

workers' ACTION

No.56

May 12th to 19th 1977

10p

Britain out of Ireland!

THE MURDER of a 46-year old Belfast bus driver, the father of three children, in an attempt to intimidate busworkers into stopping work, is a grisly demonstration of the reality of the attempted Loyalist "strike" in the Six Counties.

Denied support from the heavily "Loyalist" organised working class and from most Orange politicians, the attempt to repeat the 1974 strike action has only one kind of weapon — force, intimidation, and now murder.

It may well be that the resort to undisguised gangster-style murder will prove counter-productive and increase rather than end the isolation of the Paisleyites. For this time, unlike 1974, there is no 'soft' political target to strike down, such as the power-sharing Executive was then. And, this time, the hardline Orangemen are attempting to reiterate a supremacy that has faded because it was politically sterile.

In 1974, by contrast, they were asserting in direct action the real attitudes of the Protestant working class against the vulnerable Faulknerite Unionists who had very cynically tricked them in the 1973 elections, only to cheat them afterwards.

Today the entire logic of the Paisleyites' position leads unavoidably towards a demand for Orange independence.

Though some of them occasionally talk of independence, the Paisleyites are not prepared to set that as a goal for their "strike" because they are aware of

PAISLEY TERROR - LOGIC OF ORANGE STATE

its unrealism.

For example, the Belfast shipyards have recently gained a valuable contract which the workers there — and they are overwhelmingly Protestant — know would not have happened without the British government, and which requires £12m of British funds.

Extreme "Loyalism" is caught in the contradiction that it is impotent against Britain, yet cannot bear to accept that the British government is no longer prepared to underwrite undisguised Orange supremacy within the Six Counties.

Today the British ruling class and the 26-County bourgeoisie, partners in the EEC, insist on a restructuring of the sectarian state so that some Catholic sectarian politicians can get their snouts in the trough, and there is a chance that the Catholic population can be conned into accepting the Six-County sectarian state.

The problem for those Orange supremacists who want to challenge the British government at this fundamental level is that no one is sure an independent Orange state would be a possibility. And everyone who has thought about it is quite sure that a move towards an independent Orange state could only lead to the break-up of the Six Counties — which do not at all form an organic unit, and large areas of which have a Catholic majority.

Therefore the Paisleyites

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THE LAW & ORDER MOB STRIKE AGAIN

Water and gas pipes ripped out, gas fires destroyed, photocopier wrecked, files and shelving torn up and strewn around, furniture broken up.

That was how the Tottenham LAW CENTRE was found after it had been broken into on Saturday, May 7th.

The Law Centre has been the centre for the Defence Campaign set up to defend those arrested trying to stop the National Front march through Haringey on April 23rd. It has served as the meeting place for the Haringey Campaign against Racism, which was involved in organising the huge counter-demonstration which gave the fascists a mauling on April 23rd.

The Tottenham Law Centre joins a lengthening list of centres, offices and bookshops wrecked by fascists.

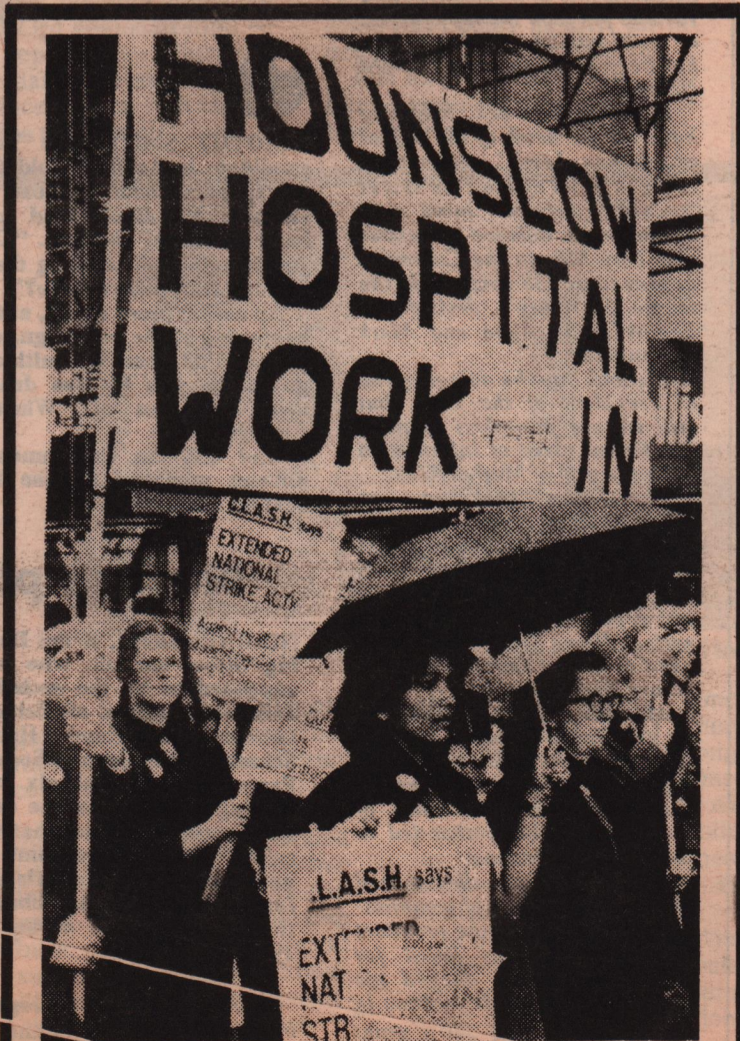
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Tower Hamlets Labour Party rooms was attacked the week before. Hackney Community Relations Council's premises have been attacked twice. Haringey CRC has also been done over.

In Leeds, a Labour Party meeting was attacked last week. Labour canvassers in East London have been intimidated.

These are the hallmarks of fascism. The labour movement will have to defend itself, or before long no meeting, no premises, no individual militant, no picket line, will be safe. The strong-arm bully-boys must be met and challenged by the stronger arm of the labour movement.

(See Editorial, p. 3)



ABOVE: nurses on the 5,000-strong demonstration through London on Wednesday May 11th in protest against public service cuts. Some 50,000 NUPE members in hospitals, libraries, local authority offices, sewage works and in 220 primary and secondary schools in the London area struck as part of this massive day of action.

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2-YEAR FIGHT FOR A DAY CARE ABORTION CENTRE

After two years of campaigning by local women, health workers and doctors, the long-awaited day-care abortion centre in Tower Hamlets will be open by the end of the year.

It will mean less time waiting for beds and enable more women to have the choice of an abortion. It will particularly help those women concerned about confidentiality.

Campaigning for support within the area and pressuring the Community Health Council had resulted in a decision last summer to extend abortion facilities at the London Hospital to include day-care terminations. But a year later alterations to an existing building at Mill End have only just started.

It was only last week that the opening of the centre was definitely announced. At a meeting of the CHC, David Kenny of the District Health Management Team said that staff for the centre are being recruited.

The opening of the day-care centre is clearly a victory for the NAC campaign in the area and the hospital workers who have petitioned and picketed and pressurised over the years.

But given cuts in the Health Service and falling standards of care, they will now have to ensure that the Centre will not be used as a rationalisation for cutting back on beds and staff elsewhere. The London Hospital at present has wards and many areas under-used because of shortage of staff and funds. And in the area, health management are instigating cuts in the region of £210,000 and has abolished 200 jobs through "natural wastage".

Day care abortions on the NHS are a woman's right. But we must oppose the running down of other facilities under cover of such provision.

SUSAN CARLYLE

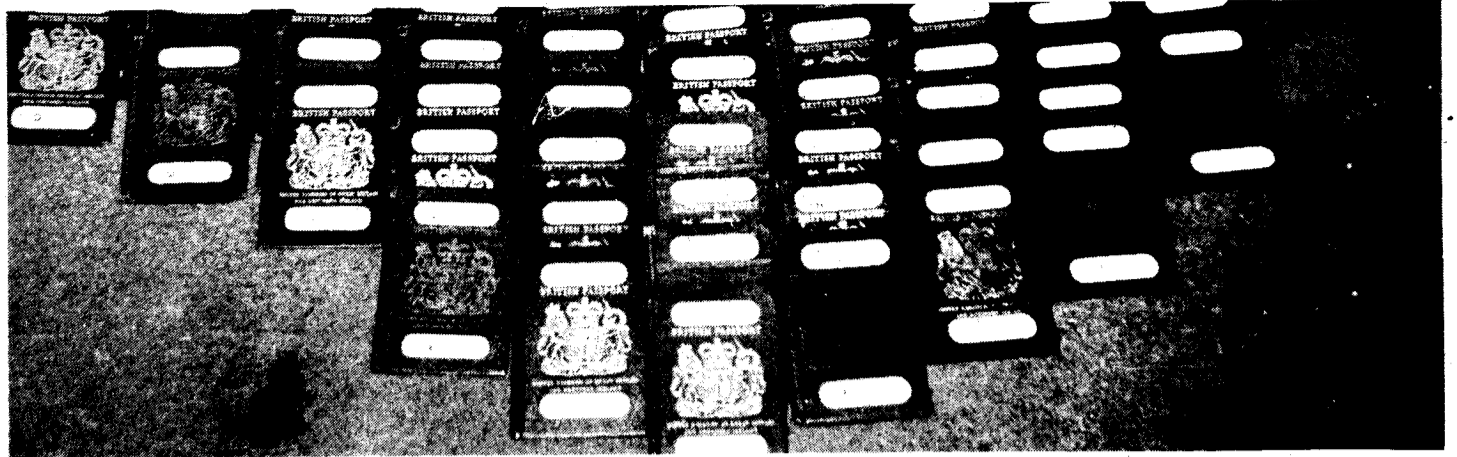
WOMEN'S RIGHTS RALLY IN GLASGOW

150 attended the 'Rally for Women's Rights — One year on from the Sex Discrimination Act' in Glasgow on Saturday 7th May.

Missing — although the rally had been initiated by Edinburgh Working Women's Charter group — was an organised presence of the WWC to point out an alternative to reliance on anti discrimination laws, and to use the rally to help build a fighting movement.

Instead platform speakers concentrated on how to use the tribunals which adjudicate on equal-pay and sex-discrimination cases, and factual accounts of the inadequacies of the tribunals. In her summing up, Linda Smith (of the Scottish Socialist League) stressed the Scottish women's liberation conference, coming up in June.

'Workers' Action supporters spoke from the floor on the need to build the Working Women's Charter as a fighting women's movement, and collected names and addresses of some 20 people interested in further activity.



DO YOU HAVE THE WHITE CONNECTIONS?

ON APRIL 28th, the Government finally published its long promised proposals to change the law on British citizenship and nationality.

In opposition, Labour opposed the "pinpricking and niggling Bill" which became the racist, repressive 1971 Immigration Act on the following grounds: "Our main criticism of the Bill" said Merlyn Rees in Parliament "is that it attempts to change immigration control without looking at citizenship".

Reform of the citizenship law was thus the plank of opposition in Parliament to the 1971 Act and the excuse for not repealing or reforming this Act since 1974 when Labour returned to office and proceeded to implement it.

Now finally, having got round themselves to "looking at citizenship", the Labour Government is suggesting new ways to "change immigration control" which do not fundamentally

change the 1971 Immigration Act and which are racist and repressive in their own right.

The question of citizenship law revolves around the granting of citizenship rights for inhabitants of former British colonies.

The British Empire expressed its colonial interests in a citizenship law which allowed for the free movement of colonists from Britain to the colonies, and allowed them and their descendants to remain British citizens. It also formally allowed for free movement to Britain.

This was a convenient mechanism to retain in the 1948 Nationality Act for post-Empire Britain. In the 1950s Britain's labour shortage could be solved by drawing upon the peoples of the old empire, which had been under-developed by Britain, to do the lowest paid menial work here.

The fall in demand for labour,

the racist reaction and Britain's orientation toward Europe quickly led to changes in the 1960s, restricting the right of entry through immigration controls.

Now the Green Paper states "The most serious drawback to the status of Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies is that it does not provide a ready definition of who has the right of entry to the United Kingdom" (para 10, p.9). So whereas the 1971 Act limited rights of entry by imposing immigration controls on citizens, these proposals will do so by changing the citizenship law.

The Green Paper proposes a two tier system of British citizenship. One category, 'British citizenship', gives right of entry; the other, 'British Overseas Citizenship', which does not. Who gets which is to be determined by the application of such concepts as 'close ties',

'the strength of the connection' or where 'the link is a real one' or a person 'suitably connected', etc.

Though the words 'race', 'colour' and 'black' are nowhere mentioned in the document (not even the race relations polite term for black, 'New Commonwealth', is used) the intention is unmistakably racist. Such criteria are to be the equivalent of the concept of 'patrial' in the 1971 Act.

Many black people will be 'suitably connected' to receive British citizenship because they live here. But rights of entry which existed before 1962 (for commonwealth citizens); or before 1968 (for British passport holders); or before the 1971 Act (for voucher holders); or at present (for citizens of a remaining British colony) will no longer apply as the 'suitably connection' will be judged to be lacking.

Nearly all the "suitably connected" people not resident in Britain who at present have right of entry are white, and that is how it is to stay — except that now their right will be because they are among the select British citizens, not because they are "patrial".

The document, in para 66, refers to civil rights such as voting as civil privileges which, it claims, "do not stem directly from the law of nationality". This may point to further steps to build up an army of black and Asian workers in Britain who are deprived of normal rights of citizenship and thus are more vulnerable to exploitation. The proposals do not go decisively further in that direction than the 1971 Act, but they formalise the provisions of that Act.

There are a series of other implications, or possible implications, of the Green Paper which should be noted.

□ The confusion over Irish citizens is simply sidestepped (Para 75).

□ The implications of the proposals for rights of entry of dependents are unclear.

□ Like the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, these proposals may be contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights to which Britain is a signatory.

□ The proposals may leave some future descendants of British Overseas Citizens (para 73) and possibly some existing UK and Colonial citizens, stateless. This is a breach of the UN Convention on stateless persons (articles 4 and 9).

□ The proposals, though they express pretensions to sex equality, discriminate against the right of women British Overseas citizens to pass on citizenship rights to their children.

"Non-racist" immigration controls are a mirage. Any system of law chosen to back up immigration controls must necessarily discriminate against and infringe the human rights of some categories of people.

Our answer has to be: no immigration controls!

ALAN CARTER

MAUDLING APPROVED, OF COURSE

THANKS to the sponsorships of Datsun motors, the Church of Scientology, a weedkiller and various pet food manufacturers, a multi-million television jury has been set up to judge Richard Nixon.

In the same week, following hard on the heels of the defeat of Arthur Lewis' attempt to bring in a Bill making the secret 'security' services more accountable, an alliance of Labour and Tory MPs in the Commons approved by 138 votes to 34 the Home Secretary's decision to deport Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball.

Work into the doings of the ex-President of the U.S., but still we are powerless to prise the tiniest piece of information from the grip of Merlyn Rees.

The Tories' spokesman on this occasion was Reginald Maudling. He spoke in support both of Rees and of the procedure adopted in political 'security' deportations, which he himself, as Home Secretary in 1970, used to deport German revolutionary Rudi Dutschke.

Maudling has good reason to be grateful to Britain's rules of secrecy, its hush-hush, protect-the-high-ups conventions that block the possibilities of the kind of inquiry that led to the ousting of Nixon.

Maudling, it was alleged, had made a packet out of commission paid to him by the architect Poulson, who was jailed for corruption. It was alleged too that he had used his position in the government to get a grant for Malta to be used partly to pay for a hospital on the island of Gozo, to be built by Poulson. But there was no investigation.

It all serves to protect what is called 'national security' and is in fact the self-defence of the rich and powerful.

LAST WEEK



TIMOTHY SMITH, the Tory candidate in Ashfield, told the newspapers about his road to success. "I didn't hold pit-head meetings", he said. "Can you imagine me standing there in a suit and a blue rosette?"

An earlier press report, at the beginning of the campaign, explained that when Mr Smith did go to the pits he was driven away by cries of "Winston Churchill!"

And still the Government's policies managed to lose the seat for Labour.

Nuclear plant for Brazil

NO-ONE noticed, at the Downing Street summit, who were supposed to be the socialists. James Callaghan of Britain's Labour Party and Helmut Schmidt of the German Socialist Party sat down with six other leading politicians of the capitalist world to discuss what they called "the world economic situation today... characterised by fundamental structural changes that had occurred during the 1970s".

Faced with the re-emergence of deeper recessions, and the faltering nature of the recovery from the last recession, the main danger the capitalist leaders wanted to avoid was protectionism. Import restrictions, once started, can easily snowball, and could transform the next recession, probable in 1978

A LABOUR vote in Ashfield would help build a 'socialist republic', declared Michael Foot. Or so claimed a Tory MP who irately demanded whether Mr Foot wanted to abolish the monarchy.

"I was misquoted", declared Foot. The Ashfield candidate, Michael Cowan, explained: "Of course, what Foot meant was not the overthrow of the monarch. He meant republic in the Platonic sense of 'The State'".

So a socialist monarchy is all right? But maybe 'socialist' is meant in a platonic sense, too.

or '79, into a disastrous collapse of world trade.

The summit declared against protectionism — but did not get very far as regards the other side of the matter: that is, persuading the stronger economies, like West Germany and Japan, to expand faster (at risk of promoting inflation) so as to help drag weak economies like Britain and Italy out of their stagnation.

The conference also discussed strengthening the international financial institutions, to ensure an element of stability vis-a-vis the large debt burdens of non-oil producing 'Third World' countries and some advanced countries. The USA raised the question of nuclear proliferation, but Germany will go ahead with its plan to sell a nuclear power plant to Brazil.

The dangerous march of fascism



THE 120,000 votes gained by the National Front in the Greater London Council elections put fascism on the map as a political force. They got 5.3% of the vote, and in 33 of Greater London's seats, the fascists pushed the Liberals, for long the party that benefited most from protest votes and disillusionment, into third place.

The National Front is benefiting from general disillusionment with Labour in power, and probably also from the general rightward shift of British politics. At the next general election it seems a certainty that there will be enough fascist candidates to give the NF parity in broadcasting and TV rights with the major political parties.

It is true that votes aren't as powerful as direct action by the labour movement, and also true that with 5.3% of the vote the fascists are hardly within reach of political power.

They are, however, a force which is consolidating and growing. They are able to appropriate and use the sour discontent of sections of the population. They can touch a solid traditional ideology of nationalism (which most of the left share, or pander to) in the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, and easily turn it into racist chauvinism.



They can play on the feelings of resentment at bad housing, falling living standards and the now chronic unemployment situation. The existence of an easily identifiable immigrant population gives them a ready focus for their politics of impotent hatred.

In addition they have a whole tradition of fascist demagoguery and tricks to draw upon.

Noticeably in the last years there has been an unashamed and thinly disguised reemergence of anti-Semitism. Under the label of Zionism, they quite clearly mean simply Jews. At the NF's meeting following the April 23rd demonstration — so it is reported — whenever John Tyndall mentioned Jews, his audience replied with chants of "Back to the ovens!"

Should anybody who listens to the NF ask for a more 'sophisticated' explanation for the mess of the British capitalist economy than the moronic claim that it is the responsibility of the black immigrants, why, it is already there. It is "international finance" — what the Nazis used to call "Jewish capital".

In fact, since the split-off of the 'populist' racist wing to form the National Party, control of the National Front has been firmly in the hands of a group round John Tyndall and Martin Webster whose political lineage goes back to the most vicious of the fascist tendencies Britain has known, that of Arnold Leese. Leese, in the 1930s, used to refer contemptuously to Oswald Mosley, whose British Union of Fascists used anti-semitism, as a 'kosher fascist'.



In addition to the political face of the National Front, there is an underground jungle of groupings of a para-military character, some of whom have links with Protestant assassin groups in the Six Counties. The number of violent assaults and raids on property has markedly increased.

Both this issue of *Workers' Action* and the last issue carry reports of fascist-inspired violence against pickets and against labour movement premises and activists. To the degree that fascism consolidates as a solid movement, such incidents will inevitably increase, making more acute the need for organised labour movement self-defence.

For the political programme of the leaders of the NF is a police state on the Nazi model.

They know that for there to be any possibility of their growth and development, it must be at the expense of the labour movement. If they now organise fractions within the trade union movement — this is only an expression of the fact that they are not yet able to come out openly against an independent labour movement.

But already their press contains unambiguous evidence that their goal is a fascist "nat-

ional Union" in which there would be no possibility of an independent labour movement, and which could only come into being by destroying the existing labour movement. The current spate of attacks should focus the minds of the labour movement on this fact.

The fight against fascism in the period ahead must take two main forms.

First of all, there has to be an unremitting drive to cleanse the labour movement of racism and nationalism. Racism is the thing that has allowed fascism to emerge as an increasingly important force in a country where the working class is the overwhelming majority of the population, and the labour movement is singularly powerful.

Racists must be harried and hounded out of the labour movement.

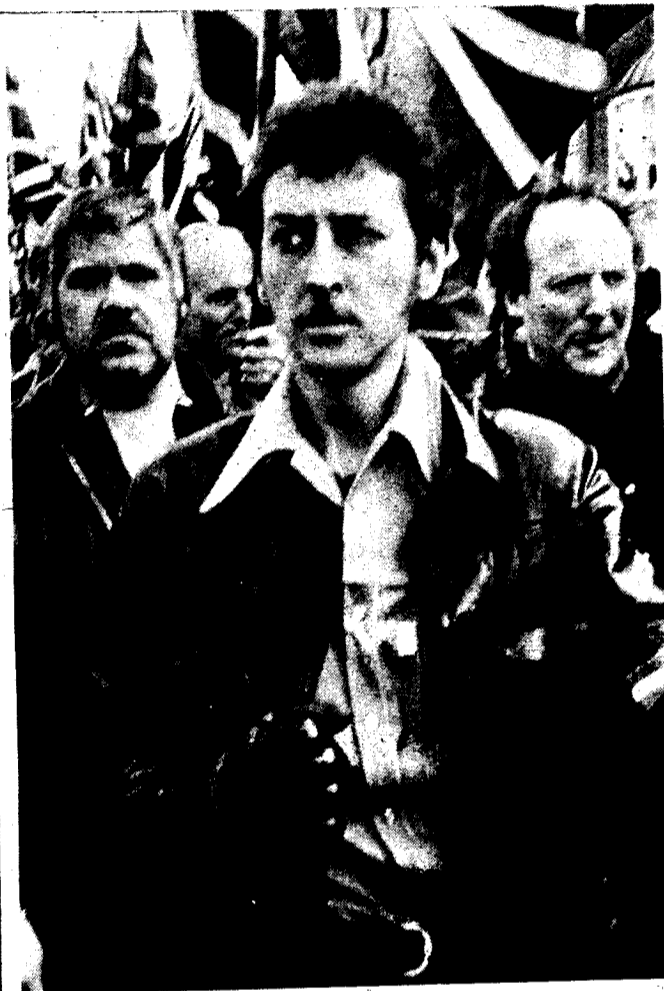
Secondly, but not less urgently, the fascist organisations must be denied the right to speak, to meet, to march, to conduct election campaigns. Their members must be driven out of the trade unions; class conscious workers must be taught to refuse to work alongside a member or supporter of a fascist organisation.

Wherever the fascists attempt a demonstration, the labour movement must be mobilised to stop them.



The recent North London mobilisation against the NF march should be the model. Not only was it a demoralising experience for the fascists, who only barely succeeded in marching, under heavy police protection. It forced local people to think about what the NF stands for and to take sides. For days, afterwards it was the main topic of conversation. The local paper came out with a remarkable attack on the NF as the Nazi Front.

The fact that the NF now presents itself as an electoral threat to the Labour Party enlarges the possibility of drawing even moribund reformists into a united front in action, as in Haringey.



MASSIVE NEW CUTS THREAT WITH TORY WINS

THE LOCAL government union NALGO is "absolutely alarmed at some of the Tory election statements". Bernard Dix, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees, declared that "It is quite clear that the possibility of confrontations between unions and councils will increase".

The newly Tory-controlled councils promise ferocious cuts. "I share your determination" — writes Tory leader Michael Heseltine to Tory councils — "To reduce the scale of local government activities and to apply the most ruthless appraisal of the Conservative Party to the ratepayers' and taxpayers'

money. Transport, consumer protection and planning come high on the list."

The new leader of the Greater London Council, Horace Cutler, promises to cut the staff of the GLC by half.

In many areas, Tories who have taken over control of the council will probably make it easier for the National Front to book meeting halls.

Bus services will be few and far between, school meal services will be cut back, council housing will be more and more difficult to get, and thousands more jobs will be lost among council workers. But the lurch to the Tories has only been possible be-

cause Labour has already gone so far with the cuts that most voters felt the Tories could not be worse.

In South Yorkshire the Labour-controlled council decided to freeze bus fares. The Labour Government responded by holding back central government support funds for the council! No wonder Labour councillors have lost their seats.

In Scotland the Tories were slightly less disastrous for Labour. The Scottish National Party gained, but not as much as they hoped. They

gained less (or even, sometimes, lost) in areas where they were already strong, perhaps showing that once voters have had practical experience of tartan Tory policies the SNP's attractiveness as a 'new alternative' diminishes.

In Scotland, too, however, sharper attacks on social services and on local government workers' pay and jobs are on the agenda.

The union bureaucrats' expressions of alarm must be replaced by a rank and file workers' fight-back. And La-

bour militants in the areas where Labour still controls the local councils, or the metropolitan district or county council, should take heed. Only a policy of refusing to implement the cuts, refusing to make the interest payments to moneylenders which weigh so heavily on council budgets, and campaigning for the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions, can serve to protect the interests of the working class electorate and thus stop the swing to the Tories.



Thatcher celebrates with new GLC chief Horace Cutler

THE POLITICS OF

MILL'S IDEAL OF FORMAL EQUALITY

The campaign for the right of women to vote began in 1867, in response to a petition signed by 1,530 women university graduates. It had the support of suffragists, cooperators, temperance workers, textile workers, Liberals and socialists. The philosopher MP John Stuart Mill, author of "The Subjection of Women", had unsuccessfully moved an amendment to the Reform Bill of 1867 to give women the vote.

Mill was a liberal utilitarian, a rationalist approaching the world from a point of "logic", reason, goodwill and "the greatest happiness for the greatest number". But Mill's exposure of the contradictions, logical absurdities and socially degrading consequences of the legal position of women in society had a powerful effect within its legalistic limitations.

He believed that one could reform the relationship within the family by bourgeois formal equality. Forcefully rebutting arguments about female inferiority, he believed that the oppression of women rested on force and that the only reason that this oppression continued was because women did not have any legal rights.

Mill's idea of the liberation of women was limited, because he saw the family as a natural arrangement, which 'always was and always will be'. He did not have a historical understanding of women's oppression

and its roots within the family and class society.

But the bourgeois formal equality that Mill argued for would have been an advance of sorts for all women. For the working class women — the vast mass of women — it would have been only a beginning. While this formal equality would have served bourgeois women well enough, it wouldn't go far enough for working class women, still weighed down by the oppression of class society and the burdens of the bourgeois family system, which brought with it their super-exploitation as workers.



Mill's limitation was his own class consciousness. He lumped all women together and failed to relate to the class roots of women's oppression. By encompassing only what was common to women of all classes he failed to take up the needs of working class women. He did not understand the need to orientate towards these women.

Mill represented the first stirrings of consciousness on the question of the emancipation of women — stirrings which unavoidably, given the political weakness of the working class movement in 1867 and the vigour of the bourgeois democratic reforming movement, were within bourgeois limits.



Many working men vote for the first time in 1867 — but women still barred.

THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A
WOMEN'S
ACTION
PAMPHLET



15p

On hunger strike, chained to railings, marching behind their banners — the struggle of the suffragette movement fighting in the early years of the 20th century for 'Votes for Women' has become a celebrated model of militancy. But when working class women fought 'shoulder to shoulder' with lady suffragettes, who gained?

Can we copy the methods of the 'Votes for Women' campaign — exclusive focus on a single issue, 'sisterhood' of women of all classes — in building a fighting women's movement today?

In the first of a series of articles, FRAN BRODIE discusses the politics of the suffragette movement, and its relation to the battles of women workers.



Matchgirls on strike and [inset] Annie Besant

THE WOMEN WHO WON THEIR PLACE IN STRUGGLE

Since the defeat of the Chartists in the late 1840s, independent working class politics in Britain had been largely silenced. But in the 1870s and 1880s militancy began to revive. From around the early 1870s there was a growth in trade union membership, not only in the existing trade unions, but also in new unions, in agriculture and among unskilled workers.

In the years 1872 to '74 attempts were increasingly made to recruit women. In 1872 the Edinburgh Upholstery Sewers Society was established as an all-women union. Then in 1874 Emma Patterson formed the Women's Protection and Provident League to encourage trade unionism among women workers.

From 1888 there was a considerable amount of industrial action by women workers — workers who had never even been organised before. The most famous of these actions was that of the matchgirls at Bryant and May, publicised by Annie Besant in her halfpenny paper *The Link*.

The terrible conditions of the women at Bryant & May first came to her notice at a Fabian Society meeting on 15th June 1888, when Clem-

NO RETREAT: ABC

TWO AND A HALF years ago the anti-abortion lobby started their campaign to cut back the limited rights granted to women by the 1967 Act. Thwarted when the Bill proposed by James White fell for lack of Parliamentary time, they are now trying to pilot through Parliament a Bill in the name of Tory MP William Benyon.

Mobilisations as big as, or bigger than, the 30,000-strong march against White's Bill on 21st June 1975 will be needed to stop the Benyon Bill. The demonstration organised for May 14th by the National Abortion Campaign will be the biggest yet in the anti-Benyon campaign, which so far has been slow to get going.

There is a direct continuity between White's Bill and Benyon's, both being engineered by the same vocal pressure group round the Society for the Protec-

tion of the Unborn Child and the Catholic Church.

After White's Bill had fallen, the Select Committee set up for it was re-appointed by Parliament, and some of its recommendations were immediately implemented by Government decree. Most of the others are included in Benyon's Bill.

Abortions would be allowed only up to the 20th week of pregnancy, rather than the 28th (the Select Committee recommended the 24th). Two doctors authorising an abortion must not be connected with each other, and one must have been registered for five years.

A whole series of measures would restrict the operations of charities, which now carry out over half of all abortions.

The Bill will hit especially hard because of the cuts in the National Health Service if there were adequate

provision of NHS abortion clinics, it would be very rare for women to have to wait until after the 20th week for an abortion — and they would not need to go to the charities.

On 25th February, the Bill got its second reading by 170 votes to 132. It is waiting to go into a Standing Committee, which will be constituted according to the proportions of the second reading vote: that is, with a 4 to 3 majority for the anti-abortionists.

The Bill's backers have to try to push it through the Committee stage and then through its third reading by the time the Parliamentary session ends in October or November, or else it will lapse as the White Bill did.

Labour movement support for abortion rights has broadened over recent years. The TUC's recently-issued "Aims for Women at Work", reflecting this, declares "Free contraception

THE SUFFRAGETTES

entina Black (a friend of Eleanor Marx) gave a lecture on female labour.

During the discussion the question of the Bryant & May conditions was raised, and at once Annie Besant set out to interview women there and compile an account of their wages and conditions.

Then she kept up a barrage week after week in *The Link*, exposing the use of white phosphorus in the making of Lucifer matches. This chemical caused caries of the jawbone, which the women referred to as "phossy jaw". The women were subjected to fines for the slightest mishap or error — often due to fatigue — while shareholders' dividends rose to 22½%. And at the same time the Bryant & May management was imposing a compulsory levy on the workers for a statue of Gladstone!

When these women first read about themselves in *The Link* they held a meeting at Mile End Waste and marched to the offices of *The Link* to see Annie Besant. With her aid, they began to organise their strike.

On July 5th 1888, despite the fear of losing their jobs and their lack of funds, the 672 women at Bryant & May came out on strike. And in less than a fortnight, thanks to the solidarity of other

workers (donations amounted to £400) the strikers had won all their demands. Fines and deductions were abolished (though white phosphorus was not prohibited until 1908); and most important, they went on to form the Matchmakers' Union.

In the same year there were reports of other militant strikes — blanket weavers in Heckmondwike, cigarmakers in Nottingham, tin box makers in London, cotton and jute workers in Dundee. These actions of working class women forced men trade unionists to start taking women workers seriously as trade union fighters.

And then again in 1889 mill girls in Kilmarnock came out, and at Alverthorpe, (Wakefield) wool weavers struck to reject a reduction in pay.

In 1891, there was a long drawn out strike at Manningham Mills in Bradford.

Time and time again in the last years of the 19th century women took industrial action. Something new was on the march. Women, who were heavily burdened with all the cares of the family, women had for centuries been trampled under foot, were beginning to rise up and fight back. They began to organise. They began to take up a working class stance.

A PROMISE OF PARADISE

IN 1903 a small group of ILP women met in Emmeline Pankhurst's home and formed themselves into the **Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)**.

These women had long since given up hope of the Government granting a suffrage Bill, and clung to the hope of a Private Member's Bill. And every year on the opening day of Parliament they sent along a deputation, only to be thrown out.

Despite the struggles that had been taking place in the recent years, these ILP women confined themselves to the goal of Votes for Women in their campaign, which lasted from 1903 to 1914.

Women workers supported the fight for the vote. The WSPU had the support of the Women's Cooperative Guild, the National Union of Women Workers, the Lancashire and Cheshire Union of Women Cotton Workers, and the many socialist women.

But the "Votes for Women" campaign failed to support women workers.

Meetings took place up and down the country on the subject of Votes for Women. But, to quote Christabel Pankhurst — "Won't you speak on some other subject than the vote?, would be the appeal, but the answer was always adamantly NO. We do not speak for speaking sake".

At a meeting in Canning Town which was attended by working class women, "Sylvia and I told them all the wonderful things that would happen to them once women got the vote. Poverty

would be practically swept away, washing would be done by municipal machines. In fact paradise would be theirs once the vote was won. I honestly believed every word I had said. I had yet to learn that Nature's works are very slow but very sure. [!] Experience is indeed the best though the sternest teacher. Poor East End women, we gave them something to dream about, and a hope in the future, however distant that future might be" (Annie Kenney).

Christabel Pankhurst quite proudly refused to speak to women on any other aspect of women's oppression, confining herself solely to the question of the vote. She thereby confined the immensity of women's emancipation within the narrow framework of bourgeois legality just as John Stuart Mill had done, thereby stunting any kind of broader political view. And Annie Kenney, who at least did talk about poverty and drudgery, had promised "paradise" with a vote. A vote for which band of robbers gets a turn to oppress you every 5 years...

Socialists and working class women supported the fight for "A Woman's right to Vote". But what they needed was their own, independent, working class women's movement, which would go further — which would open up a fight against women's oppression at work and in the family.

No such movement emerged, because there was no revolutionary workers' party, like the Bolsheviks in Russia or the early German Social Democracy, to help bring it

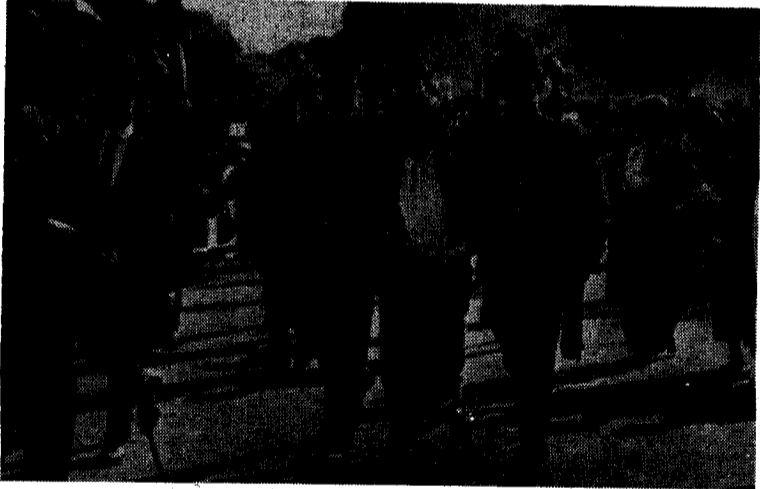
into existence. Working class women were imprisoned and force-fed for their part in suffragette agitation — while the only upper class suffragette to be forcibly fed was Lady Constance Lytton, who had dressed herself as a member of the working class and assumed a false name.

But the militant working class women found no party in which they could organise and work out a programme combining the emancipation of women with the emancipation of their class.

The Independent Labour Party and most currents of thought within the Labour Party went no further than bourgeois liberalism on the women's question. They did not even challenge the fact that the WSPU called for only a limited vote for women. The self-proclaimed Marxists of the Social democratic Federation were sectarian.

And so the bourgeois reformers were able to dominate the women's movement.

Christabel Pankhurst had in fact nailed her colours to the mast early on, when she stated that a working women's movement was of no value, that working class women were the weakest portion of the sex: how could it be otherwise, their lives were too hard, they lacked an education that could equip them for struggle. In other words, what the WSPU wanted was a movement of middle class ladies with leisure to divert from the more usual charities. The "education for struggle" of the matchgirls and the mill women was quite lost on Christabel Pankhurst.



ABORTION ON DEMAND

advice and abortion facilities are now available [?] through the NHS. The Unions recognise that the decision whether or not to use such facilities is completely a matter for the individual. Unions support the extension of such services and oppose any moves to restrict women's access to any family planning or abortion services."

However, the TUC has done nothing to mobilise for abortion rights, and though the Labour Party also has free abortion on request as official policy, Labour MPs have been given a free vote in Parliament on the White and Benyon Bills. The argument is that abortion is a moral issue.

Of course Labour MPs have a right to have their own moral judgments on abortion and guide their own personal conduct accordingly. But they should not be allowed to

impose those moral judgments as law!

Many constituency Labour Parties have opposed their MPs on this. The most striking case in 1975 was Islington North CLP, which voted to support the 21st June demonstration despite the strongly anti-abortion stand of MP Michael O'Halloran and the Catholic Church which is his main pillar of support in the constituency.

Recently the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign has been set up to coordinate and promote action in the Labour Party. It is holding its conference on 15th May, the day after the NAC demonstration. The main issue there will be whether LARC can break away from the approach increasingly dominating NAC, of relying on Parliamentary lobbying and formulating carefully 'moderate' proposals for abortion rights laws. NAC, for example, specifically

rejected making "Abortion on Demand" a mobilising slogan for 14th May, because it would be 'too radical' to win the widest support.

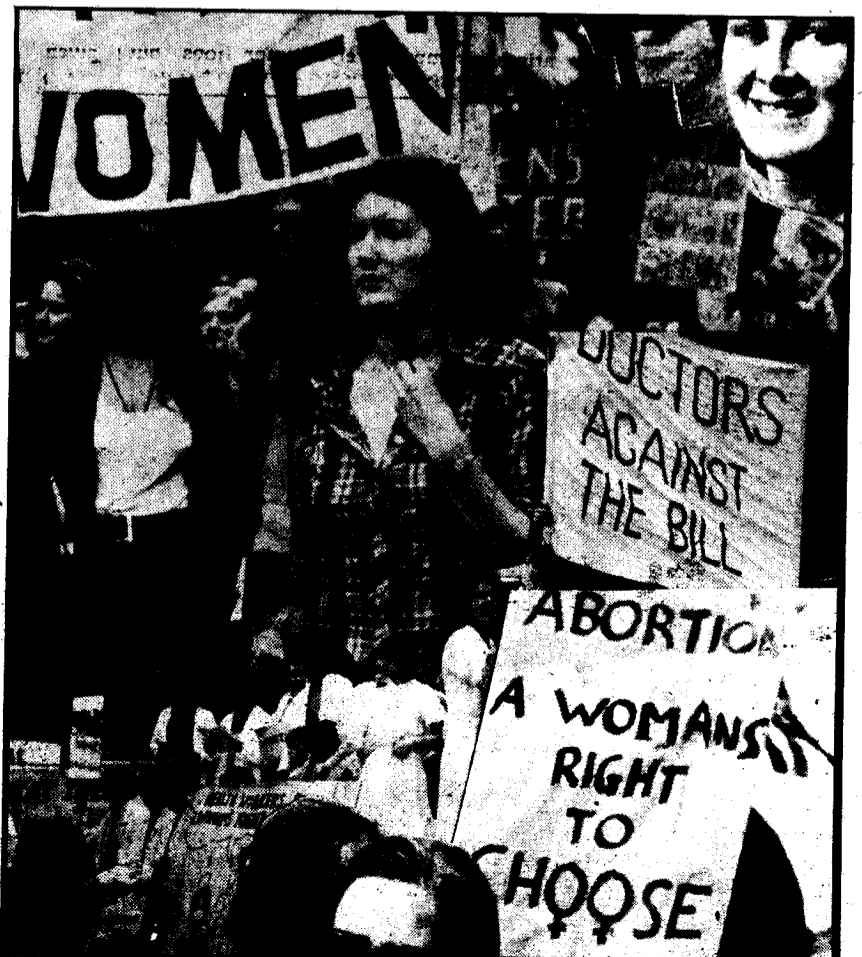
Intricate proposals, calculated to the requirements of committee-room negotiations, will not serve to mobilise the energy of the labour movement. Only the slogan "abortion on demand", which clearly puts the principle involved, can rally the large-scale action we need to stop the Benyon Bill.

The campaign will not stop on May 14th. Other actions scheduled by the National Abortion Campaign include:

■ A petition, to be concluded by 17th June.

■ A day of action on 25th June.

■ A demonstration at the end of October in the Birmingham area.



The Demonstration of June 21st 1975

A MIDDLE-AGED woman is being examined by a man who could be a doctor, or a vet. She is standing, naked, though it is mainly her skull that receives attention. Her nose is measured with a specially designed instrument; the shape of her jaw, the heaviness of her lower lip, the characteristics of her gums, the type of her body hair, the shape of her hips, and finally the fact that she has flat feet, are all recorded with 'scientific' precision by an assistant who notes down the 'doctor's' comments.

The woman's face is pink from the rough explorations of the 'doctor's' fingers, and it has a fixed look of indignation. The final item in her medical report-sheet is the 'doctor's' comment: "Attitude during examination: non-Aryan". The woman is told she will learn the results of the examination "from the police".

Two well-dressed middle class men haggle over the price of an old painting. The seller protests: the price offered is ridiculous! But still he sells, at the price offered. He says: "It's easy, isn't it, when they have to sell".

A man is in trouble with the police. His property has been seized. He has already forfeited civil rights and the right to such things as using a public lavatory. His liberty is at risk, perhaps his life. To save himself, he searches desperately for information about one of his grandparents. He must prove they did not have 'Jewish blood'.

For this is German-occupied Paris, early in 1942.

How the callous speculator who buys cheap from fugitive Jews is transformed into someone whose life depends on what a grandparent's religion may have been, is the subject of Joseph Losey's film, "Mr Klein".

Mr Klein preys on French citizens who find themselves suddenly subject to the anti-Semitic racial laws of Nazi Germany. He is a bourgeois; secure within the rules of the system, rules he knows how to manipulate. Mr Klein operates strictly according to the market, and he does not scruple to take into account the market effect of official anti-Semitism in occupied France.

He appears not to have thought about the subject overmuch. Tactful and discreet, he nevertheless lets himself speak of the idea that he might be a Jew as "a joke". In the office of a Jewish publication — whose subscription list has to be registered with the police. He — Klein — is uninvolved. So he will protest throughout.

But he is only uninvolved so long as he is allowed to be uninvolved, so long as he is accepted as "French and Catholic". What if the rules of the game demand that he prove that one of his grandparents was not Jewish?

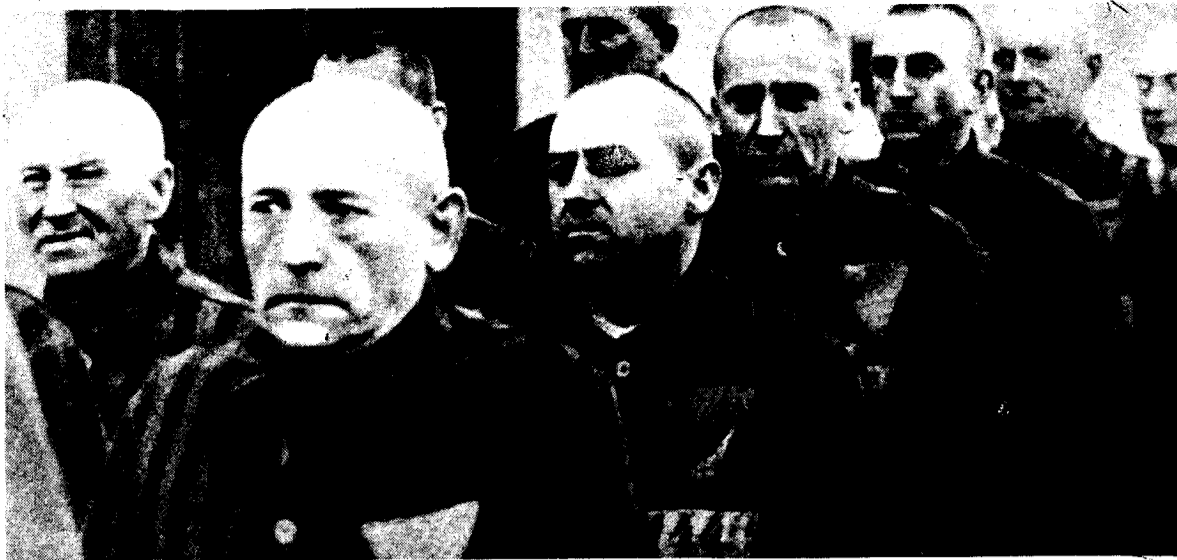
One day he finds that he is on the subscribers' list of a newsletter for French Jews. It is mis-

taken identity: mysterious, perhaps malicious. It seems there is another Mr Klein. He sets out to trace the potentially very dangerous misunderstanding to what he sees as its source: he seeks the other Mr Klein. Gradually the search becomes an obsession.

He checks with the police, who know the other Mr Klein. They are suspicious. What of his own ancestry? He has some difficulty there. For a while it seems as if he has blown the whistle on himself!

He finds himself treated like a Jew. He must register with the police. He is forbidden the public parks and public transport. He is devoured by his 'friends'. For now he is the one who "must sell".

His father splutters that the family has been "French and Catholic" since Louis XIV (who



Mr Klein and the political end of an unpolitical man

forcibly 'converted' Protestants). Proving it is a problem that remains unsolved until Mr Klein is being herded into a German-bound cattle truck. And by then the obsessive search for his namesake makes Klein choose to go into the deportation train which is taking French Jews to Germany.

He believes he will return. The film uses the technique of fragmenting the narrative into a series of explorations, perceptions, responses. With this style the difficulty of reintegrating and correlating the scenes is off-putting, and sometimes it is scarcely worth the effort. Here it is very appropriate, as the film dances back and forth between the parallel worlds of the two Mr Kleins until they meet. For the parallel worlds do converge: in the cattle truck.

Mr Klein acts and reacts as though he were not living in a political society. Everything is "personal". Self-centred and self-absorbed, it is as if he has become fascinated by his own reflection, or inversion, the other Mr Klein.

Yet he is not in a social, nor a political, void. The occupation forces are visible. Klein is prepared to exploit anti-Semitism, then official racism singles him out as a victim. (But that is "a mistake") He encounters a political organisation amongst workers in a munitions factory. He visits a morgue to examine the remains of anti-German Resistance fighters, blown up by their own bomb. Clearly we are in France as the Communist Party starts to organise the Resistance.

But none of this has power to involve Mr Klein. It is either "a mistake" or a personal score to settle, or both. His motive for action never rises above the personal, even when it becomes suicidal self-obsession.

Mr Klein never reacts politically. As he is being reclassified as sub-human, Mr Klein

is told, "It's not personal, it's the law". In turn he tells them it is a mistake. The laws on race have no "concern" with him. The point seems to be that though it drives him underground, he never learns to let it concern him except in a directly personal and ultimately petty way.

For what at the end does he want with the other Mr Klein? If he could draw any social and political conclusions from what has happened to him, then meeting Mr Klein no. 2 would, by now, be irrelevant. He would have seen his own place in the jigsaw. Because he hasn't Klein 2 becomes central to him. He seeks Klein 2, who is a man in a different dimension.

The dimension of political, not purely personal, response. The picture we piece together is of a man connected with the CPF and with military resistance to the Germans. (One of the clearest statements we have about him, from one who might know, is that he is an atheist). A sheet of music, mysterious to Klein, translates at the finger tips of someone else into "The Internationale". She doesn't recognise it, and

plays it in a room full of policemen. The world paralleling Klein and intruding on it is the world first of the Jews and then of the French workers' movement.

But, centred on himself, Klein makes contacts with political society only when it picks on him. For it to be otherwise he would have to understand that it does "concern" him. In fact it dominates everything that happens to him.

The interplay of the identities of the two Mr Kleins, the unreasonable and arbitrary fixing on one of the identity of the other, show very forcefully what racism is: its arbitrariness, its opposition to the very idea of treating human beings as persons who exist in their own right, its substitution of zoology, backed up by quack science, for human relations and categories. For nothing that Mr Klein is, or has done, is at issue. He is declared human or sub-human according to considerations about his ancestors. It is only momentarily surprising that this victim of mistaken identity should suddenly find himself having to answer for his grandparents too.

The choice between isolated and impotent individualism, incapable of acting on society, on the one hand, and political activity which can transform it, on the other, are embodied in the two Mr Kleins.

Losey's style is one of subjectivism and ambiguity. Perhaps because of that (and despite one scene, inexplicable on this interpretation, in which one Mr Klein's dog recognises the other Mr Klein), "Mr Klein" is one of the most powerful portrayals of what racism is that I have ever seen.

G. STEVENS



A CHOICE OF EVILS

THE day Jim Allen writes a bad play it'll be a lean day for working class culture. In *A Choice of Evils*, his latest television play, he once again successfully dramatises political problems and struggles from the standpoint of commitment rather than detached observation.

Using the incident of a reprisal killing by the SS of over 300 Italian hostages as a focus, he weaves a dramatic web which encompasses the Vatican and the Wehrmacht High Command. As always, Allen plumbs the contradictions of social roles and relationships in both of these strata.

The Vatican is represented by Pope Pius, a character not far from senile who mumbles banalities and refuses to even protest against the approaching massacre; while the German side includes a diplomat whose Nazism has been worn into a cynical pragmatism by the impending collapse of the fascist order.

There is a unity between these two characters — a desire for peaceful transition to "normality" and an overriding fear of

the power of the working class.

The "hero", Father Borelli, is one of the hostages, a worker-priest who has been active in the resistance — a man who attempts to fuse Christianity and Marxism, not on a theoretical plane but from his experience of oppression and misery. This "Christian-Marxism", however, derives its strength from a belief in the potential of the workers' ability to create paradise on earth, i.e. communism.

This belief of course brings him directly into conflict with the dogma of the church as represented by an old friend of his, Cardinal Volponi, himself an ex-radical priest who has found heavenly solace and temporal comfort in the curia of the Vatican.

This character is almost totally a mouthpiece to expose the real-politik of the Vatican in abandoning the hostages to the Nazis. In a later scene he describes the carve-up of Europe by Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta.

This scene 'predicts' clearly, but somewhat artificially, the betrayal of the partisans by

Stalin. But the worker-priest refuses to renounce his faith and marches to his personal Calvary along with the others.

Allen has produced a powerful play; rich in texture. The use of Bandiera Rossa, the Italian socialist anthem, hints at the power of the workers who, in the priest's words, 'shook the walls of the jail with this song. And especially moving was the repetition of Bandiera Rossa at the end as a full list of those murdered came on the screen.

Aptly enough this play's title has a relevance for today — Italian workers now stand confronted by both of the evils of the play. On one hand the Christian Democrats backed by the Vatican and ultimately by the fascists; on the other the CP, whose de facto coalition with Christian Democracy bares the neck of the Italian working class to wage cutting and unemployment.

In the fight to break from this impasse the Italian workers will stand again in the heroic traditions of the partisans until Bandiera Rossa Trionfera.

MICK WOODS

workers' ACTION

supporters' groups

BASINGSTOKE, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, CAMBRIDGE, CARDIFF, CHELMSFORD, CHESTER, COVENTRY, EDINBURGH, HUDDERSFIELD, LEICESTER, LIVERPOOL, LONDON, MANCHESTER, MIDDLESBROUGH, NEWCASTLE, NEWTOWN, NORTHAMPTON, NOTTINGHAM, READING, ROCHDALE, SHEFFIELD, STAFFORD, STOKE.

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

AS the dispute involving 60 journalists at the EVENING TELEGRAPH in Kettering enters its 24th week, the future of the National Union of Journalists as an effective trade union hangs in the balance.

Last week, following instructions from the Union's Annual Delegate Meeting, the National Executive called a national one-day strike of all 9,000 provincial journalists in an attempt to force the dispute to a conclusion. But every paper appeared as usual.

This week the Executive will meet to consider the next step — and on its past track record that could well mean capitulation.

The Kettering dispute began last winter over a claim for improved fringe benefits. After the intervention at the end of ten weeks of the Printing Industries Committee of the TUC, a compromise was reached and the dispute declared settled. Faced with an ultimatum from the print bureaucrats, the Kettering chapel (branch) agreed to accept the offer.

SCABS

But they made it clear that there was no chance they would go back to work with nine scabs — members of their chapel who had worked hard and publicly to break the strike from the beginning.

These nine, contrary to NUJ rules, had also attempted to resign from the union and had signed up with the "Institute of Journalists". The IOJ is a professional organisation of scabs which has never once struck in its ninety years' history, and which specialises in sabotaging NUJ actions while picking up any benefits the NUJ wins.

NUJ's future hangs in the balance

Locked out for their refusal to work with these people, the Kettering NUJ members battled on alone, without the slightest help from their NEC, until last month's Annual Delegate Meeting. There, delegates heard that the employers' club, the Newspaper Society, were taking the dispute very seriously. They had established a national fund to be used to break any attempt by the NUJ to defend or extend 100% membership or closed shop agreements.

The ADM decided to respond with equal resolution, and ordered the Executive to increase the strikers' benefit to full net pay, to call out 150 other NUJ members employed by East Midlands Allied Press (EMAP), which owns the Kettering paper, on indefinite strike, and to call out all 9,000 provincial NUJ members for one-day strikes until the dispute was won.

In addition delegates decided to tackle at last the crucial issue of the Press Association.

The PA is a news service jointly controlled by all the provincial newspaper companies. It supplies a constant flow of 'raw' news over a wire service, and it is this news source which

provides the papers with the bulk of their national and international news.

During NUJ disputes, the PA has continued to supply this news. The result has almost always been that a paper's editor — helped as often as not by a handful of scabs and IOC members — has been able to produce the paper anyway. Only where the print unions have given their backing have the presses been stopped.

On the instructions of the Delegate Meeting, the NUJ Executive last week demanded of the PA that it cut off its news service to EMAP. After a refusal, the 180 NUJ members at the PA were instructed to strike. Being good trade unionists, they voted by 100 to 65 to ignore the instruction.

CRUCIAL

On the day of the national strike, however, most members did in fact come out. One of the exceptions, who chose to cross the official picket, was none other than the National Executive member responsible for the area. Given his shining example of leadership, sufficient NUJ

members followed him in working with non-union journalists to allow the PA to operate almost normally.

95 per cent of provincial journalists — who know how crucial it is to win this dispute — obeyed the strike call, only to see their papers sold on the streets the next day.

Thus the largest industrial action ever undertaken by the NUJ was completely ineffective, except as a gesture. And in a crucial battle for trade union organisation, ineffective gestures can lead to demoralisation and cynicism, fuelling the right wing.

Another feature of the debacle which must have dangerous consequences was that almost everywhere the print unions crossed the picket lines. In some cases fighting broke out on the picket lines between journalists and their fellow trade unionists.

And in this, one can only say that the journalists must have themselves largely to blame. Many printworkers, ignored and treated with contempt by NUJ members for too long, were only waiting to revenge themselves for NUJ scabbing as far back as 1971. It is significant that at

Kettering the journalists have had the support of the NUR, T&G and UPW — but not the printers.

A weak and treacherous leadership, weak union organisation, hostility from fellow trade unionists, scabbing widespread in its own ranks — all of these factors weigh against a successful outcome to the NUJ's biggest ever dispute. But these same factors also make a victory vitally important.

COFFIN

To win this dispute would be to drive a nail into the coffin of the IOJ, greatly strengthen NUJ organisation throughout the country, and help to wipe away the reputation of the NUJ as a toy-town outfit which couldn't fight its way out of a paper bag. A defeat would effectively mean the more or less rapid destruction of all industrial effectiveness and guarantee the hegemony of the right wing.

Trade unionists and workers generally have nothing to love journalists for. But the crushing of the NUJ would destroy what opposition there is to the bosses' total control of the media. Bad now, the press could become even more securely a deadly weapon in the hands of the capitalist class.

There remains only one way for the NUJ to avoid this disaster: total stoppages. The Executive must call on provincial journalists to take indefinite strike action, and must demand of the print bureaucrats that they instruct their members to give full support.

Only in this way can the press bosses be beaten.

DURING THE past week, after the April 28th picket of Inner London Education Authority headquarters by 200 teachers, support has grown for the six teachers sacked from William Tyndale junior school.

The teachers' own branch of the National Union of Teachers, the North London Teachers' Association (NLTA), at its meeting on 2nd May, attended by nearly 300, carried by a large majority a resolution which called on "the Executive Action Committee to consider strike action to stop the sacking of the Tyndale teachers. NLTA also calls on the Action Committee to sanction one-day no cover action until the threat of dismissal has been lifted".

Resolutions of support have also been passed by Hackney, Wandsworth, and Lambeth associations, and in many schools. On 3rd May, 25 teachers at Holland Park school walked out of a staff meeting addressed by ILEA Education Officer Peter Newsam after he refused to discuss the sackings. Tyndale teachers were then invited to address a school NUT meeting.

NUT rules deny local branches the power to make any form of action official; only the Nat-

TYNDALE SIX - THE SUPPORT IS GROWING

ional Executive's Action Committee has that power. This "Action" committee usually takes weeks, if not months, to consider demands for action. This time they reacted fast.

Two days after the NLTA resolution, committee chairman Max Morris declared: "Pigs will fly, snowballs will live in hell, and several dead bodies will have to be stepped over before the NUT will support the William Tyndale teachers" ('Times Ed.', 6th May).

At the NUT Executive meeting on May 7th, Morris said: "... Let's sink them. Throw out this rubbish". The Exec refused support.

But at a meeting on 9th May, over 150 teachers unanimously supported a call for a one-day strike on May 25th to lobby ILEA's schools subcommittee.

The call was initiated by over 40 NUT members holding union positions in London, including Dick North and Beth Stone of the NUT Exec, and Bernie Regan and Betty Hunter, Presidents of East London and Wandsworth Associations. The resolution also called on teachers to join the lobby after school if they do not feel confident enough to strike.

London teachers have been under tremendous pressure from both employers and the union leadership: up to 400 teachers are threatened with compulsory transfer and some schools face probable closures. It is no accident that the employers are pressing the Tyndale sackings NOW, even though the 'crime' of unofficial strike action occurred 20 months ago.

Yet a nucleus of militants, at least, is prepared to act to oppose the victimisation. There will be another meeting to discuss the strike call, on May 19th.

What are the issues in the Tyndale case?

First of all, the right to strike. The teachers repeatedly asked ILEA for support against the managers and press witchunt — to no avail. "No doubt these teachers are socialist teachers, we set out to get them and we got them", said Max Wilkin-

son of the Daily Mail. Finally the teachers took unofficial strike action for an independent inquiry into the whole affair, not only the school itself, but also the role of the employers (ILEA) and the school managers.

If they go down, then ILEA will be in a strong position to victimise other teachers taking action against compulsory transfer, school closures, and education cuts.

But many have been confused by the press campaign against Tyndale, and have hesitated to give support to what they considered as naive progressives doing a bad job.

What the Tyndale teachers did was consciously devote a large proportion of resources and curriculum concern to equalise the disadvantages imposed on working class children by society.

Throughout the public inquiry and the tribunal, no criticism of the standard of English and maths teaching was ever substantiated; instead, the tribunal report (para 50) states that they "scored successes among children in the group who were below average ability and/or who were disturbed and deprived children".

Dr Briault, ILEA's Education Officer, had to switch from the

charge of incompetence in teaching to their "refusal to return to work" as the only reason for sacking them.

The Labour councillors still in control of ILEA, despite the massive Tory gains in the GLC elections, will be determined to take full revenge for the "bad publicity" Tyndale has cost them. A solid turnout for the strike and lobby on May 25th will be the first vital step in the campaign to reinstate the Tyndale teachers.

For details, petitions, financial support, and speakers, contact Terry Ellis, 32 Clifton Court, London N4 (263 2536).

CHEUNG SIU MING

Legal aid refused to anti-fascists

SEVERAL efforts are afoot to help defend the 50 anti-fascists arrested in the April 23rd clashes with the National Front and their police protectors. The Defence Campaign is attempting to produce a reconstruction of the day's events, and Haringey, Reading, and Barnet Trades Councils are reported to be interested in the project of a trade union enquiry into the events.

The defence campaign is also appealing for funds. Two of the magistrates' courts involved — Tottenham and Highgate — are refusing legal aid; this will push defendants' costs up into thousands of pounds.

Contact: 23rd April Anti-Fascist and Anti-Racist Campaign, c/o Hornsey Labour Party, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

THE TERROR 'STRIKE'

isolated and they themselves do not dare set as a conscious goal the only logical goal their present action could have — separation of the Six Counties from Britain.

SDLP (pro-partition, anti-republican sectarian Catholic) politicians have accused the Paisleyites of attempting "a coup".

The only clear takeover attempt has been to take over dominance of the Orange camp. The question of whether or not the Paisleyites can do that has now reduced itself to a question of naked force.

If the Paisleyites fall, having staked so much in the attempt, then it may be possible for Britain once again to attempt to create a re-structured Six-County political apparatus, with "fair shares" for Catholic politicians like the SDLP.

Either the Paisleyites will win or they will discredit themselves — and thereby rehabilitate

Orange politicians like Moliniaux and Craig, who can work within the realities dictated by Britain.

Naked brutality is the basic stock-in-trade of the Paisleyites, even against people on their own side of the communal division. That much must be clear to even the most stupid or the most prejudiced observer.

Yet the media and the Government have for years told us that it was the IRA which was the prime source of violence in the Six Counties.

On the contrary, IRA violence has been a self-protective response to a situation in which the 40% of the Six County population who are Catholic have found themselves.

Violence and force established the artificial state in the six north-eastern counties of Ireland. Sectarian terror sustained that state for 50 years. Sectarian institutions were the bone structure of that state.

Now it seems to be falling apart because the British government has tried to restructure it, allowing some Catholics who accept the partition of Ireland a political role.

The IRA violence has been an attempt to break out from the Six-County prison-house holding half a million Catholics.

The split among Protestant politicians who share a common goal — Protestant supremacy — shows how ridiculous is the claim that partition reflects a real division in the Irish people.

The partition of Ireland was a British imperialist device which exploited and used divisions among the people of Ireland. The Six County state is artificial and unviable. The Catholics and their militia are quite right to fight to destroy it. And if the "strike" does in fact manage to take off as a result of paramilitary terror, we must support the Catholic population and their militias.

WORKERS IN ACTION

HOTEL WORKERS STRIKE NF JOIN 'NIGHT OUT' SCAB OFFENSIVE FOR UNION RIGHTS

AS EIGHT TGWU members were peacefully picketing the "Night Out" club in Birmingham on Monday April 25th, they were abused, intimidated, and threatened by a gang of 70 or 80 scabs organised by Trust House Forte, the owners of "Night Out".

Several women pickets were assaulted, and members of the National Front were noticed among the scabs, who had just returned from a protest march to the local TGWU headquarters. The majority of them were not from "Night Out", but from other Trust House Forte establishments in the city. After bringing the march back to "Night Out", the manager, Mr Preston, had called on his staff to go up to the picket line and "get rid of this rubbish". Eddie Lister, head bouncer and strong-arm man, led out a gang to set about the pickets.

For ten weeks union members have been on strike at Night Out for reinstatement of Pat Maguire and recognition of the TGWU.

Pat Maguire's sacking followed after six waitresses had joined the TGWU and decided to try to recruit others.

The waitresses are paid 49p per hour, and the conditions are as bad as the wages. When asked how it was possible to serve 30 customers with eight cups, Preston said 'give them straws'. Often he allowed the place to be so overbooked that there were seats in the gangways, more than once causing accidents. Whenever staff complained, management replied: 'If you don't like it, there is a waiting list of 100 to fill your jobs'.

The strikers describe the events after they joined the union. "We told the charge-hand so there would be no misunderstanding. Several days later, the chargehand, Mrs K Jakes, said we had a week to leave the union 'or she would get the f... bastards out'.

"We reported this to the union official. Management apologised and Jakes was severely reprimanded.

"From then on things got worse until Pat Maguire was sacked... Preston called her to his office and told her a customer had complained that she spilt drinks and dropped cutlery.

"The customer took three days to make these complaints, and on the evening in question bought Pat three drinks and gave her £1 tip.

"Pat was instantly dismissed with no chance to defend herself. Another girl took her place immediately.

"Meetings took place the following day with union members and that night we reported for work as usual. At 8pm, when the club opened, we informed management we were withdrawing our labour in support of Pat Maguire. Since that night we have peacefully picketed the nightclub".

Money and messages of support to: "Night Out" strikers, c/o Transport House, Broad St, Birmingham.

JIM HOYLE

OXFORD: 38 ARRESTED AS POLICE MAKE WAY FOR FASCIST ANTI-STRIKE SQUAD

A mass picket of the Randolph Hotel in Oxford in support of the long-running strike against the Trust Houses Forte management was attacked by police last Friday.

The picket, mustering nearly 300, was called in reply to the strike-breaking right wing "Self Help" group, led by fascist Lady Birdwood, who had announced their intention of crossing the picket to hold a meeting at the hotel in "support of Trust Houses Forte".

THF are viciously anti-union, and around the country have simply sacked workers who tried to organise. Yet despite pressure on the T&G to black the hotel chain nationally to win these disputes and establish the right of all THF workers to unionise, the T&G has done little other than hinder the strikers' efforts.

At Oxford, District T&G official Hewlett spent his time last week trying to get the mass picket called off.

Despite his efforts, a substantial section of the Oxford labour movement turned out to support the striking porters and chambermaids, and it was only with massive police force that the fascists were able to enter the hotel. The pickets were attacked from two directions, with a squad of police emerging from the hotel to scissor into the picket. Four people were injured including Pat Lally of Oxford Trades Council, who was held for some hours before being allowed to hospital for treatment.

Then police laid into the pickets, arresting a total of 38 people to be charged at random with assault or obstruction.

SUSAN CARLYLE

Linton Lodge victory a boost for THF strikers

Hot 1 workers around the country fighting for union rights and a living wage will be heartened by the victory after a bitter six-month fight of the Linton Lodge workers in Oxford.

The strikers had withstood attacks on their pickets, arrests, union apathy, ACAS, and attempts to get them back without re-instatement of their shop steward Jo Tosti.

They won:
■ Reinstatement for those wishing to return and compensation of £200-£300 for those not wishing to.

■ The right to be in a union and have negotiating rights.
■ Re-instatement of Jo Tosti.

Linton Lodge is privately owned rather than by Trust Houses Forte [with which several other groups of workers are in dispute]. But it has been a hard nut to crack, and the victory will undoubtedly encourage the THF strikers. The Linton Lodge strikers have decided to donate their strike fund to the Randolph Hotel (Oxford) strike. "We hope our struggle will give other hotel workers the determination to carry on" Jo Tosti said last week. "Our struggle is an example for people who want to join a union — but only if they are prepared to fight for it. The struggle against THF is continuing. We will help them as much as possible. Our victory will be a great morale booster for them."

EQUAL PAY! SAY PORTSCH STRIKERS

400 WOMEN at the Laird Portscht textiles plant in East Kilbride have been on strike for over 3 weeks for equal pay with unskilled men working in the factory. The women are themselves skilled workers, and they get paid £10 less than the unskilled men. Their claim does not come under the Equal Pay Act because they cannot compare their jobs with men's: they are not 'of a broadly similar nature'.

When the women first approached the management in December 1975 they were turned down. The management now argue that if the claim were granted the firm could not remain 'competitive'. More likely, the firm — part of Jaeger, which is itself a subsidiary of Coates Paton — are under pressure from other textile manufacturing companies not to budge an inch. The textile industry is historically underpaid, and the action of the Laird Portscht women could well spread to other areas.

The women have received no support from their union, the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers.

An additional club wielded by management is the factory nursery which many of the women's children attend. In case of any victimisations, the women stand to lose not only their present jobs but also the chance of employment elsewhere. Before now there have been management threats to withdraw the subsidy and thus raise the nursery fees to around £12 per week — half a week's wages, excluding supplements.

Despite the nursery threat and their union, the women have remained solid. The men have come out in support of them, and they are maintaining a 24-hour picket outside the factory, which has completely stopped production. The workers at the local Sunbeam factory have also given support, and last week another clothing factory in Kilmarnock came out in solidarity.

Solidarity expressing solidarity and donations should be sent to: the Laird Portscht strike committee, NUTGW, Albany Chambers, 534 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.

JO THWAITES

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word; block ads, £5 per column inch. All payments to be made in advance. Send copy to Events, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

FRIDAY 13 MAY. London Spartacist group forum: "The Transitional Programme and the post-war economy", by Judith Hunter. 7.30pm, 'Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Rd, W1 (Warren Street tube).

SATURDAY 14 MAY. National Abortion Campaign demonstration against the Benyon Bill. Assemble 1.30pm, Belvedere Rd, Waterloo.

SUNDAY 15 MAY. Labour Abortion Rights Conference. 10am at the FTAT Hall, 14 Jockeys Fields, London WC1.

SUNDAY 15 MAY. Student Movement Conference on Ireland. Speakers include Bernadette McAliskey. 10.30am to 4.30pm at Middlesex Poly, Trent Park site (nearest tube station, Oakwood).

SUNDAY 15 MAY. International Communist League public meeting: "Revolutionaries and the Labour Party". 7.45pm, 'Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Rd (Warren St tube).

TUESDAY 17 MAY. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting on Palestine. 7.30pm at the Rhymney Hotel, Adams St, Cardiff.

TUESDAY 17 MAY. Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: "The need for a vanguard party today: Lenin and the Bolshevik Party". Based on an article in 'Revolutionary Communist' no.6. Speaker David Yaffe. Admission 20p. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

WEDNESDAY 18 MAY. Debate on "Which Way Forward for the Working Women's Charter campaign?" with speakers from Workers' Action, IMG, Workers' Power, and the socialist feminist current. Chair: Von McClarey. 7.30pm at the General Picture, Wharfedale Rd, London N1.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 21-22 MAY. National conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign — "Which Way Forward for the Charter Campaign?" City University, St John St, London EC1. Delegates' credentials £1.50 from Jill Daniels, 1a Cambewell Grove, London SE5.

SATURDAY 28 MAY. Left Action conference. 11am to 4pm at Essex Road Library, London N1.

* Apologies for the misprint in last week's Events which gave the date of the Left Action conference as 21 May. It is in fact the 28th.

ADS

"THE SPARK", journal of the Revolutionary Communist Group (Australia). Number 1, May 1977. 20p.

SPARTACUS, monthly paper of the German Trotskyist organisation Spartacusbund. 35p.

PERMANENTE REVOLUTION, organ of the Internationale Kommunistische Liga of Austria. 25p.

LA CLASSE, monthly paper of the Lega Comunista (Italy). 15p.

LUTTE DE CLASSE / CLASS STRUGGLE, bilingual Trotskyist magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière (France). 40p.

"ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAN PARTY", articles from Workers' Action reproduced by the Revolutionary Labour Group (Australia). 20p.

All available from Phoenix Pamphlets, 98 Gifford St, London N1. 15% per order p&h, minimum 6/4p.

ALBION VICTIMISES 7 SHOP STEWARDS

THE ALBION BOTTLE Company in Birmingham has been the scene of an attempt by bosses over several weeks to break shopfloor organisation by victimising militants.

250 shopfloor workers, members of the AUEW, are on strike against an attempted victimisation of their nine shop stewards. All 250 have now been sacked.

The dispute started after the workers struck on April 20th to support the day of action against the Social Contract. On the 21st, management told them they were laid off because of furnace repairs — but that the signed agreement for 100% lay-off pay in such cases would not be kept.

The management would not talk to the shop stewards, but only to West Birmingham District Secretary Bert Benson. They told Benson they wanted the stewards sacked!

At a mass meeting on Sunday 24th April, Benson recommended a return to work. "We should support the Labour Government and the Social Contract at all costs, and it was wrong that you should have gone out on that day of action." But Benson's recommendation was defeated by 97 to 64.

On the 28th, Benson presented an agreement which, he said, had been drawn up between him and management. There was to be a phased return to work — but in the list of people to go back on various days, the shop stewards' names were nowhere included!

The shop stewards rejected Benson's proposal out of hand. Two days later Benson came back with

another scheme: the shop stewards would only be suspended.

Before the next mass meeting, on Tuesday 3rd May, management said they would close down if there were not an immediate return to work. The meeting however voted 200 to 9, against Benson's advice, to stay out until the stewards were reinstated.

Next day all the workers received letters saying they had been sacked.

Official support is still lacking. When the shop stewards lobbied the West Birmingham AUEW District Committee on 9th May, they were invited in one by one and told "return on management's conditions". However, a number of branches in the District are giving support, a 24-hour picket is being maintained, and G&MWU oil delivery drivers are refusing to cross the picket line.

This attack by Albion Bottle Co. is the latest in a long series of similar battles in the last year — at Blackmans in Tottenham, Bentleys in Leicester, Ti rump Canley (Coventry), J Blackwood Hodge in Northampton, Haringey Council direct works, Fords (Dagenham and Halewood) and Leyland (Cowley). A bosses' victory at Albion will mean that yet more such "clean-up" attempts will follow. Solidarity is vital. Messages and donations to Vidas Dandona, 86 Edgbaston Rd, Smethwick.

Published by Workers Action, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27. Printed by Azad (TU) 21 York Way, London N1 Registered as a newspaper at the GPO