

workers' ACTION

No.6 February 19th - 25th 1976 8p

THERE WAS plenty of fancy footwork from Denis Healey in Parliament last week. After presenting a £215m package to "ease unemployment and boost investment" Healey started spreading his pre-Budget hints.

One thing comes across loud and clear through all the vague speculation: the Government thinks the Trade Union movement must go in for another wage limit policy — and one that is much tougher and even meaner than the £6 limit.

It seems it wasn't enough for the TUC to get onto its knees last time. This time it is expected to crawl on its belly. And Murray's statements suggest that he is quite prepared to do just that.

Solid

"In all my contacts with the movement" Murray said last week "with a few tiny and unrepresentative exceptions, I have found solid support for the idea that we must have a further phase of restraint to follow the £6 policy."

And thus they present it as if it's all in the bag.

In exchange, Healey has hinted that he would offer tax concessions. Watch him use them to argue that a decreased tax revenue must

Unemployment and Wage Freeze, Inflation and Cuts

WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS!

mean more social service, health and education cuts!

"What we in Government most want" he said "is what we got last year — a policy worked out by the trade union movement for the trade union movement with a full understanding and acceptance of the nation's

needs."

Service with a smile, you could call it...

Our answer has to be NO. The minimum we want, the absolute bedrock of any pay demand, is full automatic compensation for any decline in real wages due to rises in the cost of living.

The Government has explicitly refused this. It has laid the full burden of inflation on workers' shoulders, and the blame for it on our heads.

Can it really be a "tiny and unrepresentative exception" that is saying: WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS!

You still have to fight to get £6

NUM OVERTIME BAN We're fighting for our jobs

by Steve Abbott
Calverton NUM

WHILE Denis Healey spelt out his new no-wages policy to the unruffled purrings of Len Murray, 26 women at BICC, Glasgow struck for and won a pay rise of £14.

They had struck because BICC refused to pay them the £6 on top of the £8 addition for equal pay.

This week gas workers in many towns are staging a one-day strike because they haven't been paid agreed wage rises.

At Ransome, Hoffman and Pollard, a roller-bearing factory at Newark, more than 2,000 workers are on strike over the Department of Employment's decision that the company should not pay out a £6 rise. At a mass meeting of 1700 of the strikers, they confirmed their determination to stay out until they got the £6.

And some other people who haven't had a £6 rise: pensioners, the disabled, the unemployed and students.

Isn't it time the State coughed up?

THE decision of the NUM to call a national overtime ban in protest against the intended closure of Langwith colliery in Derbyshire has been received with the customary hysteria by the capitalist media.

"All this fuss over one pit, and no-one would lose their jobs anyway" is the typical way the press has treated the issue. And fired by the antics of some members of the NUM Executive, they have painted a picture of general revolt against the close-fought decision.

Miners, however, see Langwith as a test case, and fear that its closure would be followed by another spate of pit closures like that of the

At first, the NCB had said straight out that Langwith would be closed because it was uneconomic. But realising that the term was loaded with memories of the old slaughter — and when the miners pointed out that there was still an unexploited seam at the pit — they changed their plea.

Now they said that working the seams would be dusty and it would be impossible to comply with the new dust regulations. But the NUM could see that this argument was even more dangerous: every pit in the land could be classified "unapproved" at one time or another and thereby placed in jeopardy.

more concerned about the menace of airborne dust that are the bureaucrats of the NCB. But they feel that it should be combatted with proper dust-suppression equipment (which the NCB is too tight-fisted to pay for) rather than by shutting down pits.

So much for the press's 'version of the 'pointless, suicidal etc. action'. What about their gleeful shouts about a 'rank and file revolt' over the overtime ban?

Some of the Executive members who opposed the action have gone back to their regions and organised opposition to it. Predictably, veteran renegades Ken Toon of South Derby, Frank

Clarke of Nottingham have rallied their local support and declared that their regional voice should count for more than the national Executive decision.

Len Clarke, Notts area president, has gone on local radio questioning the democracy of the decision and implying a possible Notts area breakaway from the union. But the local reversal of the national ban which he organised was met immediately by decisions of two collieries, Calverton and Ollerton, to implement the ban straight away from midnight on Sunday, and to use the local radio themselves to urge other pits to do the same.

'YOU CAN SACK THESE WORKERS'

SAYS FOOT'S MINISTRY

Following the lead into racist infamy of its Hotel and Catering Sub-Committee (which is demanding that the number of work permits allowed to foreign workers should be reduced), the TUC has now asked the Department of Employment to reduce the number of work permit holders throughout industry.

With the TUC so blatantly turning against a section of its membership, it's not surprising that employers are moving into this 'open season' declared on foreign workers. Already, Hackney Hospital Management Committee have sent out a circular to all heads of departments advising them not to re-employ workers whose permits come up for renewal. The circular explicitly instructs hospital personnel departments to adopt a clear racist policy.

But what is even more scandalous is that the Hackney Hospital Management says in its circular that this policy comes straight from Whitehall — from Michael Foot's Department of Employment! Not content with calling for import controls which would indirectly put foreign workers out of jobs, this Labour 'left' now instructs a major state employer to give them the boot in summary fashion here and now.

Hackney can't be the only Health Department which has been, in its words, "instructed by the Department of Employment that the posts held by employees who are subject to Work Permits will be treated as vacancies when the period to which the permit relates expires..."

And it goes on to outline policy of blatant racist discrimination: "The D. of E. will attempt to produce candidates for the posts, and, if suitable British nationals are available for work we will be expected to employ them in place of the foreign nationals concerned."

Apparently, when pressed as to whether this was D of E policy the Department claimed that wasn't, but that it had been considered for future use. However, it must have made its plans pretty clear for officials in another ministry, the DHSS, know about them and quote them.

As a result, two domestics in Hackney are to lose their jobs next month when their permits expire. But it isn't a matter of one and two: in the catering industry in response to the TUC's request the government has said it will reduce the number of permits to 2,500.

That's a lot of sackings — but it's no answer to unemployment. The miserable bureaucrats of the TUC, unable to put up any meaningful fight to save jobs, turn instead to the policies of the enemies of the labour movement — the fascists. But all they will do is divert British workers from their strong and united fight against unemployment into the blind alley of racialism and class division.

British workers should not accept jobs handed to them as the result of the sackings of any other workers, whatever their accent or skin colour. We must stand clearly that all workers must have the right to work, regardless of their nationality.

The whole system of work permits should be abolished. They simply create a class of workers who can be pressured and blackmailed and easily sacked. Trade unionists should not stand for a situation where fellow workers are kept in a position of weakness. It weakens the whole movement.

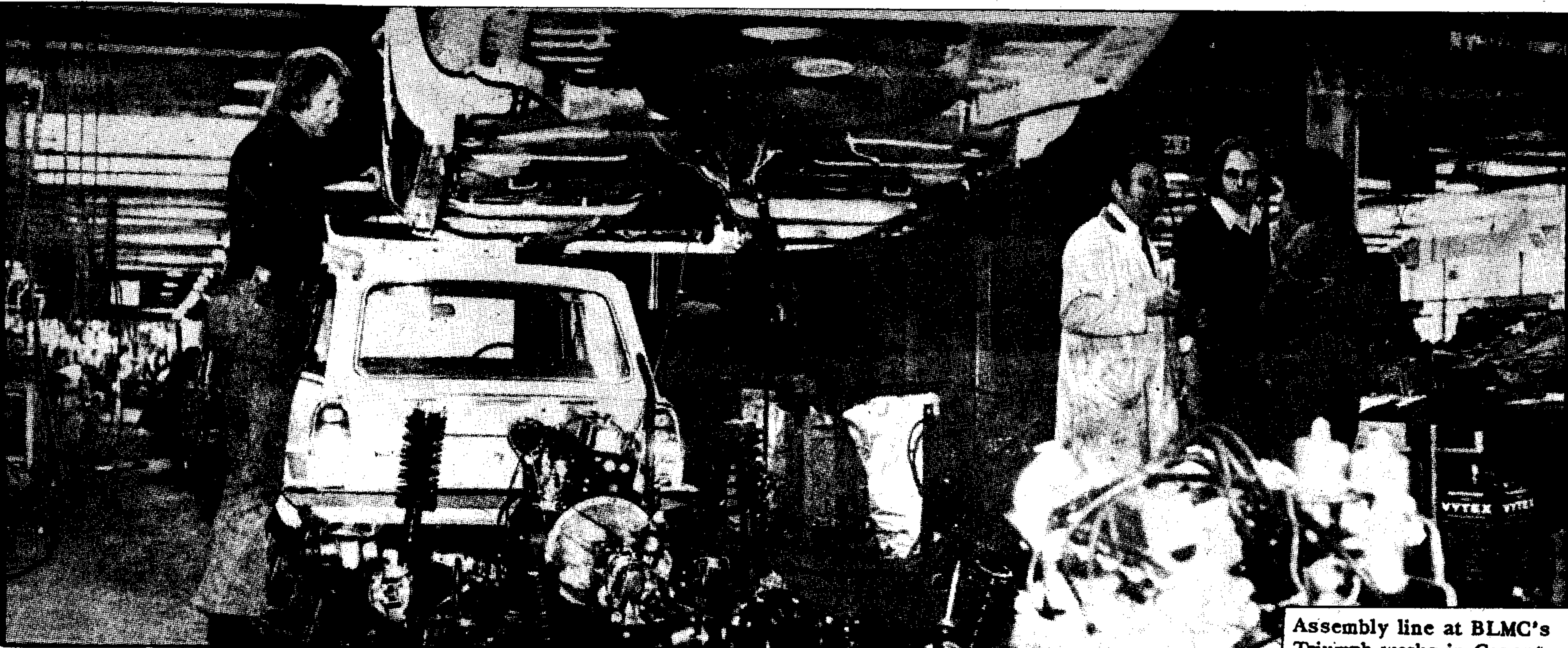
The conscious way in which work permits are used — and probably the meat of the D. of E.'s "plans" — is shown in another part of the Hackney circular. It points out that when a work permit isn't renewed "we will not be subject to appeals against unfair dismissal".

In other words, these workers are sackable. If you want to cut a hospital ward, or axe a proportion of jobs and services in an area, then hit the foreign workers and there'll be no mess, no appeals, no compensation, no noise.

The Government has always been the worst offender against the tame Race Relations Act. The Immigration Act which it lovingly administers makes a nonsense of its pretenses to be against racial discrimination by singling out a section of the population and acting in relation to them like a police state.

Demand the repeal of the Immigration Act, the end of the work permit system and an end to the TUC's racist policies. Agitate in unions like NUPE and the T&GWU, which have many foreign members, that they begin to stick up for their members.

“...to provide a forum in which workers can contribute to improving Leyland's efficiency”
- RYDER



Assembly line at BLMC's Triumph works in Coventry

CUTBACKS, SPEEDUP — WITH HELP FROM LEYLAND WORKERS ?

THE LAST CARD Lord Stokes thought to play before British Leyland went bust was to propose a scheme for workers' participation. After the financial collapse of the company and the government's 'takeover', agreement with the scheme was made a condition for keeping the company afloat.

The government was trading its investment funds for a major concession on the part of the workers. That concession was workers' participation.

After the 'takeover' the Government commissioned Lord Ryder to report on what should be done with BL. His report constitutes one of the clearest statements of a major strategy of British employers. The dangers it poses to Leyland workers are the same as those facing the entire trade union movement.

The report spelt out what participation was all about: "The most important for setting up a new structure of joint management-union committees is the need to provide a forum in which representatives of BL's workers can contribute effectively to improving BL's efficiency... There should be a framework, removed from the normal arrangements of collective bargaining, in which agreement can be reached on the action required."

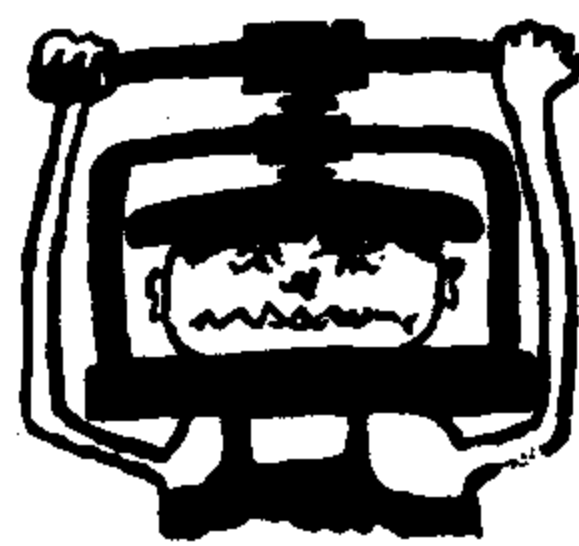
And what was the "action required"? In the case of BL it was a huge cutback on the workforce, increase of speeds and a challenging of the remaining areas of 'mutuality' — finally turning the key on the padlock of measured day work.

What better way of taking the sting out of workers' resistance to these attacks than to ask their 'representatives' to participate in and take responsibility for that process? In the joint union/management statement on participation (published in October 1975) this was spelt out straight.

"Workers' representatives need to be given more information about

their company" (their company? Since when?) "so that they can better appreciate management's problems and co-operate more constructively in solving these problems."

As a result, Joint Committees were to be set up at plant, divisional and national level. "The main task of each body in each level of the employee participation system is to improve the performance of the activity within which the employees who are represented in the body are employed."



Despite the muddled language, nothing could be clearer. Management were seeking to involve the trade union leadership at all levels in speed-up and redundancy. Participation committees would streamline this process and by-pass traditional trade union bargaining at the same time.

For the ordinary shop floor worker, "participation" is not an alternative to head-on confrontations. It simply means that where the confrontations take place they are likely to be between the rank and file on the one side and the plant & national level joint 'bureaucracy' ... with the bosses leaning back laughing while we fight among ourselves.

The only people for whom it is an alternative to confrontation are the bosses.

The left has so far fallen all over the place faced with this attack.

Last June the BL convenors accepted the Ryder Report in principle, but argued for an extension of the participation proposals. Most importantly they called for wider powers for the top level of the participation scheme.

The company refused point blank to budge. They refused even to discuss changes to the plan. At this point the convenors' resistance, if it could be called by that name, collapsed. In plant after plant the Ryder proposals were accepted by the shop stewards committees, in many cases without reference to mass meetings.

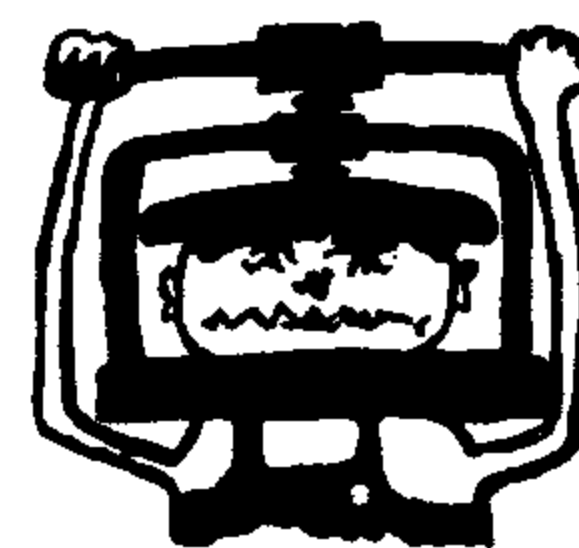
The Communist Party-led Austin Longbridge plant caved in. The company has been particularly successful in securing the participation of CP AUEW convenor Derek Robinson. He has welcomed the participation scheme as a step towards workers' control, and (no doubt in the name of workers' control!) attacked all resistance to Ryder's redundancy plans.

Last October the Leyland management were not only enforcing redundancies in Longbridge; they



Leyland convenors Derek Robinson (left) and Arthur Harper (second from right), chatting with AUEW 'Broaf Left' member Bob Wright. They have accepted Ryder's participation plans.

were asking certain groups of workers to put in overtime. When CAB Premount workers at Longbridge refused overtime, participator Robinson attacked them in these terms: "These workers are being disloyal to the future of the company under the Ryder Report." Those were his very words. And they were exactly what the company had in mind when it set up its scheme.



Elsewhere, stewards have accepted participation schemes with bluff and bravado. At the traditionally militant Tractors and Transmission plant in Birmingham, the stewards short sightedly and smugly considered themselves strong enough to turn the tables on management. It was on this basis that Arthur Harper, AUEW convenor, signed the joint union-management proposals "Employee participation in Leyland cars".

In a number of other Leyland plants the Ryder participation scheme has been accepted. Rover in Cardiff has accepted after a temporary boycott by senior stewards. Cowley Body Plant and Rover Solihull trucks, for example, have accepted. In all cases, the proceedings of 'participation' are shrouded in the deepest secrecy. Actual minutes are not published ... only a minute agreed to and accepted by both sides. Obviously management hope in this way to bind workers' 'representatives' to a collective "cabinet" responsibility for decisions and policies.

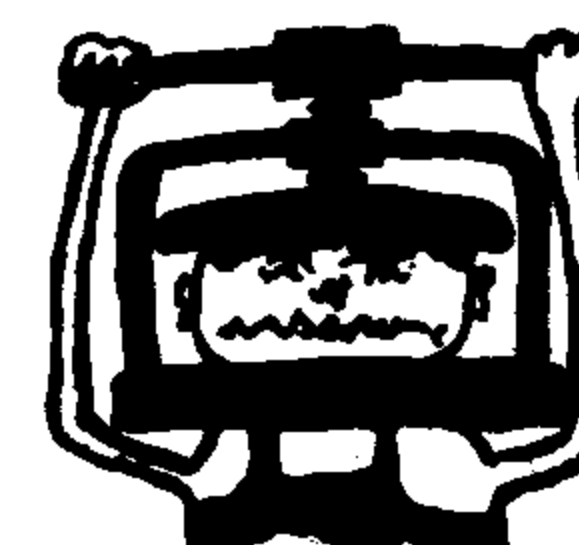
Trade union officials and shop stewards will clearly hope to hide behind such minutes if they want to

conceal embarrassing agreements and understandings from the shop floor.

The fact that lots of "left wingers" have fallen for the participation trick is not surprising. The whole language of "workers on the board", of "management incompetence" and of "faceless men at the top" that is such a staple of the British 'left' — in short, the whole Wedgwood Benn type of rhetoric — is designed to lure fighters off the shop floor into a charade of "control" completely trapped within the cage of the capitalist economy.

It isn't surprising that the Ryder scheme itself came direct out of the NEB plans of Wedgwood Benn.

But the Ryder proposals have not been accepted everywhere. A shop floor ballot at Triumph in Canley (near Coventry) rejected the scheme. AUEW/TASS members have followed suit. Shop meetings at Triumph Bordesly Green have voted against, as have mass meetings at Morris Radiators and the BL Service Division in Oxford. Rover Solihull cars are also still holding out.



This fight must be maintained. The Company has made its motives quite clear. Leyland workers have no interest in bailing out the British Leyland bosses from their crisis. It was not until they hit the rocks that they started to call for workers' participation in sacrifice, speed-up and redundancy.

Involvement in these schemes is not the way to defend the interest of the Leyland workers.

Where schemes have not been accepted, militants and socialists

Calling all you 'irrational troublemakers'

SINCE its foundation the Workers Educational Association has had pretensions to presenting education for workers from a 'working class point of view'.

Although this viewpoint in practice usually is that of the Labour left and the Communist Party, at least the WEA managed usually to steer clear of open ruling class propaganda in its courses.

That is, until recently... Now the Birmingham WEA has entered into an 'educational scheme' for shop stewards ("accredited representatives of the workpeople") and foremen ("supervisors"), with the involvement of those well known advocates of a 'working class viewpoint' — Guest, Keen and Nettlefold.

In consultation with GKN and a firm of management consultants, Cambridge Consultants (Training) Limited, the Birmingham WEA have designed a course called 'Work and Wealth'. Although the publicity for this course will present it as being on the workings of the economy, the real ideas that are going to be peddled by the course can be seen from a GKN document outlining the basic 'objectives', which was accidentally sent out to students with the course material.

'Work and Wealth' won't be telling workers that the company's profits come from their unpaid sweated labour. That's not what GKN are paying for. Instead, the course is set up with the following aims:

- "To provide a basic understanding of the various economic factors which affect the performance of both companies and countries and thereby help to reduce damaging and irrational behaviour" We can guess what they have in mind there...

- "To explain the capitalist system which is being increasingly questioned." That is, to explain it so that it won't be questioned any more...
- "To explain the vital importance of increasing productivity and the dangers of resisting change for improvement."
- "To prepare for the day when more information about company performance will have to be disclosed (which may be dangerous if such information is either misunderstood or misinterpreted)" Indeed, it may...
- "To provide management with a better chance of mobilising the goodwill of majorities against the subversive activities of politically motivated minorities".

HARDER

Courses like this are carefully designed to get workers to adopt the viewpoint of management — to want to work harder in the interests of the company, to see militant trade unionists as 'irrational' trouble makers, to become apologists for the bosses' system.

This particular course has been drawn up to fit into what GKN refer to as "a programme of general improvement in industrial relations", and "it should form, where possible, an integral part of a planned programme designed with this objective in view". That is, a programme which GKN alone will draw up and supervise, such as, perhaps, a 'participation' plan.

Shop stewards and shop floor workers should have nothing to do with this sort of 'education', and they should demand of the WEA that it completely dissociate itself from it.

No blank cheque for Triumph bosses

RESISTANCE to participation continues at the Triumph Canley plant in Coventry. Although the Triumph convenor McGarry signed the joint management-union proposals, they were thrown out on the shop floor.

The Triumph workers object to the scheme on the basis of "not giving a blank cheque to management". The proposals were not negotiable; they had just been handed down from the top by the company and grabbed at greedily by the trade union officials and by many convenors.

McGarry has tried all sorts of methods to reverse the shop floor decision. He arranged, and spoke at, zone meetings in the factory. He organised a secret ballot. But still he didn't get his way.

The company and trade union officials have now stepped in against the workers. Harry Urwin, Assistant Secretary of the T&GWU, has attacked their decision in the Coventry press. Management have refused to give assurances to maintain Canley as an assembly plant. They have argued that this can only be discussed once participation has begun!

McGarry and the trade union officials are still fighting hard. At the Coventry Combine Committee McGarry declared that 'workers could expect no power without responsibility... Which should be turned right back on him with a clear refusal of any 'power' which involves responsibility for redundancies and cuts in manning.

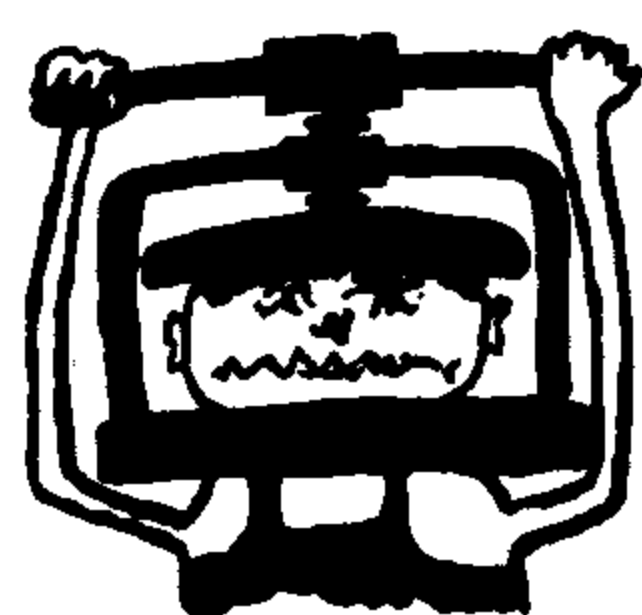
The Triumph workers are right to reject the 'advice', the threats and the cajolery of Harry Urwin, McGarry and the Leyland company. They must be supported.

must continue to argue for the total rejection of Ryder's proposals. Where they have gone through, work must be done to maintain and strengthen independent shop floor organisation in order to fight the Company's attacks however they are dressed up in the frills of participation and consultation.

That is why we must argue that militants and socialists should not be involved as representatives on these collaboration committees.

The paper 'Leyland Worker', dominated by the International Socialism (IS) group, has argued that militants should stand for these committees to expose them. We disagree. Militants must use their base to oppose the plans of these committees and to place pressure on the participators to break with collaboration and confidentiality.

They must demand report-backs in the sections, the provision of minutes and materials as and when workers want them, as part of a campaign to break any illusions that may exist in the value of participation schemes and as part of a campaign to re-assert the strength of independent shop floor organisation.



In Leyland the schemes are only operating for a 12-month trial period. These policies must be fought for here and now if rejection of the scheme is to be secured when it comes up for extension.

But this fight is still only one part of the struggle for new policies and a new leadership in the car industry. In Vauxhall, in Chrysler and in Leyland, traditional policies and methods have not been able to stop management's plans in their track.

Against the powerless 'participation' committees where information is safe and fed in by the Company itself, a fight must be waged to open the real accounts and proceedings of the car companies. The joint Shop Stewards Committee at Cowley Assembly Plant established an Open the Books sub-committee last year. Conducting a workers' enquiry in order to arm the joint shop stewards committee must be our answer to participation and collaboration.

Sue Thomas

FRANK STAGG

The shame and the anger

FRANK STAGG is dead.

For 62 days he fought for the right to political prisoner status and transfer to 'Northern Ireland'. Last Thursday, his will unweakened, his spirit unbroken, his physical resources ran out.

The British state could chalk up another splendid victory; and bombs started going off in Belfast and London streets.

The press, which had defended the inhuman torture and the killing of Frank Stagg, stepped up its screechings about "IRA murderers" and "inhuman monsters".

On Monday 16th February, a coroner's jury brought in the verdict that Frank Stagg had killed himself.

Lies

It lied. Frank Stagg was killed by the British state, which forced him to take his struggle as far as his body would go, and until it died, rather than grant him the puny 'concession' of a transfer to a Northern Ireland prison.

He was sentenced to ten years on a vague and possibly trumped-up charge of 'conspiracy' to 'endanger life' etc. Under the barbarous penal system, his 'sentence' was increased to one of death, a slow and lingering death, because he attempted to exercise some control over the conditions of his own imprisonment.

Against his demand to be sent to 'Northern Ireland', they said he had "no connection" with 'Northern Ireland', being born in the 26 Counties. Brutal, blind, stupid, bureaucratic pedants! He was in jail for supporting the struggle of the oppressed in Northern Ireland, that is, the North-Eastern, British-occupied part of his country.

He was not sentenced to be starved until he died after 62 days. If even unspeakable psychopaths involved in the 'Moors murders' of ten years ago had had such a sentence pronounced publicly against them, there would have been a justified outcry against such medieval savagery.

Yet the body of Frank Stagg slowly wasted away until last Thursday it became an emaciated corpse. There was no outcry, no mass protests nothing but callous indifference. The labour movement was shamefully silent; and the Labour government bears responsibility for forcing Frank Stagg either to fast until he died, or to allow himself to be broken.

Smug

Many British workers will be indignant and maybe surprised if some Irish nationalists look on us as enemies, or mindless dupes of the bosses — smug, indifferent, callous people, fit only to be bombed into taking notice.

Think of the emaciated body of Frank Stagg. Perhaps you'll understand the psychology of people who have sometimes been driven to lash out blindly at the civilian population of Britain.

WORKERS ACTION believes that the IRA are fighting for a just cause, and that Britain should immediately get out of Ireland. We condemn attacks on civilians in Britain or in Ireland as contrary to working class morality, counter-productive, and only helping to rally support to the ruling class. We condemn — but such desperate acts are only too understandable against the background of British brutality and British



Stagg's death was due to Jenkins' political decision

indifference.

The labour movement's indifference is not only a crime against the Irish people and against Frank Stagg. It is an act of blind folly against its own interests.

Stagg was jailed under the self same laws, the conspiracy laws, as the Shrewsbury pickets, and on the same vague type of evidence. When widespread class struggle erupts again, other British workers will be, too.

Des Warren had to go on a short hunger strike to protest at his conditions in jail. If Warren had felt obliged to take his hunger strike as far as Stagg, the authorities could have tortured him to a slow death too, refusing to budge an inch.

Political

They could have. But they wouldn't, of course. The labour movement wouldn't have allowed it. Roused, it would have forced a political decision to grant Warren's demands — for to let Frank Stagg die, or grant Warren's demands, or release him, are political decisions.

The same ruling class toadies who have kept Warren in jail over two years took the political decision to kill Frank Stagg in Wakefield jail. They are callous, cold-blooded, murderers.

One more young life needlessly destroyed. One more crime against the Irish people. One more open wound to speak against the unity of the Irish and British working class. One more shameful stain on the record of the British labour movement.

Inevitably the martyrdom of Frank Stagg will spur his cothinkers to new efforts. The British state, Harold Wilson, and Roy Jenkins, had the power to torture and kill his body, and they used it so cruelly and so completely. They are powerless against the moral force which his brave death adds to his cause — the cause of Irish liberation from British oppression.

The moral victory is entirely Frank Stagg's.

Frank Stagg's selfless, lonely heroism contrasts damningly with the brutish spirit of indifference with which our class and the British labour movement allowed him to be martyred. We must transform the shame and anger which so many British socialists feel into action to further the cause in which he died. Action to get British troops withdrawn from Ireland — immediately and unconditionally!

J.O'Mahoney

The fight for jobs

Editorial

The shop floor is the key

The growing anger within the working class movement over towering unemployment figures is partly expressed in the press demands for a recall of the TUC, for a recall of the Labour Party conference, and for a "National Assembly of Labour" to solve unemployment.

Workers everywhere want to call their leaders to order.

In many cases these calls do not arise as the 'logical next step' of a variety of separate, hard-fought, local- and union-level struggles. They are promoted by those who want to avoid a fight here and now. Nevertheless, any stage is welcome if the spotlight can be turned on the scandal of unemployment, in such a way as to clarify a working class solution to the crisis.

What then are the main lines of the solutions being offered by the 'left' within the trade unions and within the Labour Party?

Hugh Scanlon calls for the abolition of the £8 limit. But he does nothing about it; and he believes that 'import controls' are the key to solving the unemployment crisis.

Meanwhile 'Tribune' outdoes its customary spineless 'realism' with its latest plan to get unemployment down to 600,000 (an acceptable figure, no doubt!) ... in two years! 'Tribune' editor Richard Clemen carefully charts the "sort of progress which we all want to be brought about": 1,200,000 by November 1976, 1,000,000 by April 1977, and on till Labour has to fight an election...

Meanwhile the Communist Party's paper, the 'Morning Star', puts trust in nationalisation, ignoring the recently published NEDO figures which show a 7% fall in employment in the nationalised industries from 8,285,000 to 7,705,000 in the ten years to 1974.

Any successful struggle against unemployment must have shop floor conferences and its assemblies. But above all it has to take place at the shop floor.

For instance, a successful struggle on a large scale against overtime working would have the effect of making available 13,847,500 hours of work — enough for 346,200 workers working a 40 hour week. And a successful struggle for a 35 hour week would almost eliminate unemployment.

No such struggles are possible without a strengthening of shop floor organisation and without strengthening the links between factories on a local and combine basis. That is exactly why the bosses are launching such violent provocations against the shop floor organisations — dozens of different plants — at Keith Blackmans, at Chrysler, Linwood, at Rio Tinto Zinc and so on.

The immediate task is to create in every union and in every local shop floor bodies capable of taking up a struggle against unemployment which strengthens the shop organisations, which unites the employed and the unemployed, and which acts in solidarity with the struggle of bosses. Such campaigns must base themselves above all on the principle of **the hours, not the jobs, under workers' control and with no loss of pay**.

Participation: Why the right are right

Last Wednesday the TUC Economic Committee became the first victim of its own manoeuvres to push through its ideas on worker participation. When the government set up the Bullock report, the TUC managed to have the terms of reference of the report limited to its own idea of a two-tier system of company boards, with worker-directors taking half the seats on the higher Supervisory Board.

Now the GMWU and the EPTU are refusing to be bound by this and are insisting on putting to the Bullock committee their own statements on worker-directors — statements which conflict with the TUC attitude. Their statements express the fear that workers' participation will blur the conflicting interests of labour and capital and therefore blunt the edge of collective bargaining. **And they are dead right!**

The fact that the 'rebels' on this issue are from the right wing of the trade union movement, the wing most ready for class collaboration — like the Joint Industry Boards they are both involved in — seems to contradict their apparent concern for a sharp definition of roles: either worker or boss. But it is really quite logical.

Firstly, the right wing unions don't want their shop floor members involved in any kind of negotiating situation in which the officials are not in the position to discipline them sharply. Secondly, it is precisely because the right-wing unions don't think that it is the workers' business to interfere in the control or direction of companies that they want to limit them to the issues of wages and conditions. Ironically this narrow, conservative view results in the unions taking up an incomparably better position on worker directors on paper than the left wing unions who have fallen hook, line and sinker for participation. Benn's plans, Ryder's plans, and all the other worker-director plans.

REE months ago, Portugal was poised on the brink of a workers' revolution. The army was a weapon in the hands of its commanders. Rank and file soldiers, by their organisation SUV, were to break the chain of command, to order and expel reactionary officers from the barracks. Striking workers trapped the Constituent Assembly in the Sao Paulo palace until their demands were met. 100,000 workers demonstrated against the 6th Provisional Government on November 16th.

Now the working class is clearly on the defensive and the soldiers' movement is broken and scattered. The Republican National Guard has been to the fore: on January 1st it opened fire on a demonstration in Porto, killing three and wounding many others. Demonstrations in Lisbon have been broken up by armoured cars, where before those armoured cars would have been part of a demonstration. A shop worker on a picket line was shot and killed. An onslaught has been launched, on the agrarian reform. On January 9th the Government announced that the reform would not apply at all in the northern two thirds of the country and would be restricted in the south. The right wing parties have launched an agitation against the reform and against the Socialist Party. Minister of Agriculture Cardoso.

The so-called attempted coup of the 11th November was the turning point. It was not a bloody disaster for the working class. The workers' organisations, the commissions, the unions, the political parties, remain legal and intact.

Heady

The hardest repression fell on the soldiers, claiming over 200 political prisoners. The major blows were struck against the rank and file soldiers' organisations, breaking them up, disbanding the most radical units, dissolving Copcon. 'left wing' commanders like Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho were arrested. Yet all this hardly explains the sharp transition from what some saw as an immediately pre-revolutionary situation into one where the workers are distinctly on the defensive.

In the heady days of September and October, many revolutionaries in Britain, most notably the International Socialists, imagined that the groups comprising the FUR

(Revolutionary United Front) had gained the leadership of the working class. They forgot that it is one thing for workers to take up left wing slogans and join the revolutionaries' demonstrations; and another thing for revolutionaries to win decisive leadership within the organisations of the working class.

The September 29th General Strike call by the left met with little response due to Communist Party opposition. The demonstrations and strikes which reached massive proportions had CP backing. But it was the events of 25th November that showed — in a negative sense — the still tremendous influence the PCP wielded.

Coup

The PCP was engaged on a 'left course' in October and November. It had acted as junior partner to the military regime of the 5th Provisional Government under Vasco Goncalves, restraining strikes and calling for higher productivity and harder work. But having been reduced to one ministry in the Azevedo 6th Government, the CP was engaged in a manoeuvre to paralyse the government and force a compromise with more CP ministers being brought in, and if possible the PPD ministers expelled.

The CP's go-ahead to workers' struggles gave the groups of the FUR the impression that they were making the running. In fact its failure to centralise the workers' and neighbourhood commissions into anything approaching independent workers' councils, real organs of dual power, should have warned them that the CP's bureaucratic restraining hand was still powerful.

It should have warned them, too, that the united front that was necessary was not the jumbled hotch potch of the FUR but an offensive to win CP and SP workers for united action in defence of the soldiers' and workers' struggles. Instead, organisations like the MES concentrated all their fire on the SP — its members as well as its leaders. The PRP conducted a vigorous propaganda campaign saying that "the working class must prepare an armed insurrection", while at the same time it was sowing illusions in the junior officers who were to prove such a broken reed during the events at the end of November.

INDIVIDUALS
WHAT WOULD
WIP UP THE
BUILDING
DISASTERS ?

What happened on 25th November?

First, it is clear that a right wing provocation and possible coup was pre-meditated and organised by a coalition of right wingers like Ramalho Eanes, who coordinated the government troops and was made C-in-C of the army immediately after the 25th; and Jamie Neves, commander of the Amadora Commandos. They were joined in this by so-called moderates like Melo Antunes, who were prepared to go part of the way with them.

The aim was to provoke an outburst by the left wing units over the appointment of a number of reactionary officers like Vasco Lourenco and Morais e Silva to key positions in the Lisbon area, and over the final removal of Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho. The key section of left wing soldiers open to provocation was the paratroopers, recently radicalised by the fact that they had been tricked into blowing up the Radio Renascenca transmitter on 7th

Analysis by Dave Stocking

November

Threatened with demobilisation, the paratroopers were determined to resist the re-imposition of discipline and equally determined to throw out their right wing officers.

A massive united resistance by the workers' committees and the rank and file soldiers could have foiled the right wing plotters and turned the tables on them, leaving the workers and soldiers stronger than ever.

But the leaders of the working class, the PCP, weren't looking to the workers at all. They were hoping that Carvalho would lead a 'left wing coup' which would get the CP more ministries in the government. Carvalho, after signing the order for mobilisation, at the last moment went to the Belem Palace to negotiate with President Costa Gomes.

The CP did alert the workers. But it made clear that it limited its aims to a reorganisation of the Government. Its mass leaflet carried the statement "The way out of the crisis lies in the reorganisation of the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) on a progressive basis and in the formation of a left government."

Alvaro Cunhal, the CP leader, went to see Gomes and Antunes and struck an agreement not to mobilise the Lisbon workers, not to mobilise the other military units in defence of the paratroopers, and not to oppose the re-imposition of 'order' in the armed forces.

Chaos

The CP's actions, as well as the sudden disappearance of a number of their key officers and sergeants in the middle of the paratroopers' mobilisation, left the whole movement in chaos. It was this betrayal which allowed the right to surround, demoralise and force the surrender of the paratroopers and the left wing Copcon units.

In this situation, the revolutionary left and their dubious allies in the FUR were unable to offer a clear revolutionary alternative. Their lack of real influence in the crucial workers' organisations made it impossible to mobilise the working class in a general strike to stop the isolation and defeat of the paratroopers and turn the outcome of the provocation into a threat to the 6th Government.

Their mass leaflets and calls to

action show complete uncertainty as to what the goals of the movement should be. A PRP/MES leaflet issued on Tuesday 25th November talks about "giving a decisive lesson to the bourgeoisie". It calls on the workers to assemble and remain organised. It raises the slogans "Down with the Sixth Government! Down with the Council of Counter Revolution! Forward to a United Revolutionary Government!" But while it is now clear that the left groups were not responsible for organising the 'coup', they were totally unprepared for the turn of events, totally unclear about what the goals of the working class should be. They filled this vacuum with empty rhetoric about "armed peoples power" that could only confuse and disorient the workers.

The real task that faced the working class was to repulse the attack of the right, defend the soldiers' organisations and prevent the re-establishment of 'discipline' in the army. A mass mobilisation of the working class could have repulsed the attack on the paratroopers and driven the reactionary officers and commanders from the barracks. It would have helped generalise the working class offensive on the economic front and turned the grass-roots workers' organisations into real organising centres of an alternative power.



One party, one revolutionary organisation, which had acted in this way, certainly could not have guaranteed success. But it could have acted as a clear pole of attraction to those militants of the reformist and centrist organisations who realised through these events where the bankruptcy of their parties' policies was taking them.

The working class is now on the defensive. The existing, and largely intact, organs of the working class, the workers' commissions particularly, can only be strengthened, centralised, and transformed into bodies capable of fighting for and exercising working class power on the basis of a powerful

PAIN:

STRIKE WAVE

CONTINUES

TO GROW

ABOUT 100,000 workers are on strike in many different parts of Spain. At Sanjuez, near Madrid, a general strike of engineers took place, which was backed by many other groups of workers. The strike was itself in solidarity with the local Unilever workers, who had occupied a church in support of their demand that negotiations on their demands should start immediately.

Teachers, however, have gone back to work now that the government has promised to consider their pay demands.

In Madrid itself, building workers attempted to assemble in order to demonstrate for genuine trade unions and an amnesty for political prisoners. Learning their lesson from last week's huge workers' demonstration, however, the police this time turned up in force and greeted each group of workers who turned up to demonstrate with vicious baton charges and arrests. Among those beaten up were leading building worker militants and their wives.

One group of demonstrators did manage to get as far as the headquarters of the Madrid military command before they were driven back and dispersed.

Meanwhile, many journalists are still on strike in protest against the court

martial of a journalist who refused to reveal names of officers he had interviewed for an article critical of the present regime.

The wave of strikes since Christmas, which began with the underground railway workers' strike, continues to grow. Strikes have occurred in the telephone, metal and banking sectors, and in many cases have attracted the support of thousands of other workers. For instance, the strike of workers in the Madrid industrial suburb of Gatafe attracted widespread support at the beginning of January, when an 18,000 strong demonstration took place. Within a few days support action had spread to Madrid itself, and resulted in a general strike which finally brought out about 120,000 workers.

When the bank workers struck, the strike spread to the Barcelona docks, to the FESCA electricity company in Catalonia, and went on to attract the solidarity of 24,000 SEAT car workers too.

In almost every case economic demands are linked with demands for genuine, legal trade unions, an amnesty for all political prisoners, and an end of the regime of King Carlos.

LEBANON: THE UNEASY PEACE

Although the cease-fire is still holding in Lebanon, the chances are that the terms of the new agreement being worked out with the aid of Syria will not be to the liking of the Palestinians and the left-wing Moslems. The political reforms allow for a more powerful Moslem prime minister, and Christian-Moslem equality in the civil service. But they also say that the presidency must always belong to the Maronite Christians. For many Moslems this will



be small change after 10 months of a fierce civil war. The Shia Moslems, in particular, have seen their areas used as the main battle-grounds and have suffered the most casualties.

Syria has promised the Maronites that it will enforce the secret Cairo agreement of 1969. Under its terms the carrying of arms by the Palestinians would be greatly restricted. Particularly disturbing for the Palestinians is the clause on reducing the level of arms inside the refugee camps. Since 1969 the camps have been armed to protect them from Israeli raids across the border, and as a base for raids into Israel itself. Now, as well as protection against the Israelis, the Palestinians need protection against the Maronites, who during the civil war have attacked the camps with artillery and rockets and various assorted armoured vehicles. If the Syrians try to disarm the guerillas in the camps, this could be the spark that sets light a new phase of the civil war.

The Syrian agreement has already been attacked by Iraq and Libya, and the Palestinian resistance. Further fuel to their discontent has been added by the statement by Pierre Gemayel, leader of the right wing Maronite Phalange, that the Palestinians should be dispersed to other countries. It does not seem likely that the cease-fire will hold unless there are more concessions to the Moslem left-wingers and the Palestinians.



Just before the 25th: Deputies besieged in the Constituent Assembly Dept, while building workers outside tasted sardines.



United front around demands which meet the immediate pressing needs of the class.

And the united front cannot simply be posed as "from below only". Revolutionaries cannot say — you socialist and communist workers must break with your parties first, you must leave your leaders behind before you go into action. Revolutionaries must say: force your parties to stop co-operating with the enemies of the working class, the PPD, the Catholic hierarchy, the Army command. We in no way hide our view that they are inextricably tied up with these gentlemen and their repressive measures, but let us put it to the test.

Demands

The sectarian failure of organisations like the UDP, PRP and MES to fight for a united front on these lines is only the reverse side of their opportunism, expressed in their support (however critical) for the Fifth Provisional Government as against the Sixth, and their illusions in Carvalho.

Revolutionaries must call on Portuguese workers to fight together:

◆ Against unemployment, for a programme of useful public works under workers' control, for a sliding scale of hours, for work or full pay.

◆ Against the ravages of inflation: no to the wage freeze, for a sliding scale of wages, support for all sections of workers in struggle.

◆ Against the handing back of nationalised enterprises to their former owners — for the defence of workers' control.

◆ Against repression in the army. For the release of all the political prisoners rounded up since November 25th. For full democratic rights in the army.

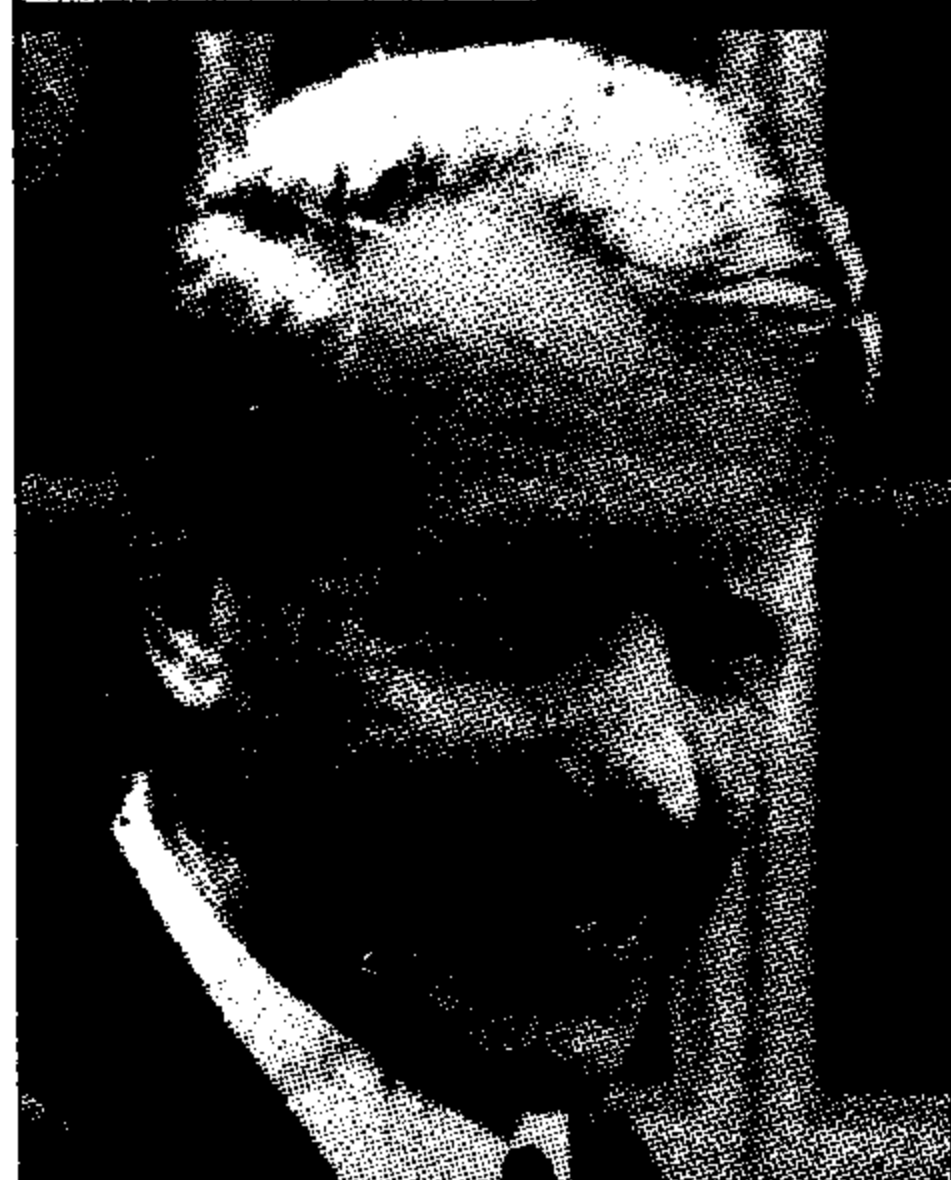
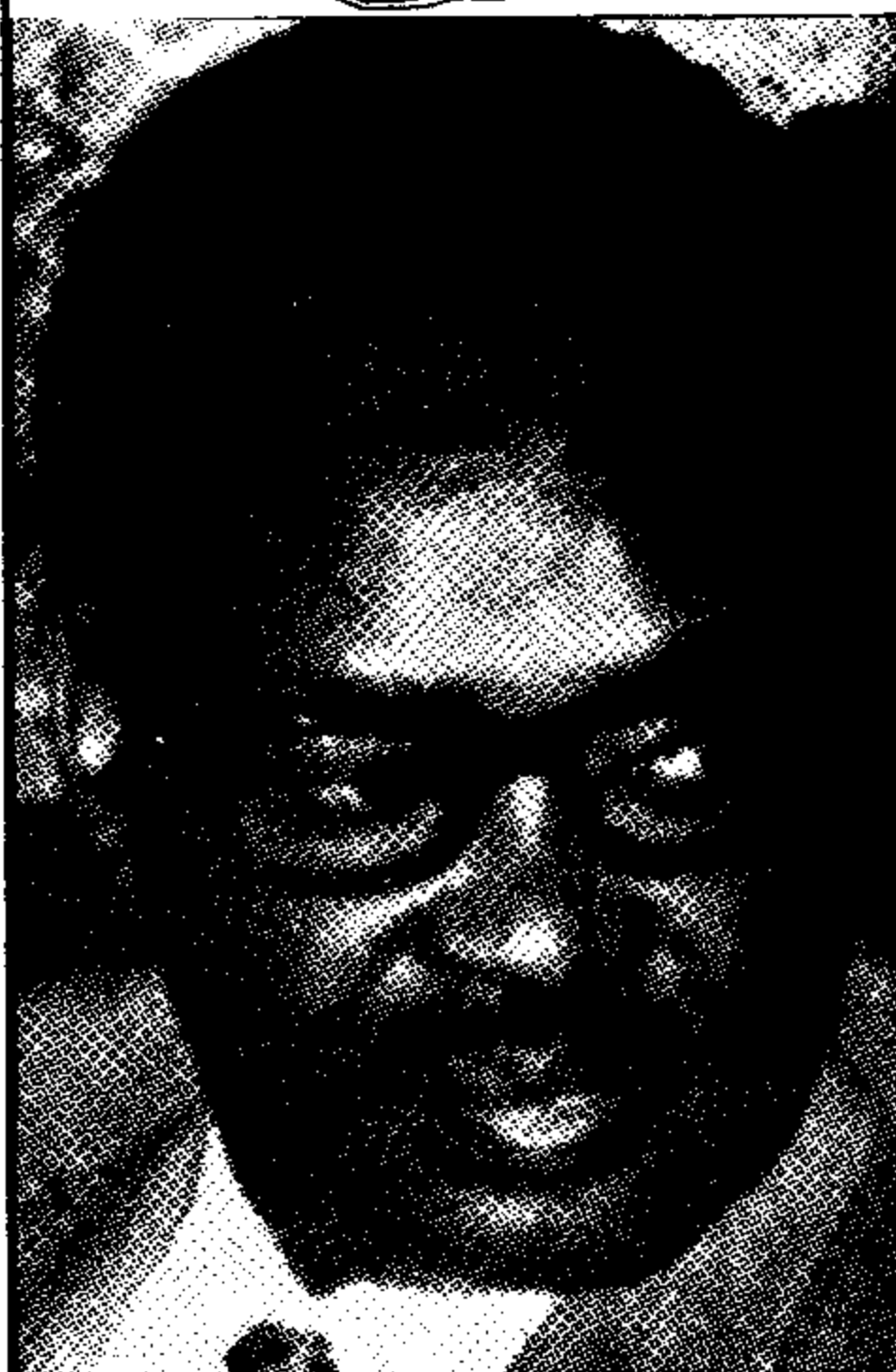
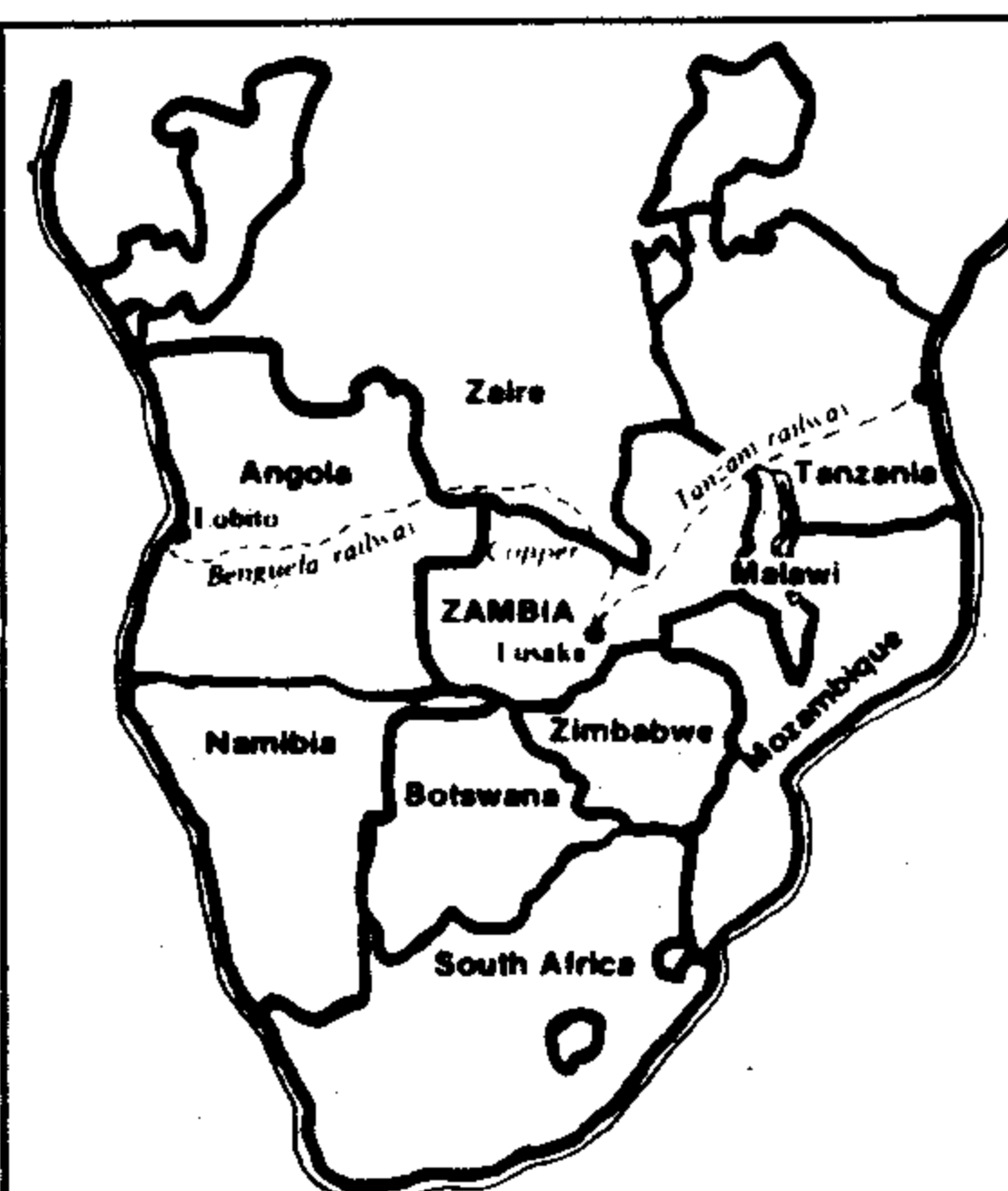
◆ Against the attacks on the agrarian reform. For funds, equipment, and fertiliser to the co-operatives and the small peasant farmers in the North.

◆ Against attacks on democratic rights, freedom of speech and assembly. Against press censorship. Against attacks on the right to strike. Workers' defence squads to protect trade union activities.

Party

These demands lay the basis for halting the retreat, stopping the slide into greater and greater repression. They lay the basis for testing in action the words and deeds of the reformist leaders.

To fight for these policies a hard nucleus of revolutionaries is needed, which avoids the twin pitfalls of opportunism and sectarianism — in short, a revolutionary party. Programmes and policies will remain empty slogans unless this indispensable weapon is forged.



Angolan leader Agostino Neto (top); Zambian President Kaunda; and Ian Smith

MPLA victory spells trouble for White Africa

by Dave Moore

LAST WEEK the Unita forces abandoned their last position and the MPLA regime in Angola was recognised as a member state of the Organisation of African Unity. The MPLA have won the war for the national liberation of Angola.

That war started with the armed uprising in Luanda in February 1961. It was a longer struggle than in either of the two other former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Mozambique and Guine-Bissau.

Imperialism had, and has, more at stake in Angola. The country has rich oil, iron and diamond resources, at present controlled mainly by US, South African, German and British interests. And those interests have tried to make sure they keep a grip on events in Angola.

Hoping to secure a servile pro-imperialist regime, South Africa and the US built up two tribalist movements, FNLA and Unita, to fight the MPLA. That effort has arrived at squalid collapse. Mercenaries were hired to 'defend the West' and ended up being gunned down by a psychopath for refusing to fight.

Cuban troops and Russian support aided the MPLA. Certainly in the case of Russia, they wanted political influence as a quid pro quo. Nevertheless, they did not aim at establishing imperialist-type economic domination, nor did they use the MPLA as their puppets, as the US and South Africa used FNLA and Unita.

Detente

South Africa and the US always had a second-string strategy, though: to involve an MPLA regime in the web of 'detente'. The MPLA regime will not prove as pliant an accomplice of imperialism as an FNLA-Unita regime would have done; for all that, the imperialist powers still hope to establish a relationship with the regime which will safeguard their essential interests.

The MPLA, so far, seems not unwilling. They speak of good relations with the militantly pro-imperialist Zaire regime, now that it has banned FNLA mercenaries from its territory.

The MPLA minister of foreign affairs has stated that if South Africa should recognise the regime, then "we could settle all the problems concerning South African interests and investments in Angola", and the South African government has also mooted negotiations.

Oil

The South African government especially wants the MPLA to guarantee the safety of their hydro-electric scheme at Cunene in southern Angola, and to refuse the use of Angolan territory as a base for guerrillas of the SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation). MPLA leader Neto has already given assurances on Cunene and has said he had no intention of interfering directly in South West Africa.

Businesses in Angola will not be nationalised, except where their foreign-based owners have abandoned them. And negotiations are starting with the US monopoly Gulf Oil.

At the same time, revolutionary-left groups in Luanda have been subject to attacks by the MPLA, as have workers' strikes. While the MPLA victory is certainly a step forward, the new regime basically expresses the interests of a nascent black bourgeoisie, rather than anything working-class or socialist.

Yet the repercussions of the MPLA victory may be greater than is allowed for, either in the plans of imperialism, or in the arrangements of the MPLA leadership.

In Rhodesia, all the attempts by South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster and Zambia's President Kaunda to pressure Ian Smith into an accommodation with the leaders of the African population have failed. Vorster on his side withdrew South African troops who were helping out the hard pressed Rhodesian Army against Zanu guerillas, and threatened to impede Rhodesia's access to South Africa's ports.

Kaunda on his side started by pushing the more militant wing of the Rhodesian nationalists into an alliance with the conciliatory ZAPU, and later harassed, jailed and probably murdered many ZANU militants in Zambia, in an attempt to put a stop to their use of Zambia as a base against the Smith regime.

Kaunda has been well aware of the possible consequences of an MPLA victory in Angola, both on the Rhodesian situation and on Zambia itself, where popular pressure against his stance is growing. For that reason he has set himself adamantly against that victory.

Now the tensions inside Zambia are being felt. After declaring a state of emergency on a vague pretext of a "Russian threat", but clearly aimed at student demonstrations and deep unrest among Copper Belt workers facing redundancies, he has now made a desperate last plea to Smith to make some move from his white supremacist posture to avert "a bloodbath before Zimbabwe sees majority rule".

Battle

This takes place against a background of reports that a major guerilla offensive is being planned against Rhodesia. President Nyerere of Tanzania (just north of Zambia) has publicly stated that his government will give training and backing to "those who are prepared to fight".

Clearly the MPLA victory and the continuing presence of thousands of Cuban troops in Angola can only heighten the crisis of white supremacist Rhodesia.

And in the central bastion of white supremacy, South Africa itself, the powerful black working class cannot fail to be deeply affected by the fact of the black people of Mozambique and Angola having won their demands through open battle with white racism. They too will move into battle — and for aims going far beyond the MPLA's.

THERE IS every reason to have a full enquiry into the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act.

The sort of questions it should ask must be obvious:

* How many women have failed to obtain an abortion because of the prejudice of doctors in their area?

* Why are public health facilities inadequate to meet the needs of those legally entitled by the Act to get an abortion?

* Why are these facilities being further curtailed by cuts?

* How long do women have to wait for an abortion after they have decided to have one? Why do they have to wait so long?

* How many women want abortions but don't qualify under the Act? How many of these women are driven to use illegal and dangerous methods?

* Why is the NHS not putting into general use the latest techniques?

* How can the Act be improved so as to reduce the worry and humiliation of women who want an abortion?

By a majority of 141 votes last Monday night, MPs decided to set up a Parliamentary Select Committee (again) to examine the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act. But the questions it will be asking will be very different from these.

The members of the Select Committee which recently reported to the Government were in their majority against any sort of abortion in principle. They included vicious anti-feminist Leo Abse, and right wing Tory John Biggs-Davison.

Their report, despite a mass of medical evidence against making abortion more difficult, recommended that abortions for foreign women should be kept down, that information about where to get an abortion shouldn't be freely available, and that abortions after five months of pregnancy should be done in hospitals with facilities for keeping a foetus alive.

These recommendations, which the

Select Committee on Abortion The questions that won't be asked

Government has accepted and is already acting on, will restrict the availability of abortions to many women. Those who have agitated for a revival of the Select Committee have done so in order to bring in more such restrictions. Changes in its composition are unlikely to help: even the pro-abortion minority all voted for the final report of the last Select Committee. The fact that it has been revived as a result of anti-abortion campaigns will set its terms of reference.

These anti-abortionists are terrible hypocrites. Many of them pretend to be on the side of women and to be doing it all in women's 'best interests'. They point to the private clinics and the fact that they make a profit out of abortions, and loudly wail about 'abuses of the 1967 Act'.

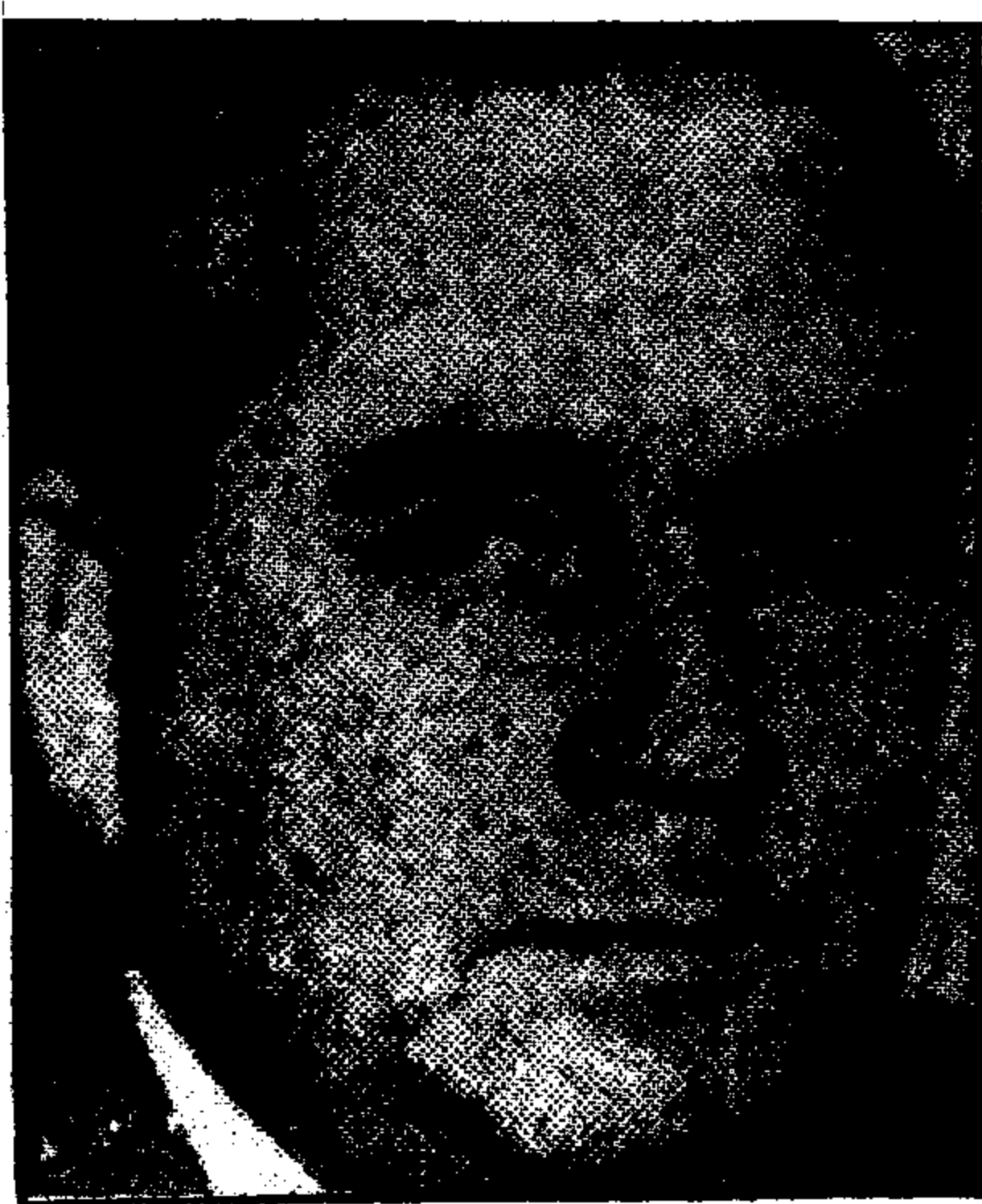
But they don't draw the only obvious conclusion: that NHS facilities should be enormously improved and that the red tape and delays that send women to the private clinics should be cut out. In fact, the easier abortion is made, the more they scream about it. They made a terrific fuss last week when the British Pregnancy Advisory Service announced that they were starting day-dare abortions.

Actually, Tories like Biggs-Davison and Anthony Fell (another Select Committee member) are all in favour of private medicine for profit. They rush to defend the Harley Street Clinic and the private Wellington Hospital. But they know an emotive

issue when they see one, and can see that the evil figure of the money-grubbing abortionist doing in the "innocent unborn" for profit is great for grabbing the imagination — and the votes — of gullible Labour MPs.

The fact that the result of their activities is that more desperate women will be shelling out their savings in the back streets doesn't concern them. On the contrary: it all helps to surround women with guilt and repression and that is just what they want.

The Government has taken up and acted on the Select Committee's 'concern' with the revival of a foetus that is developed enough to survive outside the womb. The adverts of the



James White

big pressure group against abortion, 'Life', constantly harp on about "an unborn child of 16 weeks".

But only a tiny handful of women leave the choice until that late. If it wasn't for the activities of the anti-abortion campaigns (who in many areas organise Consultants to deny abortion) and the restrictive effects of the 1967 Act, the "unborn child" in all but a handful of cases would be a tiny egg too small to show up on their adverts.

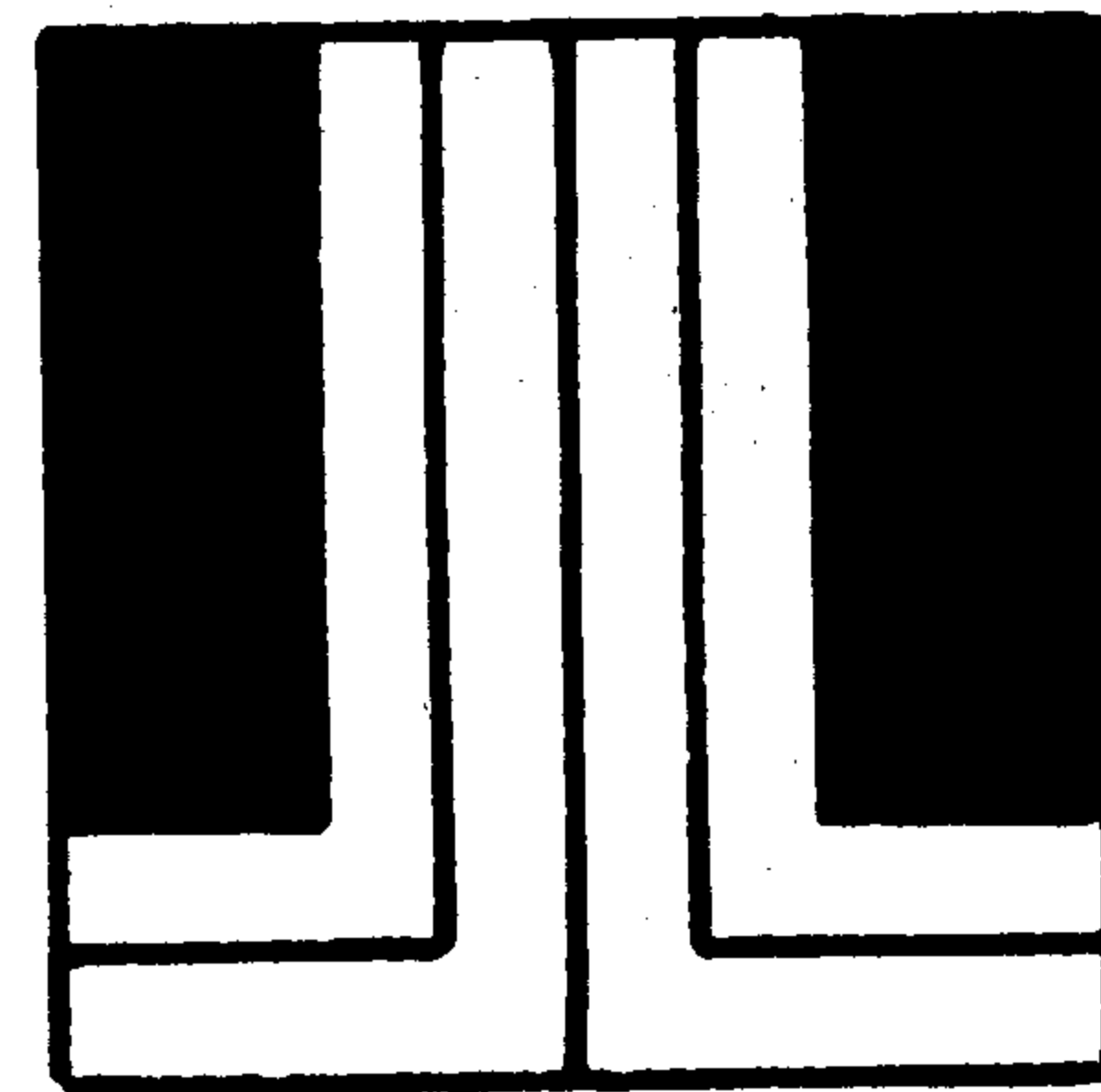
Leo Abse, a leading supporter of James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill which would have made legal abortion almost unobtainable in most cases (and which led to the setting up of the Select Committee) gave an idea of the 'further areas' the new Select Committee would be examining in its search for pretexts for more difficult abortion.

In his speech in Parliament last Monday (9th February) "he suggested that one of the most important points which had not yet been dealt with was the problem of doctors with conscientious objections to abortion." This certainly is a problem when it comes to enforcing the present law properly. But instead of looking for penalties against doctors sabotaging the law and denying women their rights, Abse has in mind some provision for giving them their head to avoid the law.

The intention of those who campaigned for and won the establishment of a new Select Committee is quite clear. They want to use it as a focus for their campaign against abortion as such.

All their 'arguments' about abuses and problems are false and self contradictory: the one obvious and simple solution to these problems is to make abortion free, safe and easy on the NHS and available to any woman that wants it. That will cut out all the questions, the red tape, the delays and the humiliations of women who now have to plead their case with doctors who really have no business to know about their private lives and motives.

Let those who have a mystical belief that a fertilised egg has a "human soul" bear as many children as they want. And let all other women also make their own free choice about their own bodies.



REVIEW

Stuck in the rut of housework

OPEN DOOR, the BBC2 'access' programme that gives air time to organisations with a point to make, may not be high in the viewing charts. But there have been programmes worth missing Match of the Day for, and many women must have felt that one on the subject of 'Wages for Housework' was worth that much at least.

The programme, put out by the Wages for Housework Campaign, was enjoyable and stimulating — though revolutionaries must disagree with just about every conclusion it reached.

Housework is soul destroying drudgery. In its present form it can be all but done away with by the social provision of laundries, cheap or free workers' restaurants, and child care. It is precisely because we wish to free women from the isolation and stultification of this kind of work in the confines of the individual home that we think the demand for wages for housework is self-defeating and reactionary. For if wages were paid for housework, it would root women ever firmer in isolation and oppression. We must fight to free women, not compensate them.

Isolated

The wages for housework campaigners recognise that women's position in society can only be improved through the actions of women themselves, and that to fight the system, women must be organised. For any demand in this fight to be relevant, then, it must be able to mobilise women.

How can women, isolated in the home and suffering an ideological as well as a material oppression, be mobilised by a demand that seeks only to leave them in the home — that is, in the very condition that makes mobilisation so difficult in the first place?

The campaigners' only answer, which they actually seem to take seriously, is that this can be done in the "pockets of time..." that a woman creates during her daily round of toil. This answer assumes that the problem is lack of time, rather than isolation. It ignores the fact that the worker putting in 50 or more hours at work might be rather short of time, yet rich in the knowledge that advance comes through collective solidarity and not through individual improvement.

Logic

Wages for Housework may start out as Women's Liberationists, but in fact many women are attracted to their banner by the anti-Women's Liberation logic of this demand. One of the women in the programme was quite explicit on this point.

The campaign seems to have no scruples about the circumstances in which women might be driven back into the home — just as long as there are wages for them there. One could have a small measure of respect for them if they clearly stood by a woman's right to work. But on the contrary, they are actually demanding "a woman's right not to work!"

To put this forward at a time when working women are the worst victims of short time and redundancy, when women's unemployment has shot up twice as fast as men's, when women are having to fight very hard for the solidarity of male workers who still think of women as only working for "pin money" — this is, quite simply, to join the side of women's exploiters.

JAMES TANDY

Abortion issue is inseparable from equal rights

THE National Abortion Campaign (NAC) mounted an impressive lobby against the re-appointment of the Select Committee. Despite a lack of time to organise, a number of women turned out to show their hostility to its re-appointment. When the result of the voting was announced, they staged a spontaneous demonstration, pronouncing their determination to carry on the struggle against any further restrictions on women's rights to obtain an abortion.

In the summer, NAC mobilised a huge demonstration against James White's Bill. And it has turned out every time to counter the demonstrations of the anti-abortionists' campaigns. But still these campaigns have made the

political running, especially at local level.

In Parliament on Monday night Tory social services spokesman Patrick Jenkin said "constituents would regard it as a dereliction of duty if we did not ask the Select Committee to examine the outstanding issues."

Labour Weekly commented defensively "Many Labour MPs who voted for it have made it quite plain that they would not vote for any restriction of the 1967 Act but that, as they had been under heavy and well organised pressure from the Catholic vote in their constituencies, felt it was hard to explain any opposition merely to the reconvening of the Select Committee." Which rather ignores the fact that the

Labour Government accepted the recommendations of the previous Select Committee, in preference to those of the earlier Lane Committee which had concluded that the 1967 Act shouldn't be changed.

James White himself had "never thought about abortion until the 1970 election. But on polling day, a Glasgow paper showed a picture of my Tory opponent with a group of nuns, calling the Labour government immoral for wanting the Abortion Act. How would you like that if you were fighting a marginal seat and it happened to you?"

But if it comes to numbers, there are eleven million women in this country who could find themselves in need of an abortion at some time. 26 per cent of trade unionists are women, and a substantial number of Labour MPs are sponsored by unions, some of which have a majority of women members.

The abortion issue and the need for 'Free abortion on demand: a woman's right to choose' is not an abstract philosophical issue. It is inseparable from the framework of equal pay, women's equal rights at work, and the whole question of women's independence and dignity. Trade unions should be pressed to see it in that light and in the light of defence of their women members' real rights. We must fight for them to take seriously the TUC resolution for FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND and to wage local campaigns around the issue.

Tighten

Many trade union bodies, too, have endorsed the right to abortion on demand as part of the Working Women's Charter, where they might have balked at it and failed to see its importance to their own members if it was treated as a single, separate issue.

The defence and extension of women's right to abortion can mobilise thousands of women. Linked to the wider social issues affecting working class women, it can mobilise many more. NAC should set itself this aim in the difficult months ahead as the Select Committee ponders new ways to tighten the screws.

Meanwhile, we must go all out to mobilise for the demonstration NAC has called for April 3rd to back up the fight for abortion on demand. The re-appointment of the Select Committee must act as an incentive for a very big turnout on April 3rd, especially from trade union delegations, and even greater public resistance to the reactionary anti-abortion lobby.

JULIET ASH

workers' ACTION

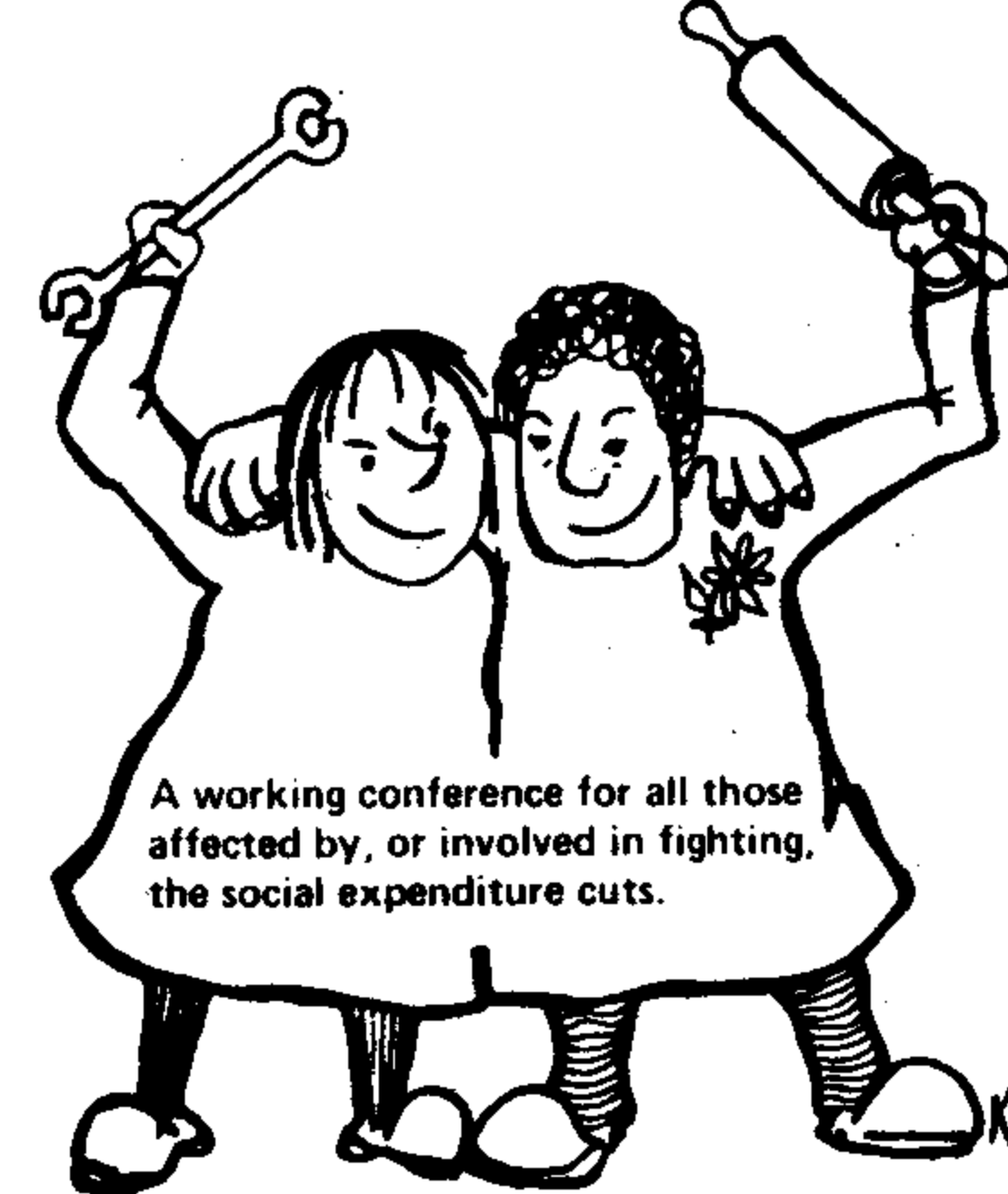
supporters' groups are being formed in the following places:

Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chelmsford, Chester, Coventry, Crawley, 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

WOMEN AND THE CUTS



Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1.

on

Saturday 28 February 1976

10.00 am till 6.00 pm

Called by WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER London Co-ordinating Committee. Details and registration from Michele Ryan, 39 Parkholme Road, London E.8 (249-3072)

Police with dogs invade Gay Workers Conference

AS THE BRADFORD Gay Liberation Front theatre group presented their play, a large contingent of police complete with Inspector and dogs arrived. The management no longer wanted us in the Wellesley Hotel, and action was being taken accordingly. The gay people present refused to submit to yet another instance of discrimination, and the play continued in spite of the police presence.

THE GAY WORKERS' conference in Leeds on 14th-15th February was attended by about 80 men and women. Lack of support by the trade unions meant that hardly anyone was delegates, illustrating the isolation of gay people in their workplaces.

Discussion focused on oppression and discrimination against gays in the workplace. Rather than straightforward sackings, this discrimination usually takes forms such as lack of promotion, social ostracisation, shifts from one job to another within the workplace (a management response to requests from hostile workmates) and voluntary resignation as a result of pressures. An example is the present British Home Stores case of a gay worker, Tony Whitehead, being forced to resign.

The hostility often comes from workmates as much as from employers. The main problem is, therefore, how to mobilise support for cases of discrimination? How to get trade unions to fight it when there is little or no support coming from our workmates?

Caucuses

There are gay caucuses within several trade unions (including NALGO and NUPE) and around various occupations, e.g. Gay Teachers, the Media, etc. However, none of these were represented at the conference.

Nalga gave no support as they felt organising outside the union was neither relevant nor within the bounds of their constitution.

One of the main ideas from the conference was that a gay rights organisation independent of the trade unions could give a necessary impetus to organisation inside the labour movement on the gay question.

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality and many other gay organisations are of little use in this context. They concentrate on legal reform and separate social activities,

Student leaders fail to tackle grants and cuts crisis

Students at Aston University in Birmingham and at St. Andrews University in Scotland have voted to leave the National Union of Students. Liverpool and Lampeter are planning to hold ballots on whether to disaffiliate. At Manchester University, the question of staying in the NUS was also posed, although there the majority voted to stay in.

These recent votes and disaffiliations highlight the growing disenchantment with the Broad Left leadership of the NUS. And the Broad Left in its turn has been unable or unwilling to tackle the reasons for the breakaways at their root.

When asked to explain these disaffiliations at a recent meeting in Cardiff, Charles Clarke (NUS President) merely brushed them aside and retorted that 5 colleges in Wales had only just affiliated to the NUS. But what Clarke and the rest of the Broad Left fail to see is that the causes for these affiliations and disaffiliations are basically the same.

Because of cuts in education, students in higher and further education are facing massive attacks on their education and living standards. We still have a discriminatory grants system in which a vast number of students get a grant at the discretion of their local authority, and of course all grants are means tested.

Yet while students can see the need for a concerted and coordinated campaign for a fair grants system and a defence of their living and education standards against the government's cutbacks, the NUS leadership merely offer localised and sectional campaigns. Over the past few years

which will do little to change the general prejudice and hostility faced by gays in the larger community.

At the same time, simply for gays to 'come out' and declare themselves does nothing in itself to defend gays against hostility and victimisation.

There was a lot of discussion at the conference on the relevance of 'coming out' to political issues. Many present felt existing political organisations to be of little relevance to them, because left groups have seldom given anything other than lipservice to the oppression which they as gay people experience and struggle against every day of their lives.

Disenchantment with the left makes it tempting for gays to limit their sphere of action to gay issues. But many others felt gay oppression could not be separated in this way from the wider class struggle. The gay person who drives a Rolls Royce has less in common with the gay worker on the buses than that gay worker has with his fellow workers. Although the patronising attitude of the left organisations makes it tempting to ignore them, many felt that the very possibility of effectively fighting discrimination against gays depended on advance in the wider class struggle.

Centres

The conference arrived at a number of immediate decisions.

- To produce a comprehensive handbook for gay working people. This is to contain practical information on how to organise in the labour movement and the community.

- An amendment is to be put to the Working Womens Charter conference in Coventry in April. The Charter needs to be amended to deal with discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation at work, and in law, for example over custody cases for lesbian mothers.

- Gay centres contribute much to combat the isolation experienced by gays. It was generally felt that these centres, such as in Brixton and East London, need to be encouraged.

- Above all we need a defence network capable of mobilising quickly in cases of victimisation. Trade Unions and 'respectable' gay organisations such as CHE have failed to mobilise, in recent cases, including the victimisation of a teacher, John Warburton, and of Tony Whitehead at British Home Stores.

WENDY CLARK
MARGARET PAGE

'OBEY US...OR ELSE' teachers are told

Suspension from the Union could face NUT (the teachers' union) militants who either disobey official union instructions or "undertake industrial action without prior approval of the Executive."

These new rules are put forward in an "urgency report" by the officers at a recent meeting of the NUT Executive. The new procedure, to take effect after this year's conference, will be included in the Executive's Annual Report to Conference.

These restrictions are clearly a reaction to, among other things, what happened in the weeks preceding the enquiry in William Tyndale School, when seven of the Junior School staff went on unofficial strike against an imposed inspection of their school and ignored an instruction from the NUT General Secretary to return to work and COOPERATE WITH THE INSPECTORS.

Under the draconian new regime planned, if the officers of the union decide there is a "prima facie" case of disobedience, they can automatically suspend the member for 21 days prior to a meeting of the national disciplinary committee. Hence the member is assumed guilty even before the case is heard.

When the case is heard by the committee, the member on 'trial' is not allowed to have a practising lawyer as a 'friend' (somebody more experienced in procedure who can go into the hearing and give advice). And if the member is not satisfied with the committee's findings, who can they turn to but the Appeals Committee — which is merely the rest of the Union Executive besides the original officers who made the complaint: i.e., whoever else is left in the den of thieves who hasn't already been involved.

What is more, "the new procedure" provides for all these disciplinary

proceedings, except for the final decision, to be confidential." Good of them to make the final decision public!

NUT President Mrs. Elsie Clayton, inverting the familiar 'it hurts me as much as it hurts you', says "suspension is for the protection of the member as much as a sanction against him".

The general implications of this move are to put some teeth into the infamous Rule 8 of the Union, which was passed at the 1973 Annual Conference and which forbids local NUT Associations from taking industrial action without the "prior approval" of the Executive.

It means, for instance, that militants operating the sanction of not covering for unappointed staff or staff absent for more than three days (a sanction first introduced at the time of the teacher shortage, and now even more crucial in the fight to protect jobs) are now at risk unless they have gone through the lengthy 'official procedure' of the Union. It is estimated that this procedure means a delay of some six months while Union members prove there is a "need" for their action.

Even when the need is there for all to see, there is no guarantee that the NUT Executive will give automatic support. Take, for instance, the case of Oldham, where in thirty schools NUT members have decided by a two thirds majority to operate the sanction of no cover, yet the NUT refuses to give official backing to this action.

Rank and File, the militant teachers' organisation, now has an even greater task to break through local fear of Rule 8 and initiate independent action when necessary. As well as pushing for the NUT to adopt the following policies, Rank and File must organise locally around them to build up local strength:

- Full local association support for any teachers refusing to cover for



THE UNIONS



unappointed staff or staff absent for more than 3 days. Where possible this should be extended to no cover at all.

- Full local association support for teachers refusing to take classes of more than 30 on the roll, or reception classes of more than 25, or remedial classes of more than 15.

- Full, free local association membership rights (including voting rights) to all local unemployed qualified teachers, including college leavers, whether or not they were in the NUT prior to being unemployed.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

Workers may occupy at British Sealed Beams

ON MONDAY 2nd February, the stewards at British Sealed Beams, Corby, were informed without any previous warning or consultation that

the factory was to be closed down at the beginning of April.

The following Sunday, 8th February, a mass meeting of 450 of the 500 workers

(mainly women) voted unanimously to oppose all redundancies, and if necessary to occupy.

The BSB management had agreed not to put out redundancy notices until after the mass meeting. But the day after the meeting they still insisted the factory must close. It was not 'viable' because of the effects of the slump in the motor industry and changes in car design on demand for the sealed-beam units for car headlights which BSB makes.

The stewards are dubious about this claim, and rightly so. They should remain dubious until they have had the accounts and files of BSB (and its trading relations with its joint owners, Thorns, GEC, and Lucas) opened for the closest scrutiny.

The BSB workers cannot afford to fight their case on the basis of 'viability', but only on the basis of refusing to have workers pay the cost of the bosses' crisis. The factory should be occupied if the BSB bosses prove stubborn — but on the basis of the workers taking over the factory, campaigning for the government to nationalise it and maintain it by state finance, and retaining workers' control.

Harmful

However, the perspective outlined from the platform at the mass meeting was a workers' cooperative with the workforce buying shares in the company.

This would be disastrous. When workers take responsibility for the running of a firm, competing in a capitalist market, they are forced to act in just the same way as the previous bosses, cutting their own wages, putting through their own productivity deals, etc. NVT and the Scottish Daily News are clear examples.

Equally harmful was the attitude expressed by the EPTU full time official. 'If factories had to close, let them close in Taiwan or Italy, not in Corby'.

If the Corby workers are to win their struggle, they will do it by gaining solidarity from workers elsewhere, not by trying to get one up on them. Immediately, links need to be made with the shop stewards' committees and combines within Thorns, Lucas and GEC, and also in Leyland, which fits the headlights, both for information and for solidarity action.

200 A MONTH FIGHTING FUND

HALFWAY THROUGH February, we are slightly more than halfway with our £200 Fighting Fund. So far this month we have received £110.15. Send contributions to 49 Camac St, London SE27

POCHINS: 'We'll sack you all'

THE FIFTY men at the Pochins Polytechnic site in Manchester are in their fourth week of strike in defence of their jobs and union organisation. The strike continues despite the notices from the company which all the strikers received last week, saying that they would be sacked if they did not all return to work this week.

If management carry out their threat, this will put in jeopardy redundancy payments of up to £1,000.

At a meeting last Friday, the stewards argued that the sacking notices were an empty threat as long as the strike and the

picket line stayed firm. They criticised the local UCATT official. He has provided no real support for the strikers. His way of making contact with them was to get the management to put a notice on the site gate saying: "We've been requested to advise operatives that there will be a meeting between UCATT officials and operatives 10am Monday".

However, students at the Polytechnic have donated £230 to the strikers. A lot of support is still needed. Contact 061 273 1964 or 273 2116, during the day.

BILL COPPOCK

Union rights strike at huge Oxford booksellers

BLACKWELLS, the Oxford booksellers, have traditionally tried to present the image of a 'paternalistic' firm. Now the ugly side has shown, with their sacking of a union member, Ted Heslin.

Fifty workers at the firm are on strike demanding union recognition and the reinstatement of bro. Heslin. Even though the strike is over the basic demand for the right to organise, the local TGWU leadership have not made it official. As a result some members of the union are still working, while fellow members are out on the picket line.

The strikers have got workers in

publishers such as Macmillans and Penguins to black books bound for Blackwells, and GPO and BRS drivers are refusing to cross the picket line.

Local TGWU branches are calling for the dispute to be made official, and the Oxford Trades Council has pledged its unanimous support. The strikers are calling for an extension of the blacking, and for a mass picket outside Blackwells, at Broad St, Oxford, from midday on Saturday 21st February. Send messages of support and donations to: D.J. Thompson, Blackwells Strike Committee, 8c Crick Rd, Oxford.

W D I R K E I R S I N A C T I O N

Docks Bill full of loop-holes

BY EIGHT VOTES the House of Commons decided last week to give a second reading to the Dock Works Regulation Bill, despite an enormous howl of anguish raised in the capitalist press against this Bill.

The 'Economist' announced hysterically that the Bill would give "striking dockers the power to starve Britain into submission within days". But unfortunately the Press has grossly exaggerated the leverage this Bill gives to dockworkers.

The proposals stem from the Bristow report, which the Labour government promised to implement when it was published over 10 years ago. They extend the National Dock Labour Scheme to ports and smaller wharves not at present included. The Scheme guarantees job security, a minimum wage for periods of slack in the industry, and a guarantee of redundancy money for those leaving the docks.

The Bill also proposes to bring into the National Dock Labour Scheme workers employed in handling docks cargo if the place of work is within five miles of a port. In the case of docks like London, this will create a corridor ten miles wide within which dock cargo handling will be done by dockers registered under the Scheme.

Demand

But there are dozens of loop-holes. In the first place, the Bill is several years too late. Over 50,000 dockers have left the industry over the last few years, and a lot of trade has been switched from well-organised ports to weakly-organised ports like Felixstowe.

The Bill does not touch problems like the scheduled closure of Millwall and West India docks. And it will do little about the enormous amount of docks work flowing through the huge Inland Container Depots, or the smaller but more numerous cowboy and backyard stuffing and stripping depots.

The Bill also specifically excludes from the National Dock Labour Scheme any warehouse, cold storage place, etc, that does not carry out work directly connected with docks. There is obvious room for getting round the Bill here.

Moreover, the Bill is likely to be much weaker by the time it finally becomes law. Already exceptions to the Bill include lorry drivers, workers at railway ports, and workers in firms handling their own goods. Other exceptions are being considered, and in practice the whole thing will depend on an unspecified consultation process before types of work become classified as dockwork.

The government has introduced this Bill under pressure from Jack Jones and the TGWU, who demanded something in return for the backing they have given the £6 limit. It is undoubtedly an advance for dockers. But it is no complete solution. The fight to save jobs on the docks still calls for the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee's demand of Nationalisation under Workers' Control.

Blackmans strikers call on GEC Combine



AS THE STRIKE at Keith Blackmans in Tottenham enters its sixth week, the strikers have escalated their action by a temporary demonstration-occupation of the factory, from Wednesday to Thursday night.

The management of Blackmans (part of GEC) remain equally determined, refusing to discuss with the unions about the reinstatement of the sacked steward. The strikers are also facing continuing difficulties in getting Social Security. Some of the men have been refused payments altogether, and their case is being taken up by some of the local Labour MPs.

After their successful sit-in, the men are going to resume picketing this week as before. In the next fortnight there is to be a meeting of trade unionists from the whole GEC combine to discuss how they can best organise to support Blackmans. And support is still needed from throughout the labour movement. Donations and messages to Jim Pickering, AUEW, Suite 3, 2nd Floor, 128-136 High St, Edgware, Middlesex.

Aircraft Workers Reject 1200 Redundancies Plan

IN THE week after 100,000 aerospace workers had made a massive protest against threatened redundancies in the industry, the British Aircraft Corporation announced that it would be making nearly 1,200 workers redundant by May.

The protest last week took the form of an hour's stoppage for mass meetings to discuss the future of the industry. The meetings were called by the National Aerospace Shop Stewards Liaison Committee (NASSLC), involving all the main unions in the industry.

Their leaflet for the occasion graphically described the shortage of work, the lack of any new projects, and the consequent threat of closures and redundancies in the industry.

Confirming their worst fears, last Wednesday saw the announcement of 1,200 redundancies at BAC plants around the country. And this is just half the reduction which BAC wants to achieve.

No policy

Since last November, 1,200 jobs have already gone, through voluntary redundancy or 'natural wastage'. All grades of workers are involved, including design and production staff.

Most of the redundancies will hit Filton, Bristol, where Concorde is produced. Of the 16 aircraft to be produced, six are already flying, two are due to be put into operation soon, and work on the other eight is more than half finished.

Fred Brooks, chairman of the BAC shop stewards, has announced that the new redundancies will not be accepted. Yet the aerospace stewards appear to have no really clear policy on how to fight the closures. Most of them seem to be pinning their hopes on the future nationalisation of the industry, and a subsequent participation of the unions in decisions affecting the company.

The policy of the NASSLC appears to be to demand a halt to redundancies

until after the establishment of the aerospace Corporation. Then they hope that workers' participation will give them the opportunity to resist the redundancies.

This is a forlorn hope, and a near disastrous policy. They will not only be delaying the redundancies, but putting off a fight against them where it matters: not in the boardroom, but in the plants, on the shop floor. Participation schemes are designed not to help workers resist redundancies, but to suck the workers' leaders into organising and selling redundancies. (See page 2 this issue, on Ryder's participation scheme for British Leyland.)

Weaker

While the nationalisation of the aerospace industry will undoubtedly be a step forward, it is very far from being a guarantee against redundancies and closures. Aerospace workers only have to look at what has happened on the mines, steel and the railways to see that state ownership does not in itself protect jobs: more often it is a device for massive rationalisation, streamlining and cutbacks.

Participation schemes give workers no real control at all over the production process. This can only be achieved by workers throughout the industry uniting at a rank and file level through the NASSLC and pursuing a fighting resistance to attempts to throw more workers on the dole.

For this to have a chance of success, the unions must maintain their complete independence from the bosses — they must not take on any share of the responsibility for the running of the industry.

Instead of diverting the attention of the rank and file towards possible systems of 'workers' control', the immediate task now is to strengthen the shop floor organisation for a really militant response to the bosses' plans.

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD

from p1 NUM JOBS FIGHT

Naturally, there has been less publicity for the areas that are solidly behind the ban — some of them geographically furthest from the disputed pit, which shows they see it clearly as a national issue. Scotland, Lancashire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, most of Yorkshire and South Wales are solidly behind the ban.

Undoubtedly, the action is far from popular among many miners. Their living standards are built on the assumption of overtime pay, and the ban will certainly mean hardship.

When the cards are on the table, solidarity has usually overcome any hardships. But this time the cards are not on the table! They are up in the air, on the floor, up the dealers' sleeve — in fact, anywhere but on the table... Throughout the dispute, the NEC has never attempted to clarify the issues involved; there's been no consultation, and no mandate was sought from the branches or areas. Anger over the NEC's high-handedness has therefore undoubtedly played into the hands of people like Len Clarke, allowing him to talk about 'democracy' when he himself only a year ago at the 1974 NUM Annual Conference got the Notts area delegation to vote against a cast-iron mandate of the members.

Creeps like this should not be allowed to split the miners. The overtime ban must be fully supported. The bungling and bureaucratic methods of the NEC can be tackled later: but it won't be tackled if we're divided now.

The task now is to remove the threat of short time working and redundancy. Squabbles among the NEC will not remove that threat. It can be removed, however, by the united action of rank and file miners.

EVENTS

Working Women's Charter national conference: 10th-11th April, Lanchester Poly, Coventry. Two delegates each from all labour movement organisations. Credentials from H. Gurdon, Flat 4, 39 Newbold Terrace East, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Solidarity with the Portuguese working class: Conference, 10am, 13th March, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. All labour movement organisations may send delegates. Details from PWCC, 12 Little Newport St, London WC2.

Labour Movement Assembly on Unemployment: Saturday 27th March, at Central Hall, Westminster. Details from 'Assembly', no. 8 Confederation District Committee, 12 Denmark St, London WC2H 8NJ.

Demonstrate against the Criminal Trespass Proposals: 1.30pm, Saturday 28th February, at Belvedere Rd, London SE1.

Women and the Cuts conference: 10am to 6pm, Saturday 28th February, at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1. Details from Michele Ryan, 39 Parkholme Rd, London E8.

Cambridge Portugal Solidarity Campaign: showing of film 'Viva Portugal', with speaker. Monday 23rd February, 8pm, Alex Wood Hall, Norfolk Street.

'Stop Cuts - Save Jobs' demonstration: organised by West Midlands TUC. Saturday 21st February: assemble 10am at Digbeth Civic Hall and march to Birmingham Town Hall for meeting at 12.

Islington Campaign against the Cuts: conference: Saturday March 13th, at Lofting Rd Library. Details from 15 Bayon House, New Orleans Walk, London N19.

Foco Novo presents a theatre show with music: 'The Nine Days and Sattley Gates'. February 18-22 and 25-29, 7.30pm at Oval House Theatre, 54 Kennington Oval, London SE11.

National Lesbian Conference: February 27th, 28th, and 29th, in Bristol. Contact the Women's Centre, 2nd Floor, 59 Lower Union St, Bristol 1. Tele. 0272 71261.

'Folk to Chile' — Isabel Parra and Patricia Castillo. 7.30pm, Saturday 28th February, at Maxwell Hall, Salford University. Sponsored by Salford Univ. SU and Manchester Chile Solidarity Campaign.

'Why the International-Communist League' public meeting in Coventry. 7.30pm Thursday 26th February, at the Elastic Inn, Lower Ford Street.

'What is the International-Communist League?' public meeting in Brighton. 8pm Thursday 19th February, at the Stanford Arms. Preston Circus, Brighton.

NATIONAL LESBIAN CONFERENCE in Bristol, February 27th, 28th, 29th. Contact Women's Centre, 2nd Floor, 59 Lower Union Street, Bristol 1 (0272 712621).

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What's behind the Workers Press collapse?

"WORKERS' PRESS", the daily paper published by the Workers Revolutionary Party for the last six and a half years, is dead. Last Saturday's Workers Press departed from its usual hysteria with a short, simple, grave announcement that it would never appear again.

The Workers Press was child of the WRP's sole perspective: immediate world-wide slump, irreversible crisis, and volcanic working class response. On the basis of the imminence of these conditions the paper was born, and with bitter irony it was as these elements appeared (albeit not in the doomsday proportions proclaimed by the WRP) that it died.

"The crisis" — hailed in and out of season with all the primitive conviction of an Old Testament prophet — would, in the view of Gerry Healy and his followers, assure the flourishing of a mass party and a mass press. For a short time, given the investment of vast financial resources, compared with

those of other left-wing organisations, the wish became its own fulfillment. What was the 'Newsletter' went daily, the once rock-hard 'cadre party' became an unsteady, chaotic, loose and ignorant mass only given the semblance of direction by the frequent cracking of the leader's whip.

Slanders

More than ever the political line of the organisation had to be based on falsifications and slanders, and the Workers Press duly turned its relatively empty pages over to this infamy. It lied systematically and scandalously — sometimes even in a lunatic manner.

Its reports, whether on international, industrial, or any other matter, did not scruple to lie about the opponents of the WRP. No lie was too great. No distortion too disloyal.

Its last few months saw a consuming obsession with a seemingly endless stream of paranoid fantasies, where the

police raid on the 'Red House', the WRP education centre, was tirelessly juxtaposed to the infamous series of articles which set out to prove that two leading American Trotskyists with over 40 years experience were, all the time, Stalinist secret agents, who, not content with 'fixing' Trotsky's murder, have devoted their lives to wrecking Trotskyism from within.

Non-WRP socialists therefore have no reason to weep at the death of the Workers Press. But what of the devoted brigade of papersellers to whom the daily Workers Press was an artery of truth in the working class movement? What of the WRP members?

The shock which sincere WRP militants feel might make some ask themselves — where have your leaders been leading you all this time? Why do they suddenly, without warning, pull the rug from under your feet? Why was there no warning of impending collapse? More pointedly — what is going on?

The Plough Press has not gone bankrupt. The leadership has maintained its press. It is a press which is personally owned by a handful of central WRP members who are on every question outside of any democratic control by the members of the WRP. What is going to happen to the leaders of the WRP? Ask your leaders, comrades of the WRP. There is a very relevant Trotskyist slogan that applies here and should have been raised inside the WRP — OPEN THE BOOKS!

Rump

For ourselves, we can think of no better epitaph for the Workers Press than to quote a man whom Mr G Healy, WRP General Secretary, never tires of quoting. Driving out the rump Parliament, Oliver Cromwell said what we feel: "You have sat too long for any good you have done here. In god's name, go."

Ken Smith