKINSON



WHY DID HE DIE?

WORKERS' ACTION SUPPORTS the call by the Prisoners Aid Committee and the Official Republican Movement for a full inquiry into the circumstances of the death of Noel Jenkinson in Leicester Prison.

In November 1972 Jenkinson was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment on charges of taking part in the February 1972 Official IRA bomb attack on the Parachute Regiment Officers' Mess at Aldershot barracks.

Mr. Justice Sebag Shaw, the sentencing judge — a fine example of the vicious and pompous smugness that characterises the 'justice'-giving of the possessing classes — declared that Jenkinson should be shut away almost for life (he would have been 73 if he had completed his sentence) because he was "a threat to any environment in which you are at liberty".

Noel Jenkinson was proud to stand as a 'threat' to the environment of the British ruling class, which has oppressed and dismembered Ireland. He was a socialist and a Republican, a member of the Official Republican movement and active in political campaigns against Britain's rule in Ireland.

He denied that he had in fact been involved in the Aldershot operation. The case against him hinged on the testimony of a police informer, John Parker.

WAR CASUALTY

But the courts have had their way. Sebag Shaw did ensure that Jenkinson never saw liberty again. Even if Jenkinson's death, at the age of 46 (officially attributed to a heart attack) is in no way directly connected with foul play on the part of prison officials, what sort of prison regime is it that brings a man of 46 to his death by 'natural causes' after just four years?

Noel Jenkinson, we are sure, would wish to be seen as yet another of the casualties in the continuing war for Ireland's unity and independence, against British imperialism. For Irish Republicans — and for Workers Action, as revolutionary internationalists — the Aldershot bombing was not a criminal act, whether Jenkinson was involved or not.

The Aldershot bombing was a justifiable act of war. It was a reprisal operation for the British Army's shooting down of 13 unarmed civilians in Derry the previous month. That the Aldershot bombing missed its target, killing some women cleaners rather than the Parachute Regiment officers at whom it was aimed, is tragic. It does not change its essential nature.

As long as class exploitation and oppression continue, military acts against oppressors such as the bombing of Aldershot, will be necessary. The working class movement will need men and women like Noel Jenkinson, willing to give up

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OPENING THE BOOKS



PORTUGAL LITTLE DYNAMISM IN RESPONSE TO SOARES' ASSAULTS

WHEN General Ramalho Eanes was elected president of Portugal in July this year, and appointed a Socialist Party government headed by Mario Soares, WORKERS ACTION said that the scene was set for a drive against the workers' and peasants' organisation and against in particular the Communist Party — which, despite its consistently class collaborationist policies, still leads many militant sections of the working class.

Soares has not been slow in confirming that prediction. As part of his 'austerity' programme, the government has ordered that land in the Alentejo area taken over by agricultural workers should be returned to its former owners. This repossession is being done on a small scale so far — but success on a small scale will undoubtedly encourage the government to attempts on a larger scale.

A limit on wage increases of 15% (which, with current inflation rates in Portugal, means a drop in real wages) has been announced. Legal limitations are being placed on the right to strike, and previous restrictions on employers' right to sack workers are being removed.

Union status

The Intersindical has had withdrawn from it the status of being the sole recognised trade union federation. The government ruling, in early 1975, that the Communist Party-controlled Intersindical should have exclusive recognition, was a ruling aimed to regulate the question of trade union unity through interference by the bourgeois state. It was therefore a ruling which Marxists could not endorse. But, while the numerous splits from the Intersindical in recent months have by no means always been to the right, the present move against the Intersindical by Eanes and Soares is clearly a right wing move.

All these measures are paving the way for the Portuguese application for membership of the EEC.

Soares will offer the EEC a Portugal whose government is efficiently re-imposing discipline on the working class; and in return he hopes that some of the investments with-



Limits on right to strike

drawn from Portugal in the turbulent revolutionary months of 1974 and 1975 will be returned.

Despite the fact that the Eanes-Soares strategy threatens not only the working class in general, but also the Communist Party in particular the CP has been slow to react.

Blindly, it is still trying to persuade the dominant military figures to restore the CP to the place in the government which it enjoyed from April '74 up to July this year. Alentejo is one of the CP's major strongholds. But the CP has advocated a policy of 'responsible' non-resistance to the Socialist Party government's reversal of agrarian reform.

The major tendencies to the left of the CP are not doing much better.

While the CP has orientated to the currently dominant figures in the military hierarchy, the major 'revolution-

ary left' groups — the Maoist UDP and the centrist PRP — have hitched their star to a military hero currently out of favour with the bourgeoisie — Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho.

Xmas card

The electoral support groups for Otelo — the GDUPs [Dynamising Groups of Popular Unity] — have been extended into permanent organisations. The PRP didn't want that to happen, and the extension of the GDUPs is a victory for the UDP. Thus the programme of the GDUPs has the same central demands as the UDP: "Anti-fascist government", "Popular Unity" etc — slogans no more capable of leading a working class fight-back than the greetings on a Christmas card.

The GDUPs are currently engaged in intense UDP vs. PRP faction fighting in prep-

aration for the first Congress of GDUPs. There seems little doubt that the UDP will win out, and that the GDUPs will gradually become a front organisation for the UDP — just as the UDP itself is a front for the PCP(R) [Communist Party of Portugal (Reconstructed)].

The GDUPs are, in fact, a sort of degenerate "son of FUR" (Revolutionary United Front, an alliance of left groups which existed from August to November 1975).

The task of revolutionary Marxists in Portugal must be to win militants away from the blind alley of the GDUPs and towards a united front approach to the working class base of the SP and CP. Concrete demands and initiatives must be put forward for united actions with rank and file workers increasingly hostile to the SP's attacks on the working class and the CP's passivity.

COLIN FOSTER



Soares starts the land grab

GISCARD SQUEEZED BY GAULLISTS AND UNIONS

THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 7th October marked another step in the decline of the Giscard d'Estaing administration in France.

The general strike was called by the CGT (the trade union federation linked to the Communist Party), the CFDT (the second largest trade union federation, with connections to the Socialist Party), and the FEN (the teachers' unions). It had the support of sections of FO (a smaller, more right wing federation). They were protesting against the new economic plan announced by Giscard's recently appointed prime minister Raymond Barre.

Barre has proposed a price freeze, increased income tax, motor tax and alcohol tax together with increased state aid for industry — and restrictions on wage increases. In an effort to secure trade union agreement he said the wage restrictions would be voluntary. In fact, CFDT leader Edmond Maire has estimated that the Barre plans would imply a 3% cut in real wages.

Barre tried to brazen out the general cry of opposition to his plans by saying that such general opposition must show the plan was good since it spread the sacrifices out over everyone! The real bias of his plan has, however, been shown by the violent denunciations directed by the CNPF (the French bosses' association) against the 7th October strike.

Giscard's authority is also crumbling on its right wing. Barre is a replacement for Jacques Chirac, who is now trying to rally the dilapidated forces of Gaullism against Giscard.

Giscard's rise to the presidency was based on a strategy of replacing the cumbersome, corrupt and chaotic Gaullist bloc — crisis-ridden since 1968 — by a more modern and flexible conservative majority to rule France. Evidently he is not succeeding.

French revolutionaries must make sure that 7th October is followed up — advancing demands such as automatic cost-of-living wage increases, and fighting for the immediate overthrow of the Giscard regime.

We call on LPYS: REPUDIATE THIS STATEMENT!

TRIBUNE has recently (Sept 24th) published a report from a 'left' minority of the Labour Party NEC. The report is preceded by a preamble which disclaims any intention to smash the social contract. That suggestion, say the signatories, "has no truth in it at all."

In fact, they say "nobody in our movement derives more satisfaction than we do from the constructive co-operation which has developed over the last few years between the TUC and the Labour Party, whether in Government or in opposition, and nobody is keener than we are to see it continued and strengthened."

The statement is signed by the familiar collection of names from Allaun & Castle to Hart, Heffer, Mikardo and Short. AND by NICK BRADLEY.

Members of the LPYS who were at this year Conference at Blackpool will know that the policy of the LPYS is against the social contract. Nick Bradley is on the NEC as a delegate of the LPYS, and it is his job to present the policies decided on democratically by the LPYS at its conference.

If he wants to diverge from these policies we expect him openly and honestly to give an account of himself and not to wait to be brought to account!

Perhaps Nick Bradley will claim that he is not out of step

with LPYS policy; that to be against the social contract is not the same as being out to smash the social contract. But to be seriously opposed to the social contract IS TO BE OUT TO SMASH IT AND TO CALL ON WORKERS TO SMASH IT.

The statement Nick Bradley has signed can only be interpreted as a defence of social contract. (The distinctions in the statement as to which document constitutes the actual contract are irrelevant; the contract itself has a far wider meaning than any piece of paper.)

As for the last part, the broad generality about TUC-LP co-operation, it may sound well enough in the abstract, but what is it really about?

The image of unity it conjures up is attractive. But what is this unity for, and just who is being united?

If it were unity of mobilisation against capitalism, that would be fine. If it meant support and solidarity by all sections of the labour movement acting to aid any workers in struggle, socialists would be all for it.

In practice (and this is what the statement refers to) it is that 'unity' summed up in the 'social contract': a deal whereby the TUC acts to police the working class on behalf of an anti-working class government, and is drawn in closer as an accomplice of the capitalist

state, taking more and more responsibility for what happens to capitalism — rather than for the fate of its members.

And it is summed up in the fact that a Labour Government, and this one in particular, is able to get away with measures against the working class that the Tories would find much more difficult.

As a process (and to some extent Tory governments also manage their own forms of 'social contract' with the TUC) it means that the trade unions cease to be independent organs of the working class; and that the trade union leaders become closer and more accountable to the bosses and their state than to their rank and file members.

Long before today's social contract was thought up, the relationships it crystallises were described by Leon Trotsky (to whose teachings Nick Bradley and his co-thinkers in the Militant tendency that dom-

inates the LPYS claim to adhere): "In England, more than anywhere else, the state rests upon the back of the working class which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population of the country. The mechanism is such that the [trade union] bureaucracy is based directly on the workers, and the state indirectly, through the intermediary of the trade union bureaucracy. ... The Labour Party and the trade unions — these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour. Together they are the fundamental support of the domination of the English bourgeoisie."

And Nick Bradley welcomes the closeness of this "fundamental support of the English bourgeoisie" and its cohesion!

And certainly Trotskyists could only describe as the most miserable centrism, the most pathetic instance of being revolutionary in words and capitalist in deeds, a stance consisting of a verbal opposition to the social contract in a resolution, and a refusal to carry that through and to advocate the action of smashing the social contract.

We call on Nick Bradley to make a public withdrawal of his support for the statement in Tribune. We call on LPYS branches to demand an immediate disavowal of Bradley's stance by the LPYS NC.



Nick Bradley

Campaign against racist hacks beats off witch hunt bid

THE FIGHT-BACK against racists in the National Union of Journalists is beginning to bite. So it would seem, at any rate, from the squeals of pain coming from right wing sections of the union and from the press. And things are looking worse for them after their vicious counter-attack met humiliating defeat at the Union's National Executive last weekend.

As reported in earlier issues of *Workers Action*, a number of journalists have been active recently, in cooperation with black workers and other trade unionists, in the Campaign Against Racism in the Media (CARM). Almost from its founding, the Campaign has been the subject of slanderous attacks — particularly from the *South London Press*, a local paper which has given big coverage to the utterances of National Party fascist David McCalden, who was excluded from membership of the NUJ last year and who is now suing the Union in an industrial tribunal.

The editor of this paper is a leading member of the Union's right wing; he seems to be afraid

that CARM will soon be turning its attention to his own paper and hopes to destroy the Campaign before it does.

His fears have been shared by journalists on the *Tottenham Herald*, the subject of a CARM meeting last month, where a leading reporter has been charged with violations of the Union's Race Guidelines.

Cries of woe have been heard too from the Fleet Street journalists responsible for giving the world the 'scandal' of the Malawi Asians: they, along with others like them, are also under disciplinary charges in the Union.

In response to blows like these, the newspaper proprietors and their agents have been

exerting considerable pressure on the bureaucrats of the NUJ. 'Censorship', 'threats to the free press' and suchlike have been their cries in answer to any challenge to their 'freedom' to print what they choose, racist slander and incitement included.



Their prayers were answered when the union's Deputy General Secretary issued a circular two weeks ago accusing CARM of intimidation, censorship and 'bully-boy tactics'. To substantiate these allegations the bureaucrat threw in a handful of fabrications and smears.

Along with this circular went a motion to the National Executive condemning CARM's activities and dissociating the union from the campaign.

This lead was soon followed by a further attack from a right wingmember of the Executive — this time directed at the Union's Race Relations Sub-Committee, an official body whose activities have been of the very mildest kind — accusing it of being unrepresentative (presumably because it contained no racists) and unconstitutional.

Unfortunately for the guardians of 'press freedom' their champions came unstuck. Motions and letters flooded in from NUJ branches, shop stewards and Community Relations Officers (not normally regarded

as raving lefties!) condemning the attack on CARM and decisively refuting the allegations made against it.

Faced with overwhelming condemnation, the Deputy General Secretary was forced to withdraw his allegations and the motion that went with it. Following this humiliation the right wing failed to get a hearing for their other slanders, and their counter-offensive collapsed.

CARM has made a start, and survived the first serious attempt made to destroy it. It is now growing and attracting affiliations from NUJ branches and trades councils. But more serious assaults will undoubtedly follow: for the press propriet-

E.London: the confrontation continues

LAST SUNDAY (Oct. 10th) 40 National Front paper sellers were confronted in Brick Lane (East London) by a demonstration of over 100 left wing militants from the IS, IMG and WORKERS ACTION. Despite the bashing the fascists had got the week before, they were back with their insults and incitements against the local Bengali community. This time 20 Bengalis, mobilised by the street meetings, joined the picket. Next week — in an effort to clear them out for good — there will be a demonstration against the National Front.

Conspicuous by their absence so far have been the CP and the 'Militant' grouping. Let's see them there, with other sections of the local labour movement, next Sunday!
MICK WOODS

ors there is too much at stake — their very power to dictate what we are told.

This battle has only just begun. CARM must quickly spread its ideas and influence if it is to seriously weaken racism — in the media, and consequently outside of it. For this task the small forces of the NUJ's left are not enough. Trade unionists and black militants who understand the power of the press and TV to divide the working class must help to smash the hold of the bosses over the means of communications.

Help to build CARM. Write for more information to CARM, 43 Shaftesbury Road, London N.19.

NO 'TURNS' FOR THE CLUB WITH NO BLACKS

IN Coventry's 'Red Square' militant unemployed workers used to meet in the 1920s and '30s. They used to drink in the pub that came to be called 'The Bolsh'. And across Red Square from The Bolsh stands the Barras Heath Working Men's Club.

It's as well that the Club never got itself a 'red' nickname: it's doubtful whether it could stand such an irony today.

Barras Heath Working Men's Club is notorious for its racialism. The booking agents for club acts, Lewis & Goddard, have explicitly been told not to book any black artists; and the club refuses membership or entrance to blacks.

But Lewis & Goddard must have slipped up somewhere, and one night a black member of Equity turned up at the Barras Heath — and was turned away. And that was the signal for Equity, the actors' union, to move in against the Club, in accordance with its national of 'sorting out' these dens of racism. It called an official picket of the Barras Heath and called on the local labour movement for support.

Thus Club members arriving for a Saturday night out last week found a picket of 100 local trade unionists on the Barras Heath. They were handed leaflets and exchanged abuse, good-humoured and otherwise.

More to the point as far as the Club management was concerned, first two musicians refused to play, and then the main 'turn', well known Midlands act Raymond and Sean Burns, informed the management that they wouldn't cross the Equity picket either. "We got more applause from the pickets than we would have got inside" they told a cheering audience in Red Square.

Now Bro. F. Betsoni of the National Council of Equity, has said there'll be a permanent picket until the colour bar is raised. Other Equity acts have been cancelled. And Equity has asked the Confed in the Coventry area to black the Club and call on the T&GWU to stop beer deliveries.

DAVE SPENCER

CHARGES AGAINST 7 AFTER ORANGE IS THROWN AT FASCISTS

BOLTON anti-fascist committee is appealing for assistance to defend seven militants arrested on an anti-fascist demonstration in Bolton on 21st August.

All seven face allegations of 'breach of the peace'; one is charged with 'criminal damage'; and one of them, Ian Hayes, a local UCATT militant, is accused of 'assaulting a police officer'.

They were arrested in the course of two police charges against demonstrators who were surrounding a police cordon protecting the National Front and National Party papersellers and leafleters in Bolton shopping precinct. The demonstration had been called against the fascist propagandists, but stewards had already decided that, in view of the relation of forces, there would be no physical attack on the fascists. The only

known provocation for the police charges was one demonstrator throwing an orange at the fascists.

Of some 200 demonstrators — including members of revolutionary left groups, the Labour Party, and Jewish groups — about 30 were from the Asian Youth Organisation. Police racialism is shown by the fact that four out of the seven arrested were Asians.

One of those arrested was attacked in the police cells, beaten about the head, and suffered a broken rib.

The cases are due to be heard individually, strung out over a month, from early November to early December. The most urgent need for the defence effort is funds. Send contributions to: Bolton Anti-Fascist Committee, c/o N. Duffield, 52 Yewdale Gardens, Broughton, Bolton.

TORY PARTY conferences are carefully organised to avoid any discomfort to the party leadership. As the Greater London Young Conservatives apparently described them, they are "irrelevant, inflexible and stage-managed".

The Tory Party is not one which rests its appeal on being "the party of the working people", but rather the party with the "leaders" who know what is best for the "nation". The centre-point of every Tory conference is not any debate, but well orchestrated applause for the party leader.



Nevertheless the Tory conference last week in Brighton did prove something. It proved that the Tory leaders can think of no better policies for helping capitalism than the policies being carried through by Callaghan.

Unity was re-established between the Thatcher-Joseph wing and the co-thinkers of Edward Heath (mostly on the basis of Heath-ite policies). There were the routine Conference war-cries. But Tory leader Margaret Thatcher carefully failed to propose an aggressive strategy in Parliament which could quickly topple the Labour Government (which is, at present, a minority government).

Top Tories were at pains to insist that they would not seek open confrontation with the trade unions. "Let us make it absolutely clear" declared Thatcher "that the next Cons-

ervative government will look forward to discussion and consultation with the trade union movement about the policies that are needed to save our country". James Prior said that a new Tory government would not try to ban the closed shop.

As for policies outlined for a future Tory government, the Tory leaders had little to say except that they would be "neither easy nor popular"

(Thatcher) or "difficult and very unpleasant" (Heath).

In fact the Tory alternative is "difficult and very unpleasant" swingeing attacks on the working class — and electoral support won't be won by spelling these out in detail.

Geoffrey Howe (Shadow Chancellor) pointed, however, to the one weakness of the present government for the capitalist class when he spoke of "two Labour Parties" — the

"Marxist Labour Party" and the "Callaghan Labour Party".

Unfortunately, Howe's description of the sentiments of rank and file Labour militants as being "Marxist" is still far from the truth. But the mobilisation of the militant rank and file — in the trade unions as well as in the Labour Party — against the bureaucratic leadership is indeed the main obstacle to making workers pay the cost of capitalism's difficulties.



TORIES: WE COULDN'T DO A BETTER JOB

LAST WEEK workers at Leyland Longbridge plant were presented with a bald ultimatum from the bosses: "Accept our terms unconditionally, or the new mini project (ADO 88) is cancelled and we close down Leyland and Cowley".

The works committee and senior stewards, after some initial resistance, collapsed under this pressure and persuaded the workforce at shop meetings to pass a resolution accepting this blackmail.

The resolution that was passed declared "total commitment to the ADO 88 programme including Clause 3.ii dealing with productivity". "In order to achieve targets, changes will have to take place. Those changes that are outside the current agreement will have to be negotiated and agreed. Some of the changes can only be implemented if additional remuneration is forthcoming". Even senior stewards admit that this last sentence is pretty meaningless.

Clause 3.ii is a section in the ADO 88 programme that commits the workforce to accept a maximum of 52 man hours per job and an increase of 30 per cent in productivity. Obviously this is going to mean big redundancies. We calculate about 10,000 jobs will go, but several senior stewards at Longbridge blandly — and quite untruthfully — assured shop meetings that the new "total commitment" resolution contains guarantees against redundancy.

Plan

The events leading up to the management's ultimatum reveal a great deal about how participation has been used to integrate the trade union leadership. At the Cars Council (the highest national body of the participation scheme) late in September, Leyland bosses presented a 9-point plan. This plan would massively increase productivity and mobility and virtually do away with mutuality — that is, the arrangement whereby manning levels and rest periods are sorted out on the shop floor. It would mean

a loss of almost every trade union right fought for by Longbridge workers over the last 30 years, and the establishment of corporate bargaining, something that management have previously denied to be the intention of the participation scheme.

In fact, the participation bodies are not supposed to have any jurisdiction on questions of wages and conditions. Nevertheless, the union representatives on the cars council agreed that the 9 points should be put to the local participation bodies. At this point, even Derek Robinson, the winking apology for a convenor at Longbridge (and a Communist Party member), whose main activities since nationalisation have been ordering people back to work, sabotaging the Trico blacking, endorsing resolution banning unofficial strikes — even Robinson advised the works committee to reject the proposal.

Ploy

As reported in last week's Workers' Action, shop floor meetings throughout the plant endorsed this decision.

However, the Longbridge works committee was not prepared to throw out the management proposals altogether and so the "total commitment" resolution was drawn up. By this time Leyland managing director Derek Whittaker had issued a threat to close down Leyland and Cowley. This threat, combined with a barrage of vote-yes publicity in the press and the deceitful presentation of the resolution on the part of the works committee, result in a 4 to 1 vote in favour in the shop floor meetings.

At least one CP steward motivated the resolution along the lines of "accept it for now, brothers, and then when they introduce the ADO 88, we'll forget about it and start fighting over manning and conditions as usual". This sounds a very cunning ploy, but as one militant said, "if the management get away with their blackmail this time,



WORK-SHARE

Battles still to come at Longbridge

what's to stop them using the same threat again later when we do start fighting back? We've got to call their bluff sometime, it might as well be now".

Acceptance of the 'total commitment' resolution also gives the management a powerful weapon to use against Longbridge workers in the future — the maximum manning level allowed for in clause 3.ii.

Although we have lost a major battle, the war goes on. When management attempts to cut manning levels by 30 per cent, Longbridge workers will resist, despite total commitment".

Workers Action supporters will be fighting for that resistance to be around the demand of **work-sharing on full pay**. We shall also be arguing for **complete withdrawal of union representatives from participation** and for the opening of the books of both company and state — for **workers' inspection**.

The importance of this last demand is very clearly demonstrated by the way that Leyland management have been able to trade on the

confusion rife among the workforce regarding Leyland's financial state. There are rumours of imminent bankruptcy, but Leyland made a 44 million pound profit in the last financial year, despite the huge rake-offs to privately-owned component manufacturers at the expense of the nationalised company.

Fight

Information of this sort, plus a more detailed knowledge of the thinking behind new projects like the ADO 88, can only aid the rank and file fight back. Workers Action supporters, together with supporters of the Engineering Voice group, are also re-convening the Leyland rank and file group, which will be open to all socialists and militants in Longbridge so that a clear strategy for the coming struggles can be hammered out.

Workers Action supporters, Longbridge.

KEY TO CALL FIG BAC

US workers fight on lay-offs, hours

FORD workers in America have been on strike since September 14th. The strike was called by the United Auto Workers union to force a better contract on the three big car companies, Fords, General Motors and Chrysler. The union leadership operate a system called 'pattern bargaining' where they try and do a deal with one of the companies and then hope the other two will settle on the same basis.

This time it was Fords. The union leadership was forced into calling out the Ford workers. Their demands were very weak, however. For example, their pay claim was for annual increases of 3% over the next three years, with only a slightly improved cost of living allowance over the previous one (which had only covered 80% of price rises). Their demand for shorter working hours consisted of asking for extra days off tied to good attendance!

The Ford management took these weak demands as a sign of surrender and countered with proposals involving real deterioration in workers' conditions.

They demanded that improvements in medical care insurance were to be paid for by the workers themselves; that new starts

should have a year's probation and \$1 an hour less pay than other workers; and that any extra days off should be tied not only to attendance but also length of service.

Even UAW President Woodcock, who is angling both to get acceptance on a few 'improvements' and for a place in Carter's cabinet, couldn't accept these company demands and hope to keep any control over the rank and file.

So the UAW called Ford workers out to get a better contract. To date, however, they have conducted the strike in the same manner that they approached the negotiators — with a willingness to sell out at the slightest hint of 'improvements' in the management's 'offers'.

Overtime was being worked right up to the strike, so Fords' stocks are good. Large numbers of cars are not only being stockpiled but are also getting out to the dealers (the UAW pronounced that it was only 'necessary' to picket during the day!). There's been no attempt to organise strikers in fact the UAW has given out many special passes to cross picket lines, allowing maintenance to be carried on. They allowed the Engineering and Research Centre to keep operating — until it was closed, against UAW threats, by rank and file workers. And

there's been no attempt, even given the strategy of 'pattern bargaining', at involving GM and Chrysler workers, or Canadian Ford workers.

With a background of speed-ups (production is at 1973 levels with 20% less workers) and generally worsening conditions, widespread lay-offs and redundancies over the last two years, and with inflation eating into the 1973 sell-out contract, rank and file anger has prevented the UAW leadership coming too quickly to a sell-out this time.

This anger has concentrated on a number of demands:

- ★ Substantial wage increases. This has especially been the emphasis of the skilled workers, who are demanding parity with building workers. (These skilled workers have in fact been far more involved in the strike than the production workers, who are in fact the great majority.)

- ★ A cost of living allowance on pensions, which at the moment are fixed. The strike to date has seen a lot of militancy from the organised 'retirees'.

- ★ A shorter working week, with no loss of pay — as against the existing ideas of extra days off conditional on good attendance and/or length of service.



- ★ Guaranteed lay-off pay. At present, Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) are supposed to guarantee 95% of wages during lay-offs — but only as long as the SUB fund doesn't run dry. It did in 1975. So far, the UAW has tried to draw out the fund by arguing for increased contributions to it from Fords and for restricting the numbers of workers eligible for it. There is a really strong feeling against this, and in favour of a 100% guaranteed fund.

JOHN BLOXAM



NOVEMBER 6th

All out for Trico



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ngbridge
YS

INCREASED flexibility and removal of shop agreements were just two of the impertinent demands made by the TRICO management in return for their latest 50p offer to women who have been on strike since last Spring for equal pay.

These outrageous conditions were reported, along with other news of the strike, to the Support Committee set up by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils.

A poorly attended meeting — only 9 trades councils were represented — it was memorable chiefly for some of the comments made from the platform in reply to delegates' questions.

John Bracher, AUEW, during a report of the strike, stated that for a victory at TRICO the blacking of all windscreen wipers was essential. Taking up this point, a delegate from Lambeth Trades Council asked for the official position of the AUEW leadership on blacking. At that point Jack Dromey, President of Brent Trades Council and on the

AUEW District Committee covering the Trico area, immediately became defensive, and it became clear in the course of the meeting that the District Committee, controlled by the Communist Party, had no intention of putting pressure on the AUEW 'lefts' or demanding that they fight on the Executive for the blacking of windscreen wipers.

The excuse given was that the right wing had the majority on the Executive, creating a delicate situation which made it difficult to demand official blacking — and that anyway the strength lay on the shopfloor! (Without a doubt, had Dromey been at that moment on the shopfloor, he would have insisted on official channels!)

Dromey was merely giving Scanlon a cover, at a time when it is quite clear that such blacking could bring the car industry to a halt and end this strike very quickly. And equally clearly an official call from the AUEW

leadership would immeasurably strengthen the hand of those on the shopfloor fighting for the blacking.

The further suggestion that the AUEW District Committee should call for stoppages in the factories in the area to put pressure on the TRICO management was met with downright hostility.

In fact the delegate who suggested it — from Lambeth TC and a member of NATFHE — was virtually told to keep his mouth shut as he had no strength on the shopfloor and therefore had no right to make such suggestions!

The only glimmer of hope came when it was announced that the District Committee will call a demonstration on Nov 6th — an initiative the Working Women's Charter Campaign and others involved in the strike have been pushing for some time.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign and many other organisations see this

demonstration as having major importance and are planning a national mobilisation. With the support of important sections of the trade union movement it could bring strong pressure on the AUEW leadership to bring in the effective blacking that is needed and to give the strike its full financial backing.

Such national mobilisation could be important to the outcome of the strike. But it is clear that the AUEW District is becoming increasingly hostile to organisations they consider to be outside their immediate control and who have made criticisms of the way that the strike has been organised.

In the weeks leading up to the demonstration *Workers Action* will be calling on all those who understand the class-wide significance of this strike and the importance of a victorious outcome, to join the demonstration and mobilise their workplaces and organisations to turn out for it too.

PAT LONGMAN

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GUARANTEED WEEK'S PAY Dagenham militancy must be extended

THE STRIKERS at Fords Dagenham have gone back to work on a basis which is really no more than previous offers.

1000 night shift workers from the Body Plant had been on strike, and 5000 workers in the Body and Paint, Trim and Assembly [PTA] plants, had been laid off. The night shift lay-off in the PTA was also a result of the strike.

The lay-off for the day shifts (Body and PTA) followed a dispute by plasma welders concerning manning levels and regrading.

The striking night shift workers held a meeting at 10am Wednesday morning (6th October) and voted to stay out for a further week. There were 500 at this meeting, and there would have been more if not for confusion about the timing of the meeting. A number of workers had turned up at 10pm on Wednesday evening, thinking the meeting was then.

The meeting again rejected management's offer to pay 4 hours of the Tuesday shift when they were originally laid off, and not to lay off in future after 11pm 'providing every effort was being made to solve the dispute'. The shift continued to demand: no victimisations

from Tuesday night's events; full pay for that shift; a guaranteed shift payment in future.

After September 28th, management sent out letters to 22 workers threatening them with disciplinary action. In addition Staley, the plant manager, sent out a circular containing 'standard' witch-hunt reference: "For the company to continue to pay wages when there is no possibility of production would give a licence for disruption to those employees whose objectives are not to secure continuity of production."

Union

Union negotiators, however, did not really back the strikers' demands. On the question of victimisation, they adopted a policy of waiting and seeing what 'evidence' the company produced. Such an attitude, which accepts that there *might* be grounds for victimisation, could only weaken the strike and union organisation.

In relation to lay-offs, the negotiators asked for a guarantee of 2 weeks without lay-offs. In a situation where the strikers are

demanding guaranteed shift payment, this union request is a massive step backwards — to the situation before September 28th. As with the section in the pay claim concerning a review of lay-off payments, this shows that the union negotiators are not prepared to fight on the question of lay-offs — even verbally.

Fords management, realising this, went no further than their first offer of confirming the existing arrangements and paying four hours for the night of September 28. Over the pay claim, they indicated that they will only consider extending the 15 day limit on lay-off pay to 20 days, but at the time of writing it is unclear what has been agreed. In relation to the present dispute, they have said that there will be no lay-offs for 2 weeks if... the union guarantees no strikes!

Staley said: "We are not in the lay-off business — we want to build cars for all and every shift" This from someone who was instrumental in laying off the striking shift 5 times in 5 weeks, not to mention all the other times! He — and Fords — want to build cars on *their* terms, attacking manning levels and conditions as they see fit and necessary.

Hours

The case for a guaranteed shift payment and, beyond that, for a guaranteed week — irrespective of the number of hours and shifts worked — needs to be made clearly in this situation.

If door setting equipment is installed which is both dangerous and involves a deterioration in conditions, then it should be rejected. The present agreement retains the equipment, though it promises that the firm will discuss modification!

The plasma welders appear to have gained a little of what they

wanted, though talk of 'flexibility' can be as easily used against them as against others.

The guaranteed week demand still remains to be fought for. At the moment it is clear that this will be against the union — unless they can be forced to change their spots, or removed — and those in the plant leadership who support them will have to be replaced.

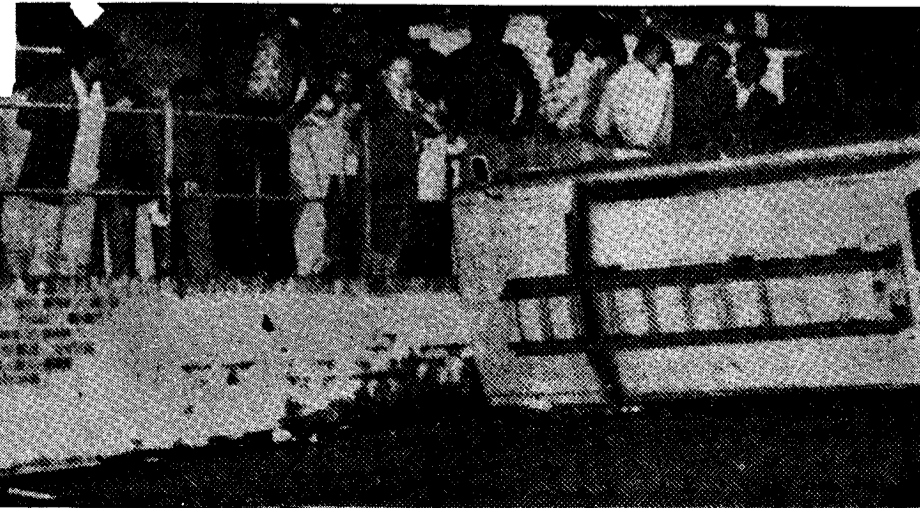
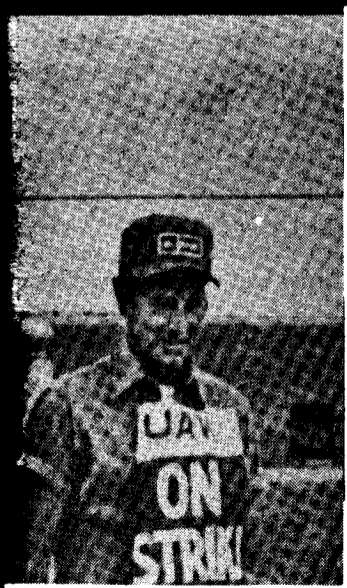
Unity

The lay-off of the day shift workers has emphasised both the pressing nature of the demand for a guaranteed week and the fact that it is a demand for all Ford workers — in fact, all workers at the moment, whether in the motor industry or elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the laid-off workers still do not see this and did not take up the demands the night shift struck for. This meant that the night shift remained isolated. That was a recipe for the defeat. For instance, the day shift in the body plant, while they were still working, voted against supporting the night shift. Even the fact that they were later laid off did not create a situation of overwhelming support for the guaranteed week demand throughout the plant.

Fords hope they have succeeded by getting the men back to work in ensuring that the heat generated in this dispute, and the sharpened anger of the night shift workers, do not spill over into the national pay claim — in particular, into the section of the national pay claim 'reviewing' lay-off payments. On the contrary, a national fight for guaranteed week payment, irrespective of the number of hours and shifts worked, is necessary. Ford Dagenham workers have shown the depths of feeling that exist on this issue.

JOE MACAULAY



Left: US auto union leader Woodcock. Above: Fords Dagenham, the night of 28 September. Top: Ford pickets in USA.

Our demands are still: 'OPEN THE BOOKS!' and 'AN END TO BUSINESS SECRECY'

AS WITH many of the issues socialists and militants have fought around in the trade union movement, the government — in its own way and for its own reasons — is responding to the demands summed up in the slogan 'Open the Books'. The divisive way it is doing it is, in fact, a close parallel to the 'workers participation' response to the demand for workers' control.

Just as much as participation is a snare to the working class, so is this response.

On the face of it, it looks harmless enough. The second in the series of codes of practice on 'Disclosure of Information to Trade Unions for Collective Bargaining' as laid down in the Employment Protection Act 1975 has been published in draft form by ACAS. The production of this Code of Practice was laid down in the Act, along with the code on 'Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities', which has yet to emerge. (Other codes are being produced by ACAS under its discretionary powers: these include *Disciplinary Procedures*, *Trade Union Recognition*, and *Collective Bargaining Procedures*).

Neutral

None of these codes is legally binding — though they can be taken into account by Industrial Tribunals — and they invite the obvious contemptuous reaction from militants: stuff their codes of practice, we make our own!

But that response misses the point of these codes. They are first published in draft, discussed by 'both sides of industry', amended and then republished after everyone has supposedly agreed to them as a guide to trade union activities. Having been agreed (perhaps after amendment) by the trade union officials, these codes will be foisted on to the shop floor.

It is vital to understand each one of them, because though they should be rejected now outright, it is odds on that they won't be.

Trade union officials, indeed, have gone on record as seeing much of ACAS's work as splendid, and given the low level of combativity of the working class at present, for now what the trade union bureaucrats want is more or less law.

Faced with cuts, closures, redundancies, short time and productivity deals, workers have increasingly been demanding information on the wheeling and dealing of the bosses and into the affairs of supposedly 'public' enterprises like the British Steel Corporation, the Post Office and the other nationalised industries. The State has responded by providing guides for employers and unions on how to open up some business information and at the same time leave the important bits under wraps. And it has contrived to make it appear that these codes and methods have come from the trade unions themselves.

Unlike the codes produced under the Tories' Industrial Relations Act, these come out of legislation (the Employment Protection Act) which is supposedly pro-working class. Against

Alan Carter looks at the new code of practice on Disclosure of Information

the background of the Social Contract and Labour Government/TUC collaboration, and stamped with seal of trade union approval after amendment and consultation, these codes will carry a great deal of credibility.

The code on *Disclosure of Information to Trade Unions for Collective Bargaining*, like all aspects of the recent employment and trade union law, rests on the implicit assumption that the body that issues it (the Government) is basically neutral; and that worker/employer conflicts are about problems of detail (small or large) which given the correct procedures and guidance can be ironed out without resort to industrial action (let alone, of course, resort to smashing the capitalist system!).

The information to be provided by employers is strictly limited to what will help wage bargaining negotiations run as smoothly as possible. As the draft code states "Information can help to clarify the issues involved and avoid misunderstandings. This in turn assists the formulation of realistic proposals and allows the parties to concentrate their negotiations and discussions upon the differences between them." (p.2)

Profit

In other words, if some of the books are opened, the wage negotiation can take place within the limits of the profit and investment figures available to both sides and no-one is going to talk of claims outside these limits. Instead of a claim relating to workers' needs and living standards, it will be tailored to the plans and needs of the bosses or the state enterprise.

Moreover, if a firm is in trouble in terms of the amount or rate of profit, the fact that this is known well in advance to the wage negotiators means they will be expected to temper their demands and make them more amenable to manpower cuts, productivity deals, and even redundancies. The cuts or layoffs will of course have to be negotiated, made gradually, etc. but the fact of trade union representatives being implicated in the plans will make resistance by the shop floor much more difficult.

Many people have commented that the demand to 'Open the Books' could be used in this way — that is, to defuse struggle by 'proving' a company was broke. However, it is the limitation of



the information available which 'proves' this.

In reality, any company is part of the national and international commercial and financial system whose transactions are semi-secret or totally secret. The demand to open the books cannot — or should not — stop with the opening of a single company's books. It should be taken further to demand a look at the aggregated figures — linking this with the demand for nationalisation WITHOUT COMPENSATION under workers' control.

Trust

Only if it accepted that a particular individual company must make a profit equal to competing firms do we get a situation where figures showing a failure to make this profit 'prove' that the company requires layoffs, productivity deals etc.

But the code of practice does not simply recommend the release of information on a limited basis; it also recommends release of information in a controlled and regulated manner. This is seen as being at least as important as limiting the information.

The draft code states "An understanding on the information required for the conduct of negotiations and the procedure by which it is provided is a valuable aid in creating and maintaining mutual trust between parties engaged in collective bargaining. Both employers and trade unions should therefore consider concluding agreements on disclosure arrangements." (p.4) The code even recommends that "a procedure for resolving possible disputes concerning any issues associated with the disclosure of information should form part of the agreement" (p.5).

By-pass

Further, when a request for information is refused by an employer the employer is advised to explain the reason for refusal, e.g. confidentiality, to the trade union officials in such a manner as it is capable of being substantiated by independent enquiry" (p.5).

The idea is to have a formal procedure for disclosing information, and designated persons who it will be given to; set procedures for disputes related to disclosure of information; and finally if amicable settlement can't be reached by such procedures,

'Keep your nose out!' they told the Councillor

Haringey Trades Council decided at its last meeting to conduct a Workers' Inquiry into PELAW (Partnership Experiment in Local Authority Works), a new system the Council evolved to run parallel with its Direct Works Department.

WORKERS ACTION has once before carried an account of some of the antics of Haringey Borough Council and the way it exploited the idea of participation to extract worse conditions, while never allowing the workers any real say in how this so-called cooperative scheme would work.

At the Trades Council meeting, George Greenacre made the Council's chicanery even clearer. He revealed that not only were the men working on PELAW consistently refused access to the books, but that he himself hadn't been able to see them — and he was the vice-chairman of PELAW's governing panel and a local councillor, as well as a building worker himself!

Imagine the vice-chairman of a company who was also a main shareholder being refused financial information! The whole situation showed how crucial it is for workers to fight for the books to be opened. And it shows too that having workers' participation doesn't help you to get that information.

The delegates on Haringey Trades Council, however, understood that the only way to get that information is to fight for it. The setting up of the Workers' Inquiry is one step along this road.

the dispute over disclosure has to be defined in terms (e.g. the cost of producing the information) which a Tribunal can decide upon.

At no point is there either general shop floor involvement, or recourse to industrial action. The breeding of a species of trade union 'expert' who receives the information, who can be trusted with it and who will interpret it with his own bureaucratic, class collaborationist vision, is axiomatic to this process; and such an animal is seen as a further useful tool in the general management of the working class.

The code is explicit on this point: "Trade unions should review existing training programmes or establish new ones to

ensure negotiators are equipped to understand and use information effectively." And clearly it doesn't mean 'effectively' from the point of view of effectively furthering the working class struggle!

The code not only elevates the trade union official in relation to workers who rely on his to keep them informed ('There are things I know, lads, that are quite beyond your ken'); it also 'elevates' him closer to the employers, who rely on him to ensure that the workers 'under his charge' keep to the code.

Having a code which accepts as its basis that a capitalist concern has to be viable and profitable, the trade union official is in any case sucked ever further into the cogs of the collaborationist machine.

Under the guise of providing benefits for the working class, the new labour and trade union laws like the Employment Protection Act primarily give status and concessions to the trade union bureaucracy. The British state, once described as the executive wing of the capitalist class, is increasingly acting as the vanguard for these laws and codes, with the willing and eager cooperation of the trade union officials themselves.

Violate

These ACAS codes should be rejected explicitly by National unions, district committees, trades councils, union branches and shop organisations. If they are not, they will act as a strait-jacket on our struggle.

If the code is adopted, despite resistance, we will still have to counterpose our demands like 'Open the Books' to their codes, and explain and clarify the differences. When any group of workers try to by-pass the terms of reference and the union officials on a particular issue, it will be precisely because these codes are designed to set up road-blocks and hindrances in the way of the independent activity and development of the working class.

These codes, by offering a regulated, policed and extremely limited form of what workers demand, violate the fundamental code of practice of the working class: never trust the employers or their state; rely on your own strength and organisation; retain control of all elected officials; and above all, never hold yourself responsible for the capitalist profit system which exists only by exploiting the working class.

Class unity on racism means

SUPPORT BLACK DEFENCE

Comrades,

I was interested to read in *Workers Action* No.30 Rachel Lever's review of the latest CIS report *Racism - Who Profits?* I would agree with her assessment that the report provides "an invaluable collation of up to date argument, facts, figures and tables". One such important fact not mentioned in the review is the establishment of a special illegal immigrant police unit.

In the words of the report "In Britain where the word 'immigrant' is used to cover all blacks this means that to be black means to be a possible illegal immigrant. Special units of the police have been set up to seek out these 'criminals', thus the discriminatory treatment of blacks has been institutionalised."

An 'Immigration Intelligence Unit' has been set up by the Home Office, *without reference to Parliament*, which will soon be integrated with the National Police Computer. "The unit has an operational squad which undertakes raids looking for illegal immigrants. Any black may be raided by a number of police at any time of day or night, his room searched, his possessions scattered, his private documents and mail read."

Divisive

I would not, however, agree unreservedly with Comrade Lever's further conclusion that the report is "knitted together in a coherent analysis, with healthy conclusions".

Firstly, the 'coherent analysis' running through this essentially factual expose smacks of the view that racism is the *direct* result of profiteers seeking ways to divide the working class and provide themselves with cheap, disposable labour.

The important element of a residue of racism in British society at large, including the white labour movement, within which the divisive tactic of racism can be deployed, seems to be given little weight in this report. This is in part due to the nature of the pamphlet, i.e. it is a report of racism today in Britain. However the phenomenon of racism, particularly in the British white working class, cannot coherently be analysed without reference



to Britain's imperial past and the nationalist traditions of the British labour movement.

Not that a continual harping on this is called for. But the appreciation of the historical roots of racism is important in order to realise that racism is not just a device used by the employers, the fascists, the state etc, but is also a false way of understanding events, i.e. *it is an ideology.*

Thus, the view sometimes taken on the left that a simple expose of the 'myths' with recourse to 'the facts' is sufficient to combat racialist ideas is incorrect.

To the degree that the CIS Report presents this view — and in my opinion it is only *one* of the underlying themes which gives it coherence — it needs to be *politely, but firmly, challenged.*

Real Danger

Secondly, not all the report's conclusions can be given a clean bill of health. For instance, in the last section on 'Fighting Back' the report quite rightly comments that "grass roots organisations for black defence are a natural and necessary response to racism, but cannot defeat it." However, rather than draw the conclusion that the predominantly white labour move-

ment should therefore support these responses, it contents itself with the following remark: "Racism is a very real danger to the whole working class; the only way in which it can be defeated is by a concerted offensive at all levels, on the shop floor, in union organisations, and in the streets."

Felt needs

This simply fudges a very important issue. One of the major controversies on the left recently in the fight against racialism has been whether these black defence responses the report mentions should be supported. Some, like the *Militant* supporters in the LPYS, have said unequivocally *NO*. They are prepared to see black workers defenceless until such time as the 'Official' labour movement decides that it should form workers' defence groups, which would then, hopefully, undertake defence of black workers.

Given the trade union bureaucracy's illusions in the state and the police and their ever-present desire for the quiet life, that is some time to wait!

Others suggest that black self-defence groups are only temporary and that when more general working class defence

groups are built, the black groups should liquidate themselves into them. The implication is that the stress now should be put on building workers' defence groups — or 'party supporters defence groups' which IS, the main proponent of this view, certainly imply.

The black groups are accordingly not recommended either to put their own defences on a firmer footing, or seek support for them from the labour movement. The CIS statement could certainly be read as supporting this view.

The problem is that building workers' self defence is not an abstract exercise but something which takes place in response to real, felt needs. The issue which more than any other shows the need for workers' defence groups in Britain at the moment is fascist and police attacks on black people. The actual way that the issue of workers' defence groups is posed at present by events is for the labour movement to support the black self-defence groups which exist.

A further point is that black people, so long ignored or abused by the white dominated labour movement, will be very reluctant to liquidate their own defence groups in favour of labour movement ones which

fight, we must be alert to criticise their misleading strategy and demands when they do fight — otherwise struggles will occur, but they will simply be led into blind alleys. It was good to see that WA came forward with just that sort of analysis and criticism in the excellent article on the question of nationalisation of the banks.

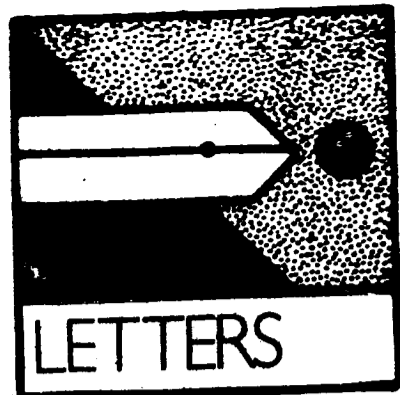
Emma Parsons
North London

REPLY: Comrade Parsons' remark that Benn's own behaviour cannot lead us directly to exclude the possibility that the 'lefts' on the Labour Party NEC will lead "any movement" against Government policy is perfectly correct.

No doubt the article (or rather, caption — having been boiled down from an article) was too elliptical. But there is a whole wealth of evidence suggesting our conclusion — and Benn's line of action if only one element in this.

We have, for instance, many times before recalled the refusal of the NEC to insist that Transport House carry out the decision of the Party Conference on the Common Market. In that particular case the NEC had the largest amount of support it could hope for (Party Conference, unions, PLP, and the nec itself) and it still refused to confront the Government directly in the form of an official Labour Party campaign against the entry of Britain into the EEC. (Readers will know that W.A. does not share this opposition to EEC entry; the issue, however, was a clear case of the paralysis of will of the NEC lefts — who are the same now as they were then.)

Likewise it was, we noted, Judith Hart herself who acted as the agency of the Gov-



TERROR OF AN EAST LONDON FAMILY

Comrades,

You're right — East London is today a vicious and mean place, especially if you're black. Lots of Bengali families are having to squat so that they can stick together for safety.

The family of 52-year old Nimar Ali are having to live apart in two different places — and pay two lots of rent. Nimar Ali took his wife and two daughters away from their council flat at Oban House in Poplar, to live in two rented rooms at Whitechapel, leaving his sons in the flat. 14-year old Shalma had twice been assaulted and beaten up in the street as she went to school. Another time, an axe was put through the front door. Mr. Ali's wife Mofura had become frightened to leave the flat; and one of the brothers was injured in a street attack.

The council are still refusing to adopt a policy of housing Bengali families close together where they can organise their own defence and social and cultural amenities. They are taking the attitude that immigrants should be forced to 'integrate' — that is, abandon their tradition and become Anglicised — by being dispersed. That policy would be bad enough even if the 'white' environment was friendly and welcoming. In a situation where the fascists are active and where every major political party supports immigration controls (implying that immigrants are undesirable and need to be kept out) this policy means isolated families living in a state of constant terror.

DES BUTLER
East London

have yet to come into existence, let alone to prove themselves.

Though it is true that black and white should unite and fight, it is blacks who are at the forefront of the fighting and the whites who need to solidarise and *unite with them*. The first step is to fight for labour movement support for black self-defence. It would have been 'healthier' if the report had explicitly drawn this conclusion.

Don Richie
North London

ernment in trying to get Alan Fisher to withdraw the last part of his anti-cuts resolution.

To talk of Foot as one of the NEC 'lefts' is, of course, a pite anachronism. Whatever his past, he has been a consistent member of the NEC right since his inclusion in the cabinet.

Of course, not all of the 'lefts' have so compromised themselves or given so clear a signal of their refusal to fight that would make it reasonable to write them off. Not to mention the obvious fact that if we write them off, that will hardly mean the mass of Labour supporters writing them off!

Nevertheless the statement in *Tribune* of September 24th (which we mentioned in passing in the article) does, we think, permit us to make an informed estimate of the likelihood of those like Allaun, Hart, Heffer, Maynard, Mikardo et al carrying their ideas through to the point of confrontation with the government.

The statement appeared in *Tribune* because "the NEC [would] not submit to conference delegates a paper showing where the Liaison Committee document is in conflict with the policies of the Party and the TUC".

But the statement which contrasts the policies of the TUC, the Labour Party and the Liaison Committee is headed by a preamble in which the signatories hotly reject the suggestion that "those who take our view are trying to smash the social contract. ... the suggestion has no truth in it at all..."

This preamble was signed by Frank Allaun, Nick Bradley, Barbara Castle, John Forrester, Judith Hart, Eric Heffer, Lena Jeger, Joan Lester, Joan Maynard, Ian Mikardo and Renee Short.

WORKERS' ACTION

supporters' groups are being formed in the following places:

Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chelmsford, Chester, Coventry, Durham, Edinburgh, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Newtown, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Rochdale, Sheffield, Stafford, Stoke

Write for details of meetings & activities to:
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Will the Lefts fight?

Dear Comrades,

On the centre page of *Workers Action* No.31 you say in one place that "the NEC [of the Labour Party] will continue to be a focus of opposition to Government policy" and in another that "the NEC lefts are not going to lead any movement against the government".

In the strictest terms, these statements are not contradictory. The NEC is a focus of opposition to the Government; but that opposition shows no immediate prospects of reaching the level of a real movement.

However, the statement that "the NEC lefts are not going to lead any movement against the government" comes as conclusion to a criticism of Benn. It is one thing to say that Benn, while he is in the government, is fairly certain to go along with Healey and Callaghan; it is not quite the same to say that the non-government left-wingers on the NEC — Maynard, Mikardo, Hart, Atkinson... — are certain not to lead important struggles against the government.

After their record on the March vote of confidence, it would be foolish to rely on those NEC lefts to promote any serious struggle. But it would scarcely be less foolish to confine our criticisms of them to the bland assertion "They won't fight". Indeed left reformism would not be a problem, and would not have much influence in misleading militants, if it just always avoided struggle.

As well as exposing the NEC lefts' lack of

WORKERS IN ACTION

Stewards try to trick workers into accepting 'participation'

SHOP stewards at London Transport's Acton Works are preparing to enmesh their members in a workers' participation scheme. With the only opposition coming from a supporter of *Workers Action*, the new shop stewards led by Communist Party members are busily evolving a plan by which London Transport would take onto its board elected workplace representatives chosen on a district basis (North, South, East West and Central). At an earlier meeting where a number of stewards opposed the

introduction of workers' participation, leading CP militants including Kevin Halpin of the old Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions tried to side-step the issue of principle and pose instead the question of what conditions should be demanded for participation if the scheme were introduced.

Debate

In this way the Communist Party and their followers are trying to ensure that the debate takes participation for granted

and that all discussion centres around the totally secondary questions of recallability, direct action, parity, the number of tiers of supervision, the role of consumer associations, etc.

By taking what will appear to some as a radical line on these matters at this point — arguing for recallability, direct elections, one tier, and a system of one third workers, one third administration and one third consumers' associations (on which the CP is heavily represented) — the Communist Party hopes to distract attention away from its

criminally treacherous role of leading the workers into a trap prepared by the employers.

Detailed

Of course, detailed documents on the proposals have not been circulated to the workers — not to mention minority views on such documents. Clearly the stewards who are trying to get a workers' participation scheme are not very keen on such participation in the present debate!

DENNIS KING

ONE LAW FOR THE MINER, ANOTHER FOR THE DEPUTY

ON October 6th, 400 members of the Gedling branch NUM walked out on unofficial strike in protest against the reinstatement to Gedling Colliery of a Deputy Manager.

The incident began on May 13th this year, when a teenage trainee miner was struck in the face and neck by a split (roof support) propelled by the Deputy. He had to have pit-head first aid treatment and was also taken to Nottingham General Hospital. His doctor advised him to stay off work for 3 or 4 days.

Mockery

The Gedling branch NUM found it unacceptable to have a man in a supervisory capacity who would endanger the lives of miners and, as they put it "make a complete mockery of the Mines and Quarries Act". The Union demanded that the Deputy should not be allowed to continue in a position of responsibility, and he was moved to another pit in the Notts coalfield until October 5th — when he reported back to Gedling.

Anyone familiar with the laws of the pit would know that if the man had been a miner and not a Deputy he would have been sacked immediately. But the Union is not demanding the sacking of this Deputy — instead that he be allowed to earn his living: but not as a Deputy Manager at Gedling pit!

Loss

The strike is being opposed by NACODS who are standing by the Deputy and insisting on his right to stay at Gedling. But with 1450 miners out (at a loss of 3,000 tons of coal) and morale high, the membership is determined: at a capacity union meeting on Wednesday 6th, it was unanimously agreed to continue the action.

CONTINUED FROM p.1

There are of course already pressures building up, especially for 'fringe benefit claims' in the wake of the seamen's settlement. But in general the union leaders are still keeping the lid well down on any pay revolt. Their talk has even shifted: from Social Contract to Dunkerque spirit; from 'saving the Labour Government' to 'saving our country'. (Whose country? It certainly isn't owned by workers!)

From one corner, however, there has been a response: and that comes from the sector that has been under the most consistent attack — public service employees.

There is already widespread support for the half-day strike, demonstration and lobby organised for November 17th in London, although the union leaderships have so far been only luke-warm. The NUT, for one, is only calling for 10 delegates per association (borough branch), despite pressure for

BANKS

more thoroughgoing action (see for example the resolution inset).

Outer London Region of NATFHE has called on its Executive to call a half-day strike — a call that is certain to be supported by other regions. The Metropolitan District of Nalgo has likewise called for a half-day strike, but as yet there has been no official statement from the union leadership.

Some London branches of the CPSA have made a similar call, but it is not yet known how the Executive will respond — they have already reported to the membership that their private approaches to various public sector union leaders for a strike on the day of action met with a blank wall.

The South East Region of the TUC is backing the call to make

November the 17th a day of action, as is NUPE — though it is not known in NUPE's case exactly what forces they will try to organise for the day.

November 17th must be the starting point for a united, organised campaign:

Every local struggle against the closure of a hospital, a school, or a nursery, must be tied in with these general working class demands.

★ Nationalisation without compensation of the banks and finance institutions.

★ Labour councils to refuse to implement cuts, and to repudiate interest payments to money-lenders.

★ The government to guarantee protection against price increases for the funds of all social services vital to working class living standards.

BURY CUTS FIGHT "We're winning"

BURY, 9th Oct: The sit-in at Hillcrest Hostel (for people suffering from nervous breakdowns) goes on amid mounting confidence that we have won. A letter sent to the Chairman of the *Action Group against Social Services Cuts* from the Bury Chief Executive Officer, MacDonald, spoke of a decision by the Area Health Authority to take over the running of the Hostel as a virtual certainty. (It had been scheduled for closure

by Bury council as part of their response to the national cuts programme).

We are staying in until this is formally confirmed, but we feel sure that our presence in the Hostel has forced the AHA to make this move.

The Action Group is now committed to fighting for the other institutions threatened, and a new Cuts Committee is to be formed of trade union and labour movement delegates, to

fight all public spending cuts. The Social Services Action Group is to date the only really active, fighting group in Bury, but we hope to spread the action to other areas such as education, where 400,000 pounds has already been cut off the budget, and there is more to come as the council scratch around for areas to recoup their next cut of 800,000 pounds.

SUE ARNALL

Director moves against students at NE London Poly

Following the successful 26-day occupation of North East London Poly (NELP) last term, the Director of the Polytechnic has moved against the Students Union.

First he instituted a 'disciplinary committee' — more of a kangaroo court — against Andy Strouthous, SU President, and Jeff Fryer, both IS militants, on charges of using or threatening physical force against three members of the governing body and four members of NELP staff including the Deputy Director. These charges arise from the disruption of a meeting on the 20th June in

write the Union constitution and freeze union funds.

In a second move, the Director is applying for the enforcement of a High Court injunction which he obtained during the occupation to deny Strouthous access to the Poly. This would mean that NELP's SU President would be in contempt of court (and liable to jail) if he came into the Poly to carry out his elected duties.

These attacks on the Union rank with the worst actions of the now notorious Terence Millar at North London Poly, and are reminiscent too of the attacks on Student Union

Secretary. NELP students demand no victimisations, and the immediate withdrawal of the High Court injunction against the President.

★★★

ALSO AT N.E.L.P.: Cleaners at the Holbrook Annexe are on official strike because of the presence of the killer asbestos dust in the building. The cleaners are G&MWU members, and their actions should be supported by the local labour movement. They have given a valuable lead in the fight

"DON'T CUT CORNERS ON US", SAY CARDIFF AMBULANCE CREWS

AMBULANCEMEN in Cardiff and South Glamorgan have struck in protest against management's attempts to cut manning levels on the night shift.

Without even bothering to consult the men involved — members of NUPE and the G&MWU — management informed them that the shift would have to operate with two men less if two or more failed to turn up. Previously, anyone missing would have been replaced by calling someone in on overtime.

The men immediately imposed an "emergencies only" service and last Tuesday (October 5th) voted overwhelmingly to take strike action.

Management responded by offering only a seven day 'stay of execution' while the men came up with their own scheme to save money. This suggestion only served to outrage the ambulance workers and make them more determined. Both unions returned a verdict that only complete capitulation by management could settle the strike.

They also made it plain that the dispute was not just over the loss of overtime. According to Adrian Jones, Assistant Welsh Organiser of NUPE, the men didn't want overtime — they wanted more crews.

This strike comes as growing evidence of widespread opposition by health service workers to the Labour Government's cuts. It deserves the support of all trade unionists both inside and outside the public sector. The need for solidarity action is vital if the strikes are to win and the Health Authority made to withdraw these and other cuts. And following the resolution on the cuts passed at Conference, the local Labour Parties must be urged to take an active stand on the issue. **WORKERS ACTION SUPPORTERS WILL BE ARGUING TO THIS EFFECT IN LOCAL TRADE UNION AND Labour Party branches.**

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, 5 pounds per column inch; paid ads, 8p per word. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27 to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's issue. **Workers Action supporters' groups are particularly welcome to advertise their meetings and activities in this column.**

Friday 15 October. Social organised by the Working Women's Charter campaign, from 8pm at RCA, Kensington Grove, London SW7 (entrance in Jay Mews). Bar, disco, 50p entrance.

Friday 15 October. Coventry Workers Action readers' meeting: John O'Mahony on the struggle in Ireland. 7.30pm in the Albany Hotel (upstairs room), Albany Rd, Coventry.

Saturday 16 October. Planning meeting for February's "One year on from the SDA" rally. 2pm at the Architectural Association, 2nd floor, 34 Bedford Sq, WC1. Further details from/donations to Jill Daniels, 16 Crookham Rd, London SW6.

Monday 18 October. Cambridge Workers Action readers' meeting. "Ireland, the war goes on". Speaker: Simon Temple (norwood CLP delegate on Labour Movement delegation to Ireland, in personal capacity). 8pm at Clare College buttery.

Tuesday 19 October. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting on "Trade Union leaders and the rank and file". 7.30pm at the Rhyemney Hotel, Adam St, Cardiff.

Friday 29 October. Coventry Workers' Action readers' meeting. Martin Legassick on South Africa. 7.30pm at the Albany Hotel, Albany Rd.

Saturday 30 October. National WWC day school on nursery campaigns. 10am to 5pm at the Centre of Environmental Studies, 62 Chandos Place, London WC2. Creche provided.

Tuesday 2 November. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting on "The Lessons of October 1917". 7.30pm at the Rhyemney Hotel, Adams St.

Saturday 6 November. Anti-Apartheid one-day delegate conference on Southern Africa. 10.45am at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. More details from Chris Child, 89 Charlotte St, London W1.

Saturday 6 November. Demonstration called by Southall AUEW and Trico strike committee, and supported by Working Women's Charter campaign: **Equal Pay for Trico Workers!**

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