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WORKERS' ACTION

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International Womens Day

Demo

March 6th

Speakers Corner
2pm

Unions accept the Cuts

WHY DON'T THEY FIGHT?

THE ANGRY noises of the leaders of the public sector unions mysteriously faded away during the TUC debate on the Healey cuts last week. They settled for "assurances" and "discussions" with Denis Healey instead of unfurling the banner for a fight.

Each of these unions has its own "anti-cuts campaign". NALGO has published a

pamphlet spearheading its campaign; NUPE has organised marches in some regions — like the one in Cardiff last weekend; and the transport unions are running their individual campaigns.

Yet when it comes to it, the leaders of these unions stand in the way of a concerted campaign by their refusal even to force the issue to a vote. The reason is

clear; they don't want to see a return of the Tory Government.

Neither do we. But we don't think that means the working class should become meeker and milder the more desperately it is attacked by the Labour Government. We think workers should fight back even if that means trouble for a Labour Government carrying out right-wing

policies.

At present that fight-back is kept in check by the dwindling credentials of the Labour Government — but it is growing. The Yorkshire area of the National Union of Mineworkers has voted to urge the union's July annual conference "to seek increases of up to £33 per week". Scottish miners have already put forward a motion "opposing all forms of income policy, statutory or voluntary". Yorkshire is also calling on Gormley to resign from the presidency of the NUM. Kent miners are pushing for an extra week's holiday, earlier retirement, and higher pensions.

Meanwhile, in the ranks of the Transport and General Workers Union, the union most responsible for the disastrous TUC-Labour Government liaison, left wingers are calling for a "re-examination of the union's stand". Their pressure may force Jones to postpone the executive meeting until after the Budget, hoping that some small concession by Healey will allow him to sell the Government's anti-working class policies to his members.

And according to the 'Observer' last Sunday, TUC leaders were saying that they would not fight the cuts, but would instead concentrate on import controls.

Rough time for fascists in Coventry

THE NATIONAL Front's planned demonstration in Coventry last Saturday was broken up by a militant anti-fascist counter-demonstration. Norfolk landowner Andrew Fountaine, the Front's candidate in this week's Coventry North-West by-election, complained that it was "bloody monstrous" that they were 'beaten up' by a "multi-racial band of reds".

After the clash with the NF, in which Front leaders John Tyndall and Martin Webster were injured, the anti-fascists marched to the city centre, where they found — and dispersed — a rally of the National Party (ex-majority of the now split National Front).

1500 had assembled for the anti-NF counter-demonstration, supported by Coventry Trades Council. The NF demo was scheduled to start nearby, but changed their plans and assembled at their headquarters in London Road.

A contingent of anti-fascist demonstrators, having found out about the NF change of plan, went in pursuit, and were able to

tackle the fascists without the usual large bands of police interfering.

This was a blow against the NF's attempt to intimidate immigrant workers with their racist mobilisation under the slogan "British jobs for British workers".

However, there should be no complacency. The NF were able to regroup and hold some sort of march, skulking round the edges of the city. The counter-demonstration, though successful, was not well organised. We have to organise better for next time.

Some of the 1500 people who demonstrated against the National Front and National Party in Coventry last Saturday. Inset: Ajmir Balns (IWA) speaking at rally. Photos by Eric Harrison



Tax

So far the news has gone in the opposite direction from any concessions by the Government to the TUC. The TUC's tax proposals — hardly the most radical suggestions — were cold-shouldered by the Government, and the announced terms of reference for the National Enterprise Board reveal a NEB stripped of the radical pretensions that the TUC had supported.

This time of year in 1972 the miners tore the Tories' first pay curb policy to pieces. This time two years later, the working class brought down a Tory government that dared to confront it. Now, two years on again, workers face cuts bigger than any the Tories implemented and have been forced to swallow a £6 pay limit. In fact the pay limit, Healey speculated on television last Friday, might go as low as 3%! Pressed further on the future limit, he said "I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE AS LOW AS PEOPLE WOULD AGREE!"

This is a time to break the deadlock, to fight the cuts, and to put maximum pressure on the trade union leaders for a break with the Government.

AFTER THE victory of the MPLA in Angola, the options are narrowing in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

The imposition of economic sanctions has severely weakened the Rhodesian economy, especially by isolating the country from the surrounding African states. For example, the closure of the Zambian border has cost Rhodesia £750,000 a month in lost trade.

The war against the guerillas has also proved to be a serious drain on manpower and resources. In a country where only 4% of the population is white, and where the overwhelming majority of the blacks support the guerilla movement, the continual policing of the countryside has meant the mobilisation of almost all the settler population. Strict draft regulations cover all whites, and this militarisation has further disrupted the economy.

But many African regimes, in desperate economic straits, extremely dependent on South Africa, and fearful of the effect on their internal politics of a militant black struggle in Zimbabwe, are pressing for a negotiated settlement, which will maintain white supremacy in its essence while giving some concessions to the blacks. It was President Kaunda of Zambia who set up the August talks at the Victoria Falls, and he will be pushing for success in the new talks now opening.

Zambia has suffered from a dramatic fall in the world price of copper, its largest export — from £1,500 a ton early in 1974 to less than £600 a ton for most of last year. World inflation, particularly in the cost of oil, fertilisers, and machinery, has made the problems even worse.

The regime has introduced austerity measures at home and solicited economic aid abroad. Last October J. Heunis, the South African Minister of Economic Affairs, visited Lusaka and signed an agreement to extend credit up to 125 million rand (about £50 million) worth of South African exports to Zambia. This covers about one quarter of Zambia's entire current annual import bill.

South Africa is reported to be secretly paying Zambia's oil bill to Iran, and is by now probably Zambia's leading foreign supplier.

As well as these links with South Africa, Kaunda has been attempting to re-open trade with Rhodesia. A caucus of MPs from the ruling United National Independence Party has



called for the re-opening of the Rhodesia-Zambia border.

In fact the border already has been half opened. Zambia uses the rail route through Rhodesia to export its copper. This has been very important since the Benguela railway through Angola has been denied to Zambia since the Angolan civil war.

Zaire is also heavily dependent on copper exports, which account for 70% of its foreign earnings. Its reserves have fallen from £370 million to less than £13 million. This has sent Zaire's President Mobutu scurrying for aid to places like the USA and South Africa, which has given him an eight million rand loan to cover the import of food.



Captured guerilla fighter Dhlamini, murdered by Smith's police regime

Zambia, Zaire — and South Africa and Britain, too — are pushing for a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia between Smith and the right wing of the black nationalist forces — the ZAPU wing, led by Joshua Nkomo. The origins of the split between ZAPU and the more militant ZANU date back to the British formula, produced in 1971, for majority rule sometime in the next century. Nkomo accepted this formula for a short period, while the African masses resoundingly rejected it.

Last ditch attempts to get Rhodesia sell-out

by **NEAL SMITH**

The ZANU wing enjoys the confidence of the vast majority of the guerillas in their camps in Mozambique and Tanzania, and the level of militancy is rising inside Zimbabwe itself. In November, for example, a demonstration in Salisbury in support of the exiled Bishop Muzorewa attracted 40,000 blacks.

In September ZANU leader Sithole was made chairman of the Lusaka-based external wing of the ZANU-ZAPU coalition, now called the Zimbabwe Liberation Council. The Nkomo faction then withdrew from the ZLC in protest. And a recent statement by Robert Magube, Sithole's former second-in-command, announced that the old leaders such as Muzorewa and Sithole had lost the confidence of the guerillas and had been removed from the positions of power for not giving enough support to the armed struggle.

With Nkomo under such pressure from the left, the chances of a negotiated settlement are very slight indeed. An enormous gulf still exists between the two sides, even leaving out any involvement of the ZANU section. Neither Smith nor Nkomo has much room for manoeuvre. At the time of the Victoria Falls talks, many members of the ruling Rhodesia Front party viewed any dialogue with African leaders as being a 'sell-out'. While the talks were actually in progress, a Rhodesian Cabinet minister called for a new offensive against the guerillas and branded the policy of detente as "a complete and abject failure".

A growing number of white Rhodesians are turning to parties of the far right, such as the recently formed Southern African Solidarity Congress of Rhodesia, who denounced the talks as "an open invitation to terrorism and treason".



Arrest of anti-UDI protester. Thousands more are jailed or live in rural encampments to keep them from aiding the guerillas

It is this increasingly right-wing opinion that Smith has to mollify.

Nkomo's latest constitutional plan envisages three rolls of electors — a top roll mainly for whites, and two rolls beneath that, which theoretically would produce a 60% black majority in Parliament. However, since the blacks represent more than 90% of the population of Zimbabwe, this would effectively disenfranchise a large proportion of the black population. And yet even this huge concession is

not enough for Smith, who does not want to see majority rule before the end of the century.

Across such a divide, it will be difficult to build a bridge. Wilson, that master architect of the shoddy compromise, could not even get the two sides together. The stage is all set for the final struggle against the Rhodesian settlers: a struggle in which we must support those who are fighting to regain the land stolen from them over a century ago.



THE POLICE already had the evidence. They had lined up the guilty party. All they needed was a body. When a white tourist, John Jirasek, died that was all they needed. They could pin a 'murder' on a young black revolutionary, Desmond Trotter.

Trotter had earned the hatred of the authorities of Dominica by his leadership of an unemployed protest movement. This had swept the small Caribbean island during the early 1970s, and driven the government to using harsh repressive measures against it. By striking at its leader they hoped to discredit and disrupt the movement.

All they needed was the opportunity to frame him. Jirasek's death was probably due to a heart attack — but that was no obstacle. A gun could easily be planted, a bullet appear from nowhere.

The one thing that couldn't be fixed was a bullet wound. One

certainly wasn't found at the hospital where Jirasek was taken.

The police could even produce a witness, a 16 year old Antiguan barmaid, Carmilla Francis. She swore that Trotter, a total stranger, had approached her boasting of killing Jirasek. She later retracted her statement in front of an Antiguan barrister. But the jury of bosses, landowners, and policemen did its job. They found Trotter guilty and he was sentenced to hang.

The Appeal Court confirmed his sentence. Since his conviction an international campaign has grown up in his support. In the Caribbean and the immigrant communities of Britain, Canada, and the USA, the Free Desmond Trotter Campaign has organised thousands of letters of protest, numerous public meetings, and demonstrations. In Dominica itself thousands have defied the police to demonstrate against the sentence.

British Government can free Desmond Trotter

In the next few weeks his final appeal will be heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council at Downing Street. They are involved in this issue because Dominica is an Associate State of Britain. This gives Britain responsibility over matters of defence and external affairs. Despite the massive support that Trotter has received, the Dominican authorities are determined to go ahead with his execution if his appeal is again refused. A Dominican Minister on a recent visit to Britain commented:

"If the law says Desmond Trotter is guilty he will be most definitely hung. That is the law of the land. It is as

simple or as difficult as that, whichever way you look at it".

Trotter can expect no mercy from those who took so much trouble to frame him. Any chance he may have now rests with the Privy Council and the British Government. So far the government has refused to interfere. Last Wednesday Labour MP Sid Bidwell led a deputation to the Foreign Office. They were told that the government could not intervene.

Bidwell made his disgust plain. He said that "the Government needs only to lift a little finger to stop it". But the

only thing that will make that finger twitch is a very strong shock.

The government can act to stop it. Mere legal formalities have not stopped governments in the past from setting people free. If it had been a rich planter who was framed they wouldn't have been so reluctant to act. Or if they were really forced to... remember the Official Solicitor who was produced by Ted Heath to free the Pentonville Five!

There is still time to save Trotter. But time is running out. **Act now. Send letters and resolutions to: Ted Rowland, House of COMMONS London SW1.**

Portugal

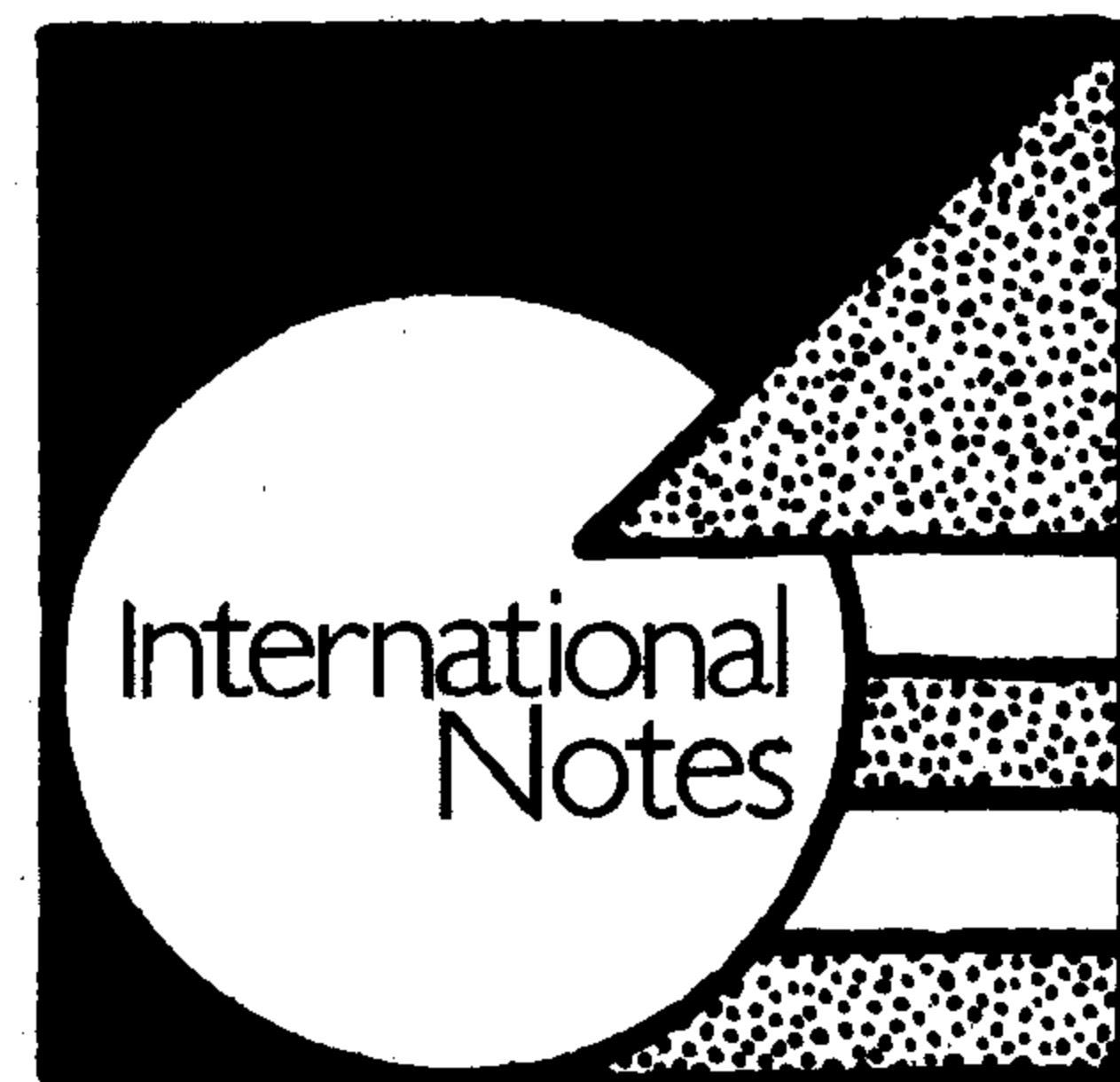
HUGE RALLY DEMANDS RELEASE OF LEFT PRISONERS

Not all has been lost in Portugal since 25th November.

On 20th February there was a huge rally and demonstration called by CLARP (Committee for the Liberation of Anti-fascist and Revolutionary Prisoners). Numbers were conservatively estimated at 50,000.

The main slogan was "Release Otelos and all the anti-fascist prisoners". Former Copcon chief Otelos Saraiva de Carvalho says he will refuse to leave prison until all the other prisoners taken after 25th November are also released.

The CLARP is a united front of four revolutionary groups — UDP,



Labour and the TUC - the bad old days again

Editorial

THE RESPONSES of both the trade union leaders and the 'left' Labour MPs to Healey's announcement of £3,000 million of cuts in public spending shows clearly that the seven years of TUC-'left' Labour alliance is over, for now, at least. We are back to the decades before 1969, to the times when the trade union vote could be relied on to shore up the centre and right wing of the Labour Party.

After discussing what Judith Hart MP rightly called "the greatest kick in the teeth for the Welfare State since the war", the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee of Monday 23rd announced through Jack Jones, "we are still united" ... the "we", of course, being the TUC General Council and the Labour Government.

The meeting, instead of hearing the fire and fury the public sector union leaders had been pouring into journalists' ears all week, only heard one heated speech. And that was from Chancellor Denis Healey, who accused the Labour 'lefts' of being "out of their tiny Chinese minds".

The insult was calculated. The timing was well thought-out. If the "left" MPs were to be shown that their affair with the TUC leadership was over, this was the time and place to do it. An insult unanswered and undefended before this audience would serve to say, "Belt up! You've lost your base".

Seven years of headlines about "Marxist dominated unions" now looks like a mere Fleet Street fantasy; articles complaining about "reds" on the General Council, Trotskyist domination of the Labour Party NEC and the "revolutionaries" of the Tribune group don't just sound hysterical, but positively hallucinatory.

Necessary step

In the seven years between Labour's debacle over "In Place of Strife" and the outcome of the Common Market referendum, the Labour "lefts" appeared as the parliamentary representatives of the trade union interest within the Labour Party. In fact, the installation in the first Wilson government of Foot, Benn, Heffer, Orme, Hart and others seemed the necessary price the then Labour Government had to pay to ensure the loyalty of the trade union movement once the election campaign was over.

Four factors then cemented that loyalty. As each made itself felt the usefulness to Wilson of the Labour "lefts" decreased. In a recent speech on the Healey cuts; Ray Buckton of ASLEF, the train drivers' union, summed up the feeling of a quite broad layer of Labour Party loyalists. "Over the last three years the Labour Party has been adopting real socialist policies. But now we seem to be in the hands of the City and Zurich".

Thus the first factor was the feeling among many Labour Party activists and certainly the trade union leaders that "the manifesto was being implemented" — there was the repeal of the Tory phases, the repeal of their anti-union laws, the gleam of an interventionist plan in Benn's description of the future National Enterprise Board.

The second factor was Labour's willingness for a short period to "let it rip" on the wages front before it brought in its version of the Tory ice-age, the £6 limit.

Thirdly there was the covert development with the trade union leaders of a set of bargaining points on national political issues, which bore the seal of "the social contract".

And lastly there was Wilson's adroit handling of Jack Jones: playing on his sentiments (on Spain, on pensions, on trade union law, on dock work regulation), Wilson, with Foot's help, converted Jones from a "left" in TUC terms to the most aggressive exponent of the government's increasingly right-wing line.

By the time the Common Market referendum arrived, Wilson had completely outflanked the 'lefts'. It was only the alignment of the majority of the unions with the 'lefts' over this issue which masked the fact that the 'left' had by now really lost the base of support it needed to become a force in Labour Party terms. That Special Common Market Conference of the Labour Party which marked the high tide of the Labour "left's" influence — backed up as they were with the trade union block vote that they had spent half a century decrying — was followed by the fastest ebb in influence imaginable.

The referendum over, the "left's" growing isolation became starkly visible. When in its wake Wilson decided to throw the City dogs the bone they had been barking for and demote Benn, the disconsolate "lefts" were made to feel the completeness of their rout.

The lack of response by the TUC to Benn's demotion

was yet further evidence that now the fracture between the TUC and the Labour leadership had been healed, the splint the "lefts" provided could be thrown away.

When Jack Jones stormed to the front of a "Tribune" meeting being addressed by Ian Mikardo during the last Labour Party Conference, the long, dreary drama of the "Left" MPs' growing isolation was provided with an inappropriately furious finale.

Each of last week's meetings revealed the same situation of the reassertion (as in the days of Deakin and Bevin, the instrument was the TGWU) of the domination of the centre and right wing within the TUC and the consequent isolation of the "lefts" within the Labour MPs.

Cornerstone

On Monday 23rd, the TUC Labour Party liaison committee meeting saw no fury over the cuts, only "anxiety" at the cut in food subsidies, transport and education, including school meals. Any suggestion that this "anxiety" should give rise to direct action was squashed in advance by repeated references to the importance of the "social contract" as the "cornerstone" of the TUC-Labour Party alliance.

On the same day the "Tribune" group had its own meeting to decide on its response to the cuts. Its only decision was to put off any discussion until after Wednesday's meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and the Party's National Executive Committee.

The TUC General Council also met on Wednesday. It had been preceded by plenty of statements of opposition to the cuts from union leaders in the public sector. "We are totally opposed to the cuts", declared Alan Fisher, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE). "Irreparable damage has been done", claimed Sid Weighell of the railwaymen, while his white-collar



Jack Jones (centre) jostled by hostile members

counterpart, Tom Jenkins of the TSSA, predicted that "disaster will overtake us unless there's a change of mind within the next two years".

Fred Jarvis of the teachers' union, NUT, went even further. "The cuts are catastrophic ... How can the Government expect the co-operation of the unions in the battle against inflation when it deliberately worsens the provision of education and the social services?"

The simple answer to that question was provided by the stance of the two biggest public sector unions, the T&GWU and the GMWU: Jones and Basnett were backing

the Government to the hilt. The furthest they would go was to talk about the need for "assurances that the Government is going to fulfill its side of the 'social contract'" and the need to negotiate the scope of some of the Chancellor's cuts.

Wednesday's General Council meeting decided not to oppose the cuts. The meeting was dominated by Jack Jones, who reworked his favourite themes: "the only alternative to Labour is a Conservative Government led by Mrs Thatcher and bringing with it an unemployment level of two million". (This line of argument can be summed up as 'the worse their policies get, the worse our policies get'). The 'damaging effect' of public dissent when the Coventry by-election was just around the corner was referred to along with the traditional cautions about "rocking the boat". Finally, Jones warned his fellow General Council members that "supporters of a Labour Government who opposed it were the real enemies of the working class".

The whole circus of demagoguery, the mindless logic of cliché-ridden rhetoric which refuses to deal with the matter at hand, and the meaningless gestures of dissatisfaction — "we will be raising several points about the White Paper with the Chancellor" — combined to create a spineless unanimity: no vote was taken and the Government won without even sniffing battle.

The same day's PLP meeting saw Healey mauling the "left" MPs again, while the National Executive Committee meeting proved a veritable showpiece of the new relationship of forces. The Prime Minister merely remarked that his attitude had been perfectly expressed by Bryan Stanley of the Post Office Engineering Union (the very man who had presented the case of the trade union - "left" MPs block of the Common Market less than a year ago). Stanley had argued against Joan Maynard's motion calling for a special conference to debate unemployment and the handling of the economy.

That motion was defeated 16 votes to 12, with "left" winger Alex Kitson voting with the right wing, no doubt on Jones' orders.

By the time "Tribune" had its meeting on the Thursday its new chairman, Arthur Latham, had gone through Lot's experience in Sodom and failed to find the "one good man" who could resign from the Government. Thus his statement: "There is no question of asking any minister to resign over the projected cuts. This is a matter for individuals". The only individual who obliged, much to Latham-Lot's chagrin, was Joan Lestor, who is not a member of the 'Tribune' group.

Knuckling under

The Labour left's feeling of isolation was vividly expressed by the following day's 'Tribune' editorial entitled: "The cuts: How the Labour Movement must fight". Taking a question-and-answer form, it culminated in the despairing tones of:

"...A. Next year must be spent in changing the Government's policies.

"Q. But the Left was not able to do that before, why should it be able to do it in the next year or so?

"A. Nothing is certain in politics."

The editorial then concludes, rightly, that it's up to the trade union movement; there's nothing the Labour "left" can do independently of it.

The irrelevance of slogans like "Make the left MPs fight" is thus best expressed by the organ of the "left" MPs itself. Tribune's own words preach: "No reliance on the 'left' MPs, they can't deliver the goods".

This should serve as yet another indication of how wrong it is of some "Left"-Labourites, and some, like the IMG and the WSL, who see the crucial political division as resting between the right and left wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party. An analysis summed up in the idea of "Kick out the right wing".

However, the basic and over-riding lesson we can draw from this whole development, symbolised as it is by the respective champions of the trade union and Labour Party "left", Jones and Foot, is not simply the bankruptcy of the political wing of reformism, but the bankruptcy of reformism as a whole.

The left's rout at Wilson's hands derives above all from the fact that the reformist "left" have no alternative to the present system, and the present system has no alternative role for them besides knuckling under. In the final analysis the working class has no alternative but to fight: the fate of the "lefts" is clearest proof that their way of fighting will not work.

MES, PRP, and PCPR. The demonstration was joined by a number of rank and file CP militants after they had forced the CP leadership to call off a rival demonstration on similar slogans planned for the same day.

Some of the revolutionary groups — UDP and PRP, certainly — have grown quite substantially since 25th November.

Committees of struggle on a united front basis are being set up in factories all over the country, including the north. Their main activity is organising against the return of the old bosses which the government is supporting. This fight has been

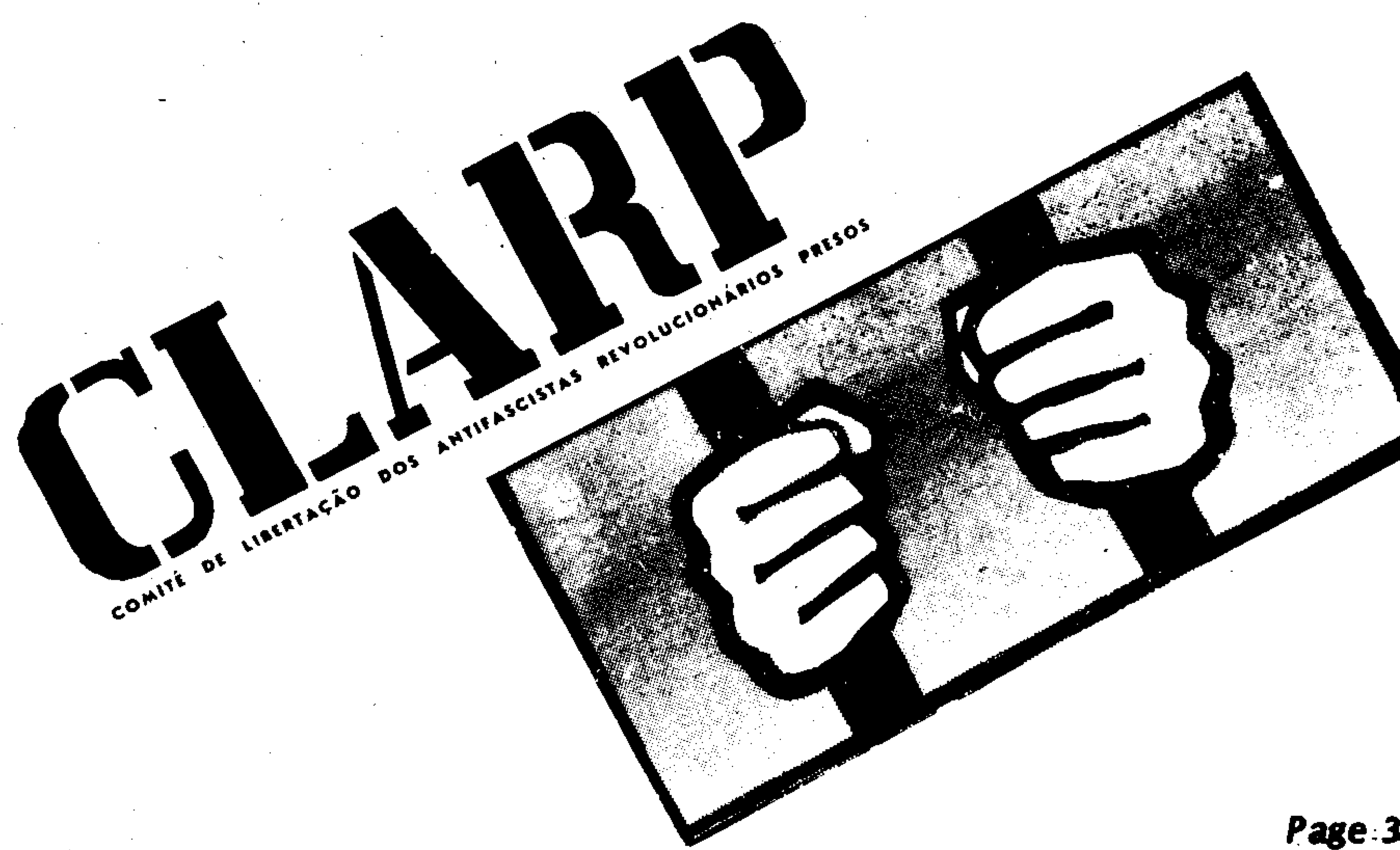
successful in the case of J Pimenta, the huge building firm, where the workers' committee was allegedly involved in the 25th November uprising. The government tried to force the return of the original boss but the workers held a mass meeting and refused to allow him to return.

But there has been a definite defeat in the struggle around the formerly worker-controlled paper 'Republica'.

A mass meeting of workers at the beginning of January voted to ask Raul Rego, the former director, to return. The paper has not been

produced since the director resigned not long after 25th November, and the workers' committee decided not to continue publishing, as it would be illegal. The decision at the mass meeting was the work of a small Maoist group, FEC(ml), and was won with a majority of about 12.

Rego refused to return or have any talks with the workers, and it is unlikely that the paper will ever reappear, even as a Socialist Party paper. Now that they have gained what they wanted from their shrieks of horror about the 'undemocratic' takeover of "Republica" by the workers, the Socialist Party are not at all interested in getting the paper back.



ON MAY DAY, 1913, the biggest woman's march that had ever taken place made its way through the streets of the East End demanding 'Votes for Women'.

Why the East End? This march was not organised by the main suffragette movement, the Women's Suffrage and Political Union, whose normal haunts were Kensington and Westminster. It was organised by a breakaway, the East London Federation, led by Sylvia Pankhurst.

Sylvia Pankhurst stood out from the other leaders of the suffragette movement because she was a socialist. She believed that the movement had to go to women in their own situations, as housewives and working women, and that it should broaden out to include a general political over-view of women's position and take up the day to day problems they faced. The suffragette movement as it stood would, she foresaw, become increasingly isolated from the mass of women, a privileged pressure group whose ideas about society in general were not progressive at all, being no different in essentials from those of the ruling class.

The East London Federation was supported by trade unions in the area and socialist societies. In the next six months after the massive 1913 May Day march it began to build a solid base among women in the East End. Money and labour for the setting up of a regional headquarters came from local Union branches and was collected at open air meetings. Women in the neighbourhood helped to establish it and make its presence known.

Then in March 1914 came the first edition of the ELF's newspaper, *The Women's Dreadnought*. It had an initial print order of 20,000, but this optimistic start was scaled down to 10,000 by August. The first issue defined the ELF as "a militant non-Party organisation of working women" and Sylvia Pankhurst wrote "The paper should be a medium through which working women, however unlettered, might express themselves and find their interests defended."

"We want, as far as possible, for the paper to be written from life: no dry arguments, but a vivid presentation of things as they are, arguing from the particular, with all its human features, to the general socialist principle."

This remained the guiding line of

Sylvia Pankhurst: The suffragette who went to the East End

BY JULIET ASH

the paper for at least its first four years. It was to express the voice of local women in the East End, report on issues concerning women at work and at home, reflect the activities of the organisation — and give a socialist analysis of political events of the time: the Irish question, the War, the Russian Revolution.

The ELF's split from the mainstream suffragette movement became crucial when the War started in August 1914. The main movement, the WSPU, dropped its 'Votes for women' banner, and proceeded to join in the patriotic propaganda campaign to entice the working class into the army to die in the trenches of Flanders.

Slogan

The *Women's Dreadnought*, however, along with a tiny minority of socialists, spoke out against the war. Sylvia Pankhurst wrote that "All sorts of reasons sounding glorious and patriotic are put forward in support of the declaration of war; but it is certain that every war of modern times has been fought on merely materialistic grounds of forwarding the schemes and practising the interests of financiers."

The paper took up the slogan that

had been adopted by the socialist paper *The Herald* and which had been rejected by the Labour Party: **Peace without Victory.**

Back in the East End, another war was being fought, one which the *Women's Dreadnought* thought was worth fighting: the war to improve the lives and conditions of working women. The imperialist war had brought sudden and exorbitant rises in prices and rents. And many employers were using the war as an excuse to screw more work for less wages.

Women were being recruited in their thousands into jobs previously done by men. It meant that the issue of equal pay for equal work was posed more clearly than ever before. It became one of the central campaigning issues of the ELF.

In its issue of May 5th 1917, for instance, the *Women's Dreadnought* reported that in a Pimlico Royal Army Engineering works, where all the men had previously received a weekly bonus of 5s. and boys had received a 2/6 bonus, the new workforce of women were to get no

bonus at all. 800 women in the factory worked a 45-hour week for £1. There was no overtime pay either.

The women had struck for the 5s. bonus and won it. *Women's Dreadnought* greeted this victory — and went on to agitate for the women to continue the strike for not only the same bonus that the men had been paid, but also the same basic wage.

On prices, the ELF organised women in the boycotting of shops whose prices were higher than the normal rate. Women went round shops 'fixing' prices at the lowest rates on essential food items.

Furious

In the first two years of the War, the influence of the ELF spread far beyond its base in East London. By 1918 it had small groupings in all the major towns of England. The war, and the consequent massive recruitment of women into industry and the trade unions, gave its work a massive impetus.

One of the paper's campaigns at that time, which no doubt horrified the genteel ladies of the main suffragette movement, was on the question of prostitution. The Government had introduced its Sexual Crimes Bill which took the view that prostitutes were the main cause of ill-health in the ranks of the army and navy, and that they should be severely punished. Whereas men got off with a maximum 6 months for rape, prostitutes faced a possible sentence of two years' hard labour for "communicating the disease".

Despite a certain amount of opportunism on the part of the ELF in its calls for action from on high there was a genuine attempt to involve local women in politics and political activity. There were the issues which women could take direct action to change, and there was also a generalised programme of demands on the Government.

What the paper avoided above all was any sense of patronising to the 'uneducated'. Much of the paper took the form of dialogues between women expressing their feelings about the lengthening of the potato queues, or showing male employers weakly defending themselves against angry women workers; other such dialogues would depict rent and tax collectors confronted by furious women householders.

To back up the paper the ELF set up a number of alternative activities. There were two cost-price restaurants, many second hand clothes stalls, and a non-profit making toy factory under workers' control with a creche. The women workers, of course, got equal pay.

Soviets

From 1918, the effect of the international situation, and especially the Russian Revolution, was to change the whole nature of the *Women's Dreadnought* and the ELF.

Increasingly the local image, and the emphasis on women's struggles, was dropped. The paper changed its name to *The Workers Dreadnought* and the organisation became the 'Workers Suffrage Federation. It became more explicitly socialist, and men began to play a bigger role in it.

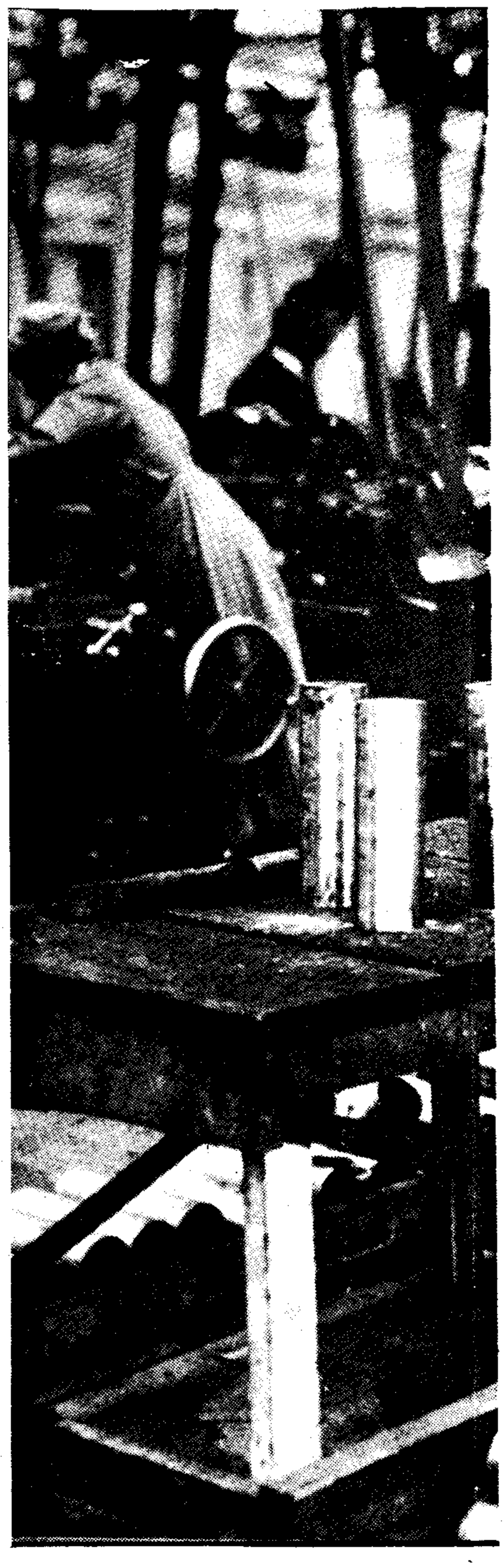
From 1918 Sylvia Pankhurst herself became involved in the various

conferences and in the debate between Clara Zetkin in Germany and Alexandra Kollontai in Russia as to the best ways that women could be drawn into revolutionary socialist politics.

In 1920 she became increasingly involved in the debate in the Bolshevik leadership in Russia, and specifically she was drawn to the politics of the 'Workers Opposition' among whom Kollontai was prominent. This grouping saw the Trade Unions, rather than the revolutionary party, as the instrument for the creation of a communist society.

But despite their emphasis on the 'self-activity' of the working class, the articles that Sylvia Pankhurst was now writing in the *Workers Dreadnought* became more and more divorced from the experience of the women to whom the paper had originally appealed. She was trying to translate Russian politics of the time directly into the English setting, in ways which were meaningless to the majority of English women.

For example, in March 1920 an article called: "The Soviets of the Street — an Appeal to Working Women", called for the forming of streets soviets to control price rises and rents. But, as against all her previous philosophy and method, this call was coming from above, not from the 'self-activity' of the working class that she supposedly considered crucial. And it met with little response from English working women.



Workers Dreadnought

Tells How to Get THE SOVIETS in BRITAIN.

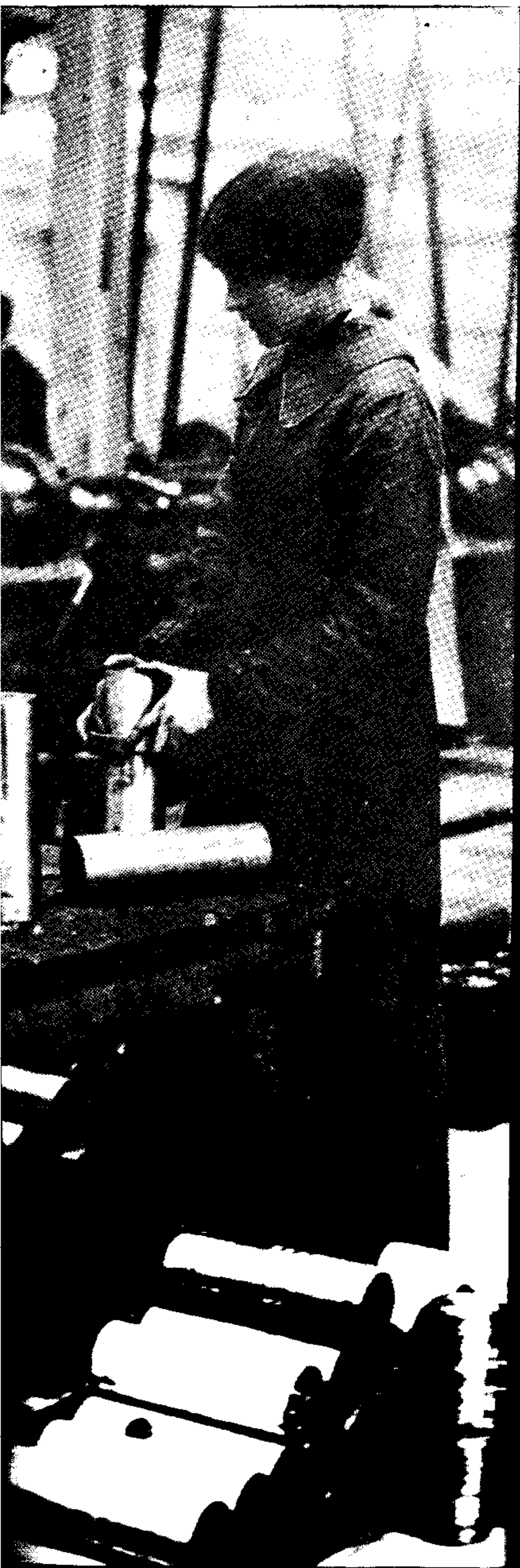
Plenty for all when we Abolish the Capitalists. Equality for the Workers. Do Away with Idlers.

In 1920, negotiations for the forming of a British Communist Party started, and the Workers Suffrage Federation joined in the talks. But when the Communist Party was born from the merger of various socialist groupings, Sylvia Pankhurst was told that the Workers Dreadnought would have to come under Party control, and when she ignored the decision was expelled in 1921. The paper, already since 1918 uprooted from its base and cut off from the working women who had been its main support, ceased to exist when it was merged that year with *The Communist*.

Mistake

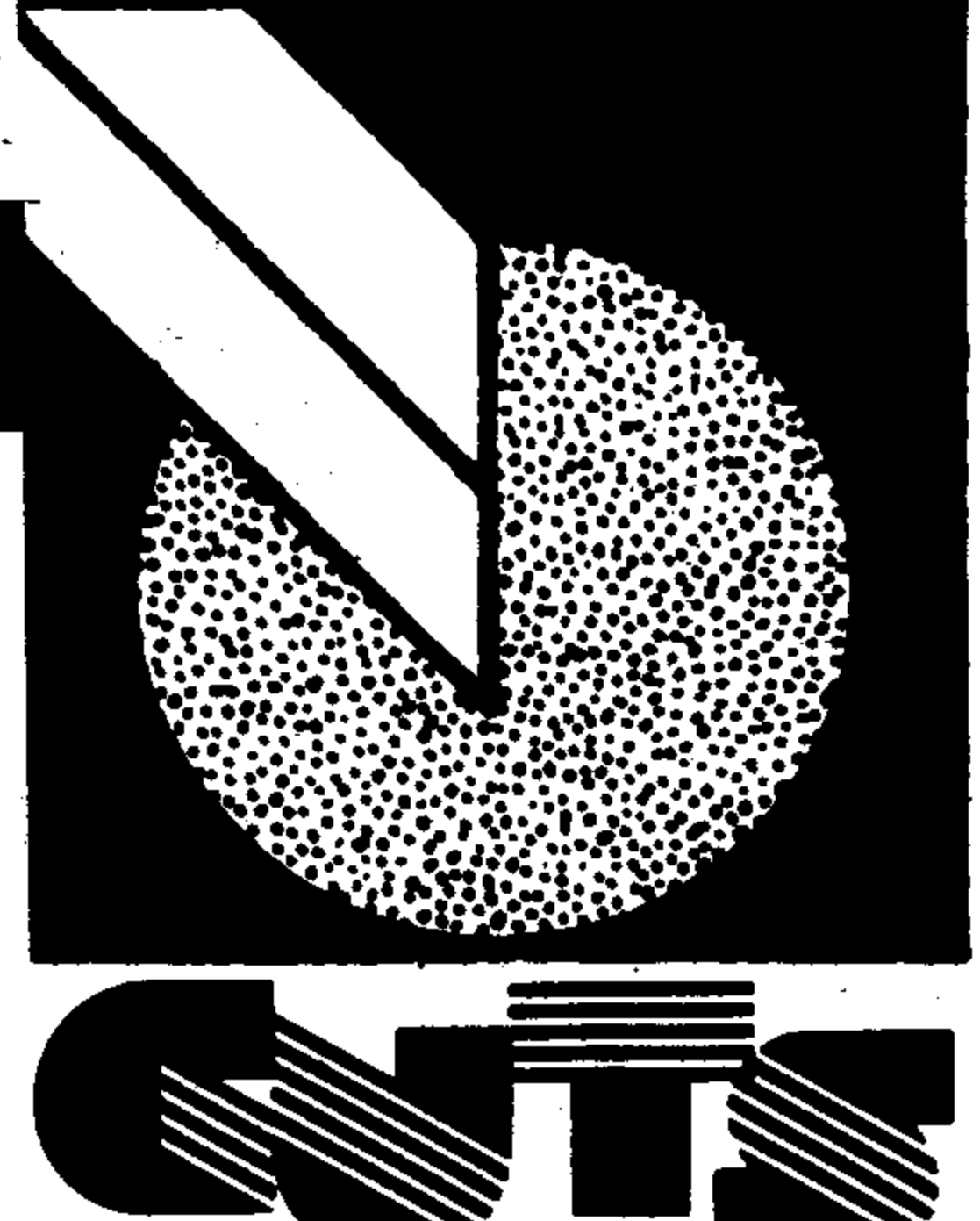
The war and the world slump that followed it released a new urgency for capitalism, and for the international socialist forces fighting against it. The women's question was to lie dormant as a major issue for British socialists until the re-emergence of the Women's Movement in the '60s.

In Britain, the ELF was important as the first movement to forward a specific movement for women in the context of a socialist perspective, and attempt also to put it into practice. Its mistake was not that it embraced communist politics — but that in doing so it relegated the women's struggle rather than integrating it with those politics.



WOMEN AND THE CUTS CONFERENCE

THE CUTS-MAKING IT A FAMILY AFFAIR



THE SOCIAL expenditure cuts are severely affecting all working people — but they are hitting women with double force. The 'Women and the Cuts' conference on February 28th, attended by over 200 delegates from the London area, was therefore especially timely.

Papers presented to the conference documented the effects of the cuts, at least prior to the latest Healey announcements.

120 hospitals are to be closed in London alone, according to a paper on health presented by Gwen Tufnell, Ruth Stern, and Berry Beaumont. Even though the health service union COHSE has estimated that the NHS has a shortage of 70,000 nurses, training places are being cut. 272

nurses are to be made redundant in the next year in Galmorgan.

There will be an increased workload for those who keep their jobs in the health service. "Ward clerks at Charing Cross now have to deal with two wards instead of just one. The cleaning staff at University College Hospital nurses' home have been cut from 25 to 11 — but the nurses' home hasn't got any smaller". As the cuts take effect, patients will be admitted to hospital more reluctantly and for shorter periods; those who do manage to get into hospital will therefore generally be more ill and will need more care — meaning a greater strain for the reduced staff.

And not only will the women working in the NHS — where they

make up 70% of the workforce — be affected; patients who are no longer able to get treatment in hospital will have to be looked after at home, and generally by women.

The cuts also restrict women's access to contraception and abortion. A paper from the Camden group of the National Abortion Campaign mentioned the projected closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital, which at present provides abortion facilities for women from all over the country, and the shelving of plans for out-patient abortion clinics at Charing Cross and in Sheffield.

The paper also pointed out that these particular cutbacks are not a simple matter of 'economy' — "it is four or five times more expensive to

provide facilities for birth and 'after care', but it is easier for the Government to adapt to the growing right-wing tide of opinion against abortion. As a result women needing abortions will be increasingly exploited by private clinics.

'Out first'

Not only in health, but in other areas employing large numbers of women, the cuts will lead to loss of jobs. Since 1974 women's unemployment has gone up by 106%, as against 50% for men. A paper from the Society of Civil Servants estimated that civil service cuts could increase female unemployment by between 9 and 18% by 1978-9, and a National Union of Teachers delegate, Judy Watson, spoke about the effect of cuts in education, where women make up a large proportion of the teaching staff.

Irene Bruegel reported on a survey by Camden Working Women's Charter group on women officially registered as unemployed. In most situations of redundancies, women had been 'out first', and the unions were giving no back-up support.

At the same time as women are being thrown out of work, and the burden of social provision is being thrown back on the 'community', the level of publicly-provided community care is being cut drastically.

In several areas home helps are being cut. Provision for the mentally ill and retarded in day centres is being cut by 50% in 1975-6. The London borough of Hackney has 17 health visitors instead of their minimum necessary establishment of 55. Facilities for the old are also being reduced — and that, again, is a double blow at women, since two-thirds of old age pensioners are women, and, moreover, women are forced to care for the old in the home.

A paper drawn up by women involved in nursery campaigns round the Working Women's Charter showed that nationally there are nursery places for only five out of every thousand under-5s. In 1949 there were 903 borough nurseries; in 1970, 453.

The paper gave some examples of the way the cuts are affecting nursery provision. In Lambeth the new nursery planned for 1976-7 has been scrapped and all other planned new nurseries postponed indefinitely. Two existing nurseries have been replaced with a net loss of 13 places. In Haringey, planned day nurseries and children's centres have been scrapped and the nursery nurses course at Tottenham Tech abolished.

Links

Councils are encouraging playgroups, and child-minding by women who do not go out to work. But — "these two forms of provision are in fact veiled cuts". The playgroups with their two-and-a-half hour sessions are no help to women who go out to work, and depend on unpaid parent labour.

The nursery campaigns paper also reported on the fight-back being organised by local Working Women's Charter groups. The fullest report came from Islington, where the nursery campaign, having organised a lobby of the council Social Services Committee, and in alliance with the nursery staff, managed to prevent one scheduled nursery closure. They have also established links with the Islington Cuts Campaign, with building workers on the site where a planned nursery — now to be shelved — was due to be built, and with the nurseryworkers' union NALGO.

A paper from "Women in NALGO" reported that NALGO members were fighting back against the cuts by refusing to cover for unfilled vacancies (though unfortunately an amendment from the International-Communist League to write into the Conference Resolution the 'no covering' policy, and opposition to women being put first on redundancy lists, was later rejected). "Women in NALGO" also reported that social workers in Tower Hamlets had defied their local authority by squatting families in their own offices.



PUT YOUR WORDS INTO ACTION

A speaker from Wandsworth Working Women's Charter group brought out some of the central points for the fight-back. A woman's right to work is central, but most trade unions assume that 'if it comes to it', women should lose their jobs before men. The union leaders, the Labour MPs who vote for cuts in social spending, and the councillors that implement them, should all be made answerable to the rank and file.

Tessa van Gelderen, a NATFHE (ATTI) delegate, argued that in the present situation the ten demands of the Working Women's Charter are very far from being superseded by reforms like the Equal Pay Act. Formal 'equal opportunity' has little meaning when women are being forced back into the home by redundancies and by the cuts in social services which mean that they have to look after the young, the old, and the sick.

Organise

The cuts are in fact a massive blow against equality for women. The root of women's unequal position is the burdens placed on them by the family. Inside the family, women are economically, socially, and legally dependent on men; they are isolated one from another; day after day after day they are confined to the drudgery of housework.

Crucial to the liberation of women is the opportunity for women to break out of the limits of the home and the family; to go out to work; to organise collectively; and to impose on the state the responsibility of social provision for children, the elderly, and the ill.

All along the line the cuts work against that opportunity. In this situation more than ever, the sort of ideas that say that working at home is much the same for women as going out to work — expressed at the Conference by the 'Big Flame' group — are positively reactionary.

Michelle Ryan, secretary of the Conference organising committee, in her speech opening the Conference, had underlined the main thrust of the discussion on the fight back in the afternoon session. Women must organise in trade unions and in cuts committees to assert the need to defend women's jobs as well as men's. The Labour Government must be mobilised to fight for demands like more nursery places as well as against

The Conference Resolution set up a sub-committee of the London Working Women's Charter to monitor the campaigns against the cuts and to work to ensure full representation of women's demands in all those campaigns. This sub-committee will also organise another conference on 'Women and the Cuts', this time on a national scale.

The Conference also voted to support the demonstration called for April 25th by the National Coordinating Committee AGAINST THE CUTS IN THE NHS. The Resolution included a comprehensive range of policies against the cuts: "cut hours, not jobs"; an immediate injection of funds into the social services; free 24-hour state nurseries; contraception and abortion to be free on demand on the NHS; workers' enquiries into the financing and organisation of the social services.

In the Planning Committee's draft of the Resolution, these policies were put forward in a perspective centred on pushing the labour and trade union bureaucracy to "honour its opposition" to the cuts. The vitally necessary question of rank and file self-reliance was brought out by an amendment from the International-Communist League, narrowly passed by Conference after it had been proposed by Marian Mound from Ealing women's group:

Example

"We will fight to reverse the policy of the leadership of the labour movement, which is either carrying out the cuts (the Labour Government) or going along with them, with empty verbal protests (most Labour MPs, Labour councils, and trade union leaders). We call on every trade union leader or Labour MP who speaks against the cuts to put their words into action, by voting against the government and by mobilising working class action against the cuts.

"We will fight through the trade unions and the Labour Party to make Labour councils follow the example of Clay Cross. They should refuse to implement the cuts; on the contrary, they should deliberately over-pay and over-employ. They should refuse to make the interest payments which are such a large part of council spending and they should campaign on the labour movement to force the Labour Government to remove its interest

burden by nationalising the banks and financial institutions.

"We believe that we cannot rely on the established leaders of the labour movement to fight against the cuts, especially as they affect women. We will therefore work to build local rank and file campaigns against the cuts and unemployment, based on Trades Councils, shop stewards' committees, Trade Union branches, and Labour Parties.

"Working Women's Charter groups should be fully represented in all such campaigns. Crucial to ensuring that the specific effect of the cuts on women is effectively fought is the building of the Working Women's Charter campaign as a structured, fighting, working-class-based movement. This conference therefore calls for maximum support to the WWC National Conference in April, and for that conference to take steps towards transforming the WWC campaign into such a movement".





Rotten apples in a rotten barrel

by Terry Field

They should have gotten by for maybe \$100,000. There was no need to pay anyone a million bucks. It reflects their lack of expertise.

Californian aerospace executive

Fruit drop in New York

ELI BLACK, Chairman of the giant United Brands Fruit Company, leapt to his death from a window of the 4th floor of New York's Pan-Am building last April. He took this way out rather than face inquiries after the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had disclosed that United Brands had authorised the paying of a million dollars in bribes to officials of the Honduran government, including the now-deposed President Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, to get them to lower taxes on the exportation of bananas.

Others have been more brazen. There were no suicides at the Exxon oil company or at Mobil when they gave evidence that they were both contributing to political "slush funds" in Italy amounting to about \$54 million. Mobil vice-president Everett Checket coolly explained: "Mobil and other oil companies contributed money through a trade association which allotted their dues according to how much oil they sold to the Italian state electricity corporation."

In Iran, a recent 'commission' set up by the Government to look into an alleged international corruption consortium registered its "failure" to find anything wrong.

But a consortium certainly did exist. Evidence before the US Senate committee under Church shows that it comprised the arms and aircraft dealer Northrop (US), the electronics companies General Telephone and Electronics (Italy), Siemens AG (West Germany) and Nippon Electric of Japan. Jointly they operated a whole scheme of bribery and corruption to further contracts in the electronics and arms fields.

And in Libya Northrop used its subsidiary, Page, to operate a joint fiddle with Occidental Petroleum.

Northrop also appear to be implicated in a whole number of dirty deals in Saudi Arabia, where nearly half a million dollars were doled out to prime two Saudi Arabian generals. Actually the money never reached them, being pocketed by one Adnan Khashoggi — a middleman who has made \$106 million in "commissions" from Northrop sales alone.



Adnan Khashoggi: the \$106 million middleman

THE LOCKHEED aircraft company has now admitted to using bribery to "oil the wheels of commerce" and to "influence political decisions in their favour" in more than 30 different countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Documents before a Senate sub-committee investigating the actions of multi-national corporations show that Lockheed paid "commission" of \$9m on a \$117m sale to South Africa; that it backed up a \$45m deal in Nigeria with a \$3.6m kick-back; that the path of a \$20m deal in Spain was greased with \$1.3m worth of generosity; and that a Greek general got a six-figure handshake for putting a spare-parts deal into Lockheed's lap.

In Holland, in Italy and in Japan, statements by Lockheed's ex-chairman A.C. Kotchian about the Company's deals in those countries have produced major political scandals.

Ample

According to Kotchian, the aircraft firm paid Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (the Queen's husband) a million dollars to "show favour towards their product". Bernhard has of course denied this, but as the US Senate sub-committee beavers away, a Dutch Cabinet minister was reported to have said "If we cannot clear the Prince, the Queen might have to abdicate; and if we don't handle this carefully, the government will fall."

In Italy (where governments fall rather more often) a prospective member of the new Moro cabinet — former Defence Minister Luigi Gui — has had to stand down to "give himself time to clear his name". The Senate sub-committee made public that it had "ample evidence" that Lockheed paid out \$2m in bribes to land a \$60m aircraft deal with Italy (on the basis of a \$120,000 kick-back for every airplane sold) and Lockheeds say that Gui was the man they paid the money to.

And in Japan, the coming elections may have to be delayed because of disclosures of Lockheed's activities there. Japanese politicians and high ranking officials have been bribed to the tune of \$2.8m; and on top of that, Kotchian also said he paid more than \$7m since 1958 to Yoshio Kodama, a right wing militarist and politician.

Glaring

All this is part of the fall-out from the post-Watergate explosion of US "clean-up" campaigns. Senate sub-committees on CIA activity and on multinational corporations (both under the chairmanship of Frank Church) were set up in the wake of revelations about ITT's activities in Chile and in the USA itself.

These investigations, together with those into the whole background to the Watergate affair, soon uncovered the extent of the so-called "slush-funds" — funds gathered by companies and campaigns for illegal purposes outside of any financial accountability.

The Lockheed disclosures are only the latest and most glaring. In fact they are part of a whole sub-system of marketing at high level.

What is American capitalism going to do about all this?

The investigations form part of an 'aftermath' of the USA's own colossal political scandal: Vice President Agnew indicted for taking bribes. Attorney General Mitchell and President Nixon kicked out for a whole range of illicit and illegal political and financial practices. With Mr. Clean now in the White House, no immediate political crisis faces the US ruling class over these disclosures.

But it is faced with a problem of how to relate to the widespread use of bribery by some of its biggest concerns.

At present, the practices revealed are only improper or illegal in that

they have involved the evasion of tax: in the view of the IRS, the American tax authority, bribes to foreign politicians don't quite qualify as valid "expenses"! And the 'slush funds' are outside of all accountability.

The practices may not be illegal in themselves; but there isn't a formal framework for them either.

Will we be seeing soon such a thing as a "justifiable corruption jury" alongside the "anti-trust commissions" and "special committees"? The Banque de France operates just such a monitoring system for the French government. But, given many of the ideas that American capitalism is supposed to hold sacred, it's difficult to see how bribery and corruption, "slush funds", 'commissions' and kickbacks can be neatly incorporated into the legal framework for every auditor to see.

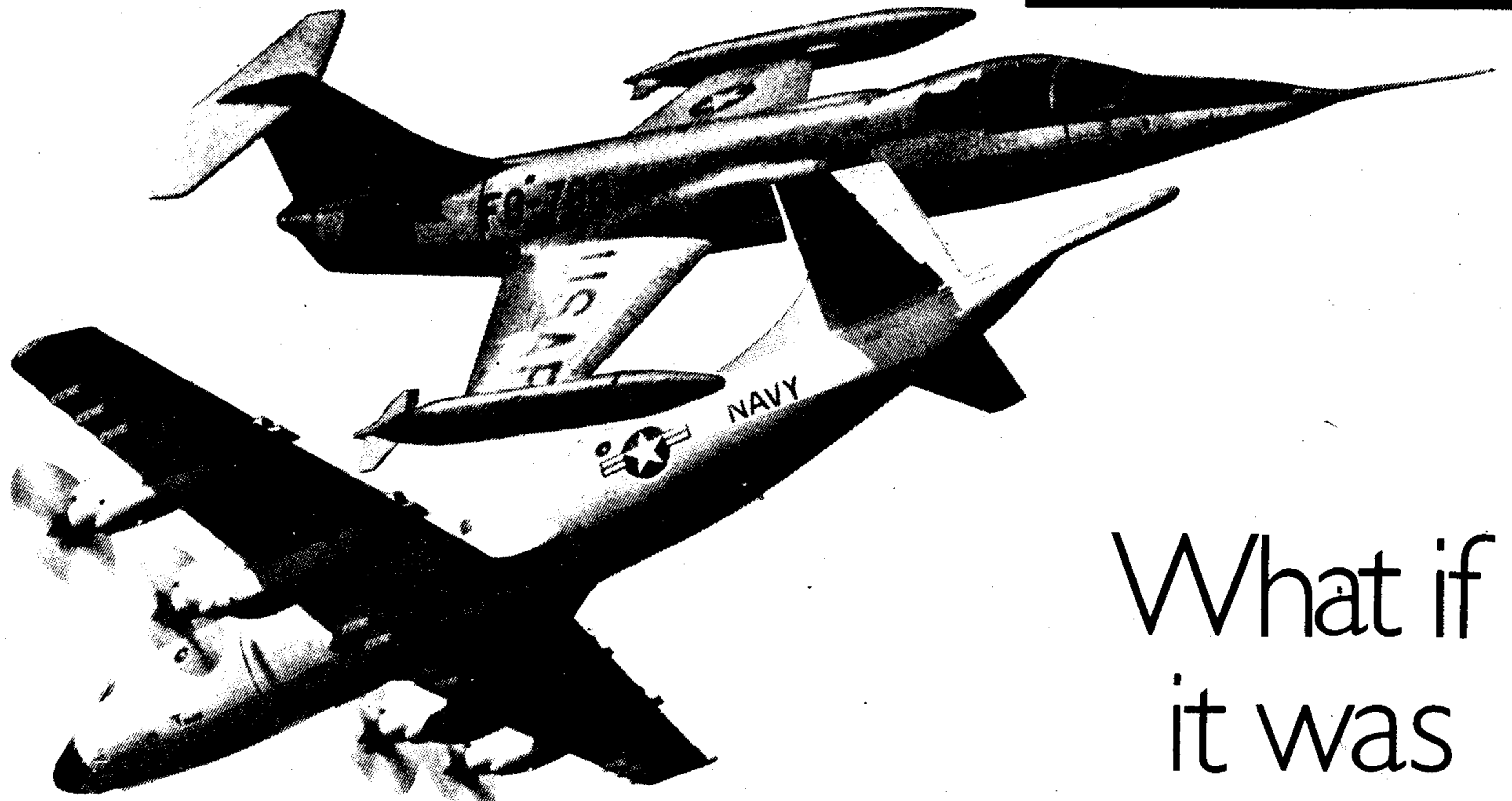
It doesn't quite fit, somehow, with the story they keep telling the workers: that politics and commerce are separate, that Governments act on behalf of 'the people' and politicians according to their conscience and for the good of their electors; that social justice rules and the best man wins on his merits, not by his purse. Ironically,

the die-hard nature of American individualism — with its imagery of the entrepreneur as frontiersman and of capitalism as the highest expression of clean, hard-living pioneering — now acts as a brake on this legal adaptation, over and above any public outcry.

There are other snags about corruption. One thing that capitalism genuinely does value is efficiency. And while corruption is no doubt very efficient for the salesman, it is hopelessly inefficient for the buyer. (There's no better example than Lockheed: 200 of their Starfighter planes out of a series of 1000 just fell out of the sky).

When the buyers are themselves officials of the state, as they almost always are in these cases, the state feels that it must safeguard itself against this subversive and wasteful inefficiency.

At the most basic level, too, the kick-back system violates the ideal conception of "pure capitalism" in which 'free competition' is the overriding principle. This 'free competition' presupposes individual entrepreneurs competing with each other on an equal basis on a wide-open market. What commends one and condemns another, according to



What if it was Concorde

this vision, is the quality of the goods.

The moment the buyer is "bought", the moment factors other than the qualities, price etc of the goods are a consideration, the moment there is only a single supplier and therefore no competition and no choice, or the moment the public is victim to "unfair advertising", then this ideal picture is violated.

The trouble for capitalism is that this picture has never been a reality. Capitalism's tendency to monopoly, the fact that the 'public' can only choose between the items pre-chosen for them by the manufacturers and dealers, the existence of tariffs and taxes, franchises, state aid to companies ... all these factors and many more have long ago torn this ideal to shreds.

Distaste

Despite its deep distaste, however, US capitalism will probably make some move towards "cleaner corruption". It can't stop it happening, so it will have to institutionalise and control it, while making a big show of 'cleaning things up'.

The task of socialists is to reveal the inevitability of corruption and kick-backs under capitalism: the fact that it really does "oil the wheels of commerce" — and the utopianism of all calls for "honest government" and "clean dealing" while this system still stands.



Lockheed ex-Chairman Kotchian (top) spilled the beans to Frank Church's Senate Sub-Committee

BRIBERY and corruption aren't the monopoly of US companies. One of Europe's biggest plane makers, the French company Dassault, is an old hand at the game; and it's played on the grandest scale with an all-star political cast.

When Dassault wanted to sell the Swiss government a batch of Mirage jet fighters, the Swiss ambassador in Paris was summoned to an interview with French Prime Minister Georges Chirac. He was given three documents and told to deliver them personally to the Swiss President.

The first document, drafted by Chirac himself, was dedicated to the ideals of "European solidarity", European and Swiss defence, and the need for "merciless competition" against the USA.

The second document — a comparative study of the Mirage V and its rival the Tiger — was written by Marcel Dassault, head of the company, owner of the weekly "Jours de France" and member of the French parliament. And the third document amounted to a millionaire's version of a trading stamp offer: Switzerland would get a reduction of several million francs per airplane as long as more than 60 were bought.

It makes Maudling's recommendation of Poulson's Gozo hospital project look like kid's stuff!

Despite this "unrefusable offer" the Swiss government declined — perhaps it had found out an earlier approach by Dassault, when he had bribed dozens of high ranking airforce personnel.

In Holland, a Liberal Party MP revealed that Dassault had offered him £5,000 to plead the virtues of the Mirage. An ex-conservative MP, Kikkert, admitted he had been on Dassault's payroll for years. And a Socialist Party MP, Piet Dankert, has told how he had been offered £250,000 to secure his cooperation and that Dassault had further tried to persuade him by showing him top-secret NATO documents favouring the Mirage over its US rival.

"To buy a European parliament takes some doing!", Dankert commented. "Dassault starts off with us, and this fellow is capable of buying the favours of the English House of Commons and the German Bundestag too."

ONE danger of participation schemes (as well as all the others WA has outlined) is of the working class being drawn into complicity in the corruption of the bosses. It doesn't take much imagination to foresee a situation in which, because workers' jobs under capitalism depend on the success of private enterprise, workers' "representatives" on the boards of companies would find themselves protecting jobs by rubber-stamping or even pushing for corrupt dealing if it guarantees bigger sales.

The fact is that you can't mix with capitalism at that level without getting fouled up in its mess.

If it could be proved that the continuation of the Concorde project has rested on a series of political lies, financial swindles and public dishonesty — involving sums of money far outstripping the entire treasury of Lockheed or Dassault — would the BAC workers whose livelihoods at present depend on it demand the project be scrapped? Hopefully the Concorde revelations will come, and then the question will not be academic.

LPYS Easter Conference resolutions

Hari Krishna, Hari Krishna, Hari-Hari, Clement Attlee

THERE IS a religious sect whose members parade the streets, with shaved heads and saffron robes, chanting incessantly - 'Hari Krishna, Hari Krishna, Hari-Hari, Hari-Hari'. Reading the resolutions for the Labour Party Young Socialists' (LPYS) Easter Conference, one is strongly reminded of them.

In resolution after resolution, the same formulae, dear to the hearts of the *Militant* tendency who dominate the LPYS, appear.

The most frequent of these, which is repeated with such monotony that it is now quite notorious, is the demand for nationalisation as a solution to all ills and all problems. Yet every worker knows that nationalisation over the last 30 years has been used simply to bail out the bosses in bankrupt industries which were needed to service the rest of British capitalism; and that it's been done at the expense of railwaymen, of steelworkers, and of miners.

This means that questions about the manner of nationalisation become crucial: how is it to be done, in whose interests, and under whose control?

The *Militant* see nationalisation as creeping socialism; their role in this scheme is to speed things up, by pressing the Labour Government to do it all in one fell swoop by passing an "enabling act". There's to be no question of independent working class action: it's all up to the government. And just in case you think this strange idea was cooked up in the kitchens of the *Militant*, they're quick to reassure everyone of its pedigree: it was, you see, first suggested in the 1930s ... by one Clement Attlee.

But don't these people call themselves Marxists? Well, they think to earn that title all you have to do is tag on two extra points to their demand for nationalisation.

First, they say, that expropriated capitalists should 'only' be compensated "on the basis of proven need". Proven need for what? The only thing they should be in need of is the chance to work for their living the same as anyone else.

Then, they say, nationalisation should be under "democratic workers' control and management". Very good! Full marks — until you discover what they mean. They go on to explain that the boards of nationalised industries should be made up of "a third from the workforce" (or in some resolutions, from "the trade unions in the industry") a third from the TUC, and a third from the government." Or, put another way round, "one third from the bosses' state, one third (or sometimes two

thirds) from the bosses' agents in the labour movement (the trade union bureaucracy) and one third (or none at all) rank and file workers' representatives."

If this seems tragic, it is repeated as farce in the resolution on New Towns from Chester-le-Street (Washington) LPYS. This calls for the non-elected Corporations which run these towns to be replaced by Councils consisting of "one third government nominees, one third from the Trade Unions, and one third directly elected by the people of the New Towns." In other words, a system of local government less democratic than the bourgeois norm!

Militant's account of the lessons of Chile sums it all up. The problem, they say, was that Allende nationalised industry only piecemeal. The army would somehow have been paralysed if only he had nationalised the major sections of the economy all at once!

The resolutions on international affairs are remarkable for their attempt to apply the norms of British trade union and Labour Party life to situations where they just don't apply. It is at its most glaring on Ireland. They rightly demand the withdrawal of Britain's troops; but they make this conditional on the formation of an armed trade union defence force which is supposed to stop sectarian killings and "terrorism".

In real life, of course, the trade unions in Northern Ireland are as much tied-up in



Leading N.Ireland trade unionist — and anti-Catholic — Billy Hull

the sectarian divide as every other institution in the Six Counties; the TUC's attempt to stop the Ulster Workers' Council's anti-Catholic 'general strike' was a miserable fiasco.

Militant also attack, in the most scandalous way, the Republicans who actually are fighting British imperialism and who are the only defence the Catholic

areas have. Incredibly, these volunteers fighting imperialism are said to be 'strengthening imperialism'!

A small number of resolutions stand out from the moronic sameness of the *Militant* ones. And these will no doubt provide the main focus for any worthwhile debate at the Conference.

Northampton North LPYS oppose the whole idea that a peaceful transition to socialism is possible. As they say "the task for socialists ... is to work to strengthen the combativity, self confidence and rank and file organisation of the working class: to explain the capitalist class character of the present state ... to argue the need to smash that state and establish the rule of democratic workers' councils."

Several branches criticise the failure of the LPYS National Committee to implement the policy of support for the Working Women's Charter, adopted at last year's conference, and demand a serious campaign nationally and locally around its demands such as free contraception, abortion on demand and 24 hour nurseries.

Carlton LPYS opposes *Militant's* scab line on Ireland, and demands "solidarity with those forces fighting British imperialism in Ireland and immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops", and calls on LPYS branches to affiliate to the Troops Out Movement.

On one question, however, the 'opposition' resolutions do not define themselves against the *Militant*. There is not a single resolution from a *Militant* LPYS branch on Portugal! Northampton South, however,

condemns the reactionary role of the Socialist and Communist Parties there and raises key demands for the release of left wing prisoners, opposition to the disarming of the working class and to the return of occupied factories and farms to their former owners, and against international capitalist intervention. And they call for the LPYS to affiliate to the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class.

There are many resolutions which are unobjectionable as far as they go. But all they do is list the problems of the working class and provide no answer except advice to the government to introduce 'socialist measures'.

The LPYS is an organisation capable of attracting thousands of young working class people. But to be built on any fighting basis, it will have to break out of the same old round of sterile, abstract debate, and adopt policies for an active fight against the Government's measures.

SIMON TEMPLE
Chairman, NORWOOD LPYS
(in personal capacity)

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

PORTUGAL Solidarity Campaign NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday March 13th,
Conway Hall, London.
Details from PWCC,
12 Little Newport Street,
London WC2

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's issue.

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.

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

Campaign to Repeal the Immigration Act: National Demonstration, 11th April. Assemble 2.30pm, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park. Committee to organise the demonstration meets every Friday, 7.30pm at 152 Camden High Street.

Critique seminar: Alan Adler on 'Anti-semitism in the Soviet Union'. 7.30pm, Tuesday 2nd March, room S418, St Clements Building, LSE, Houghton St.

Pensioners' lobby: called by British Pensioners and Trade Union committee, 2pm, March 10th, at Westminster Hall.

Newham Rank and File Teachers public meeting on the Cuts: 5.30pm, March 18th, at the Railway Tavern, opposite Forest Gate station.

London Nursery Campaign inaugural meeting: 2pm to 5.30pm, Saturday 20th March, at the Thomas Coram Foundation, Coram Fields, London WC1. Creche provided.

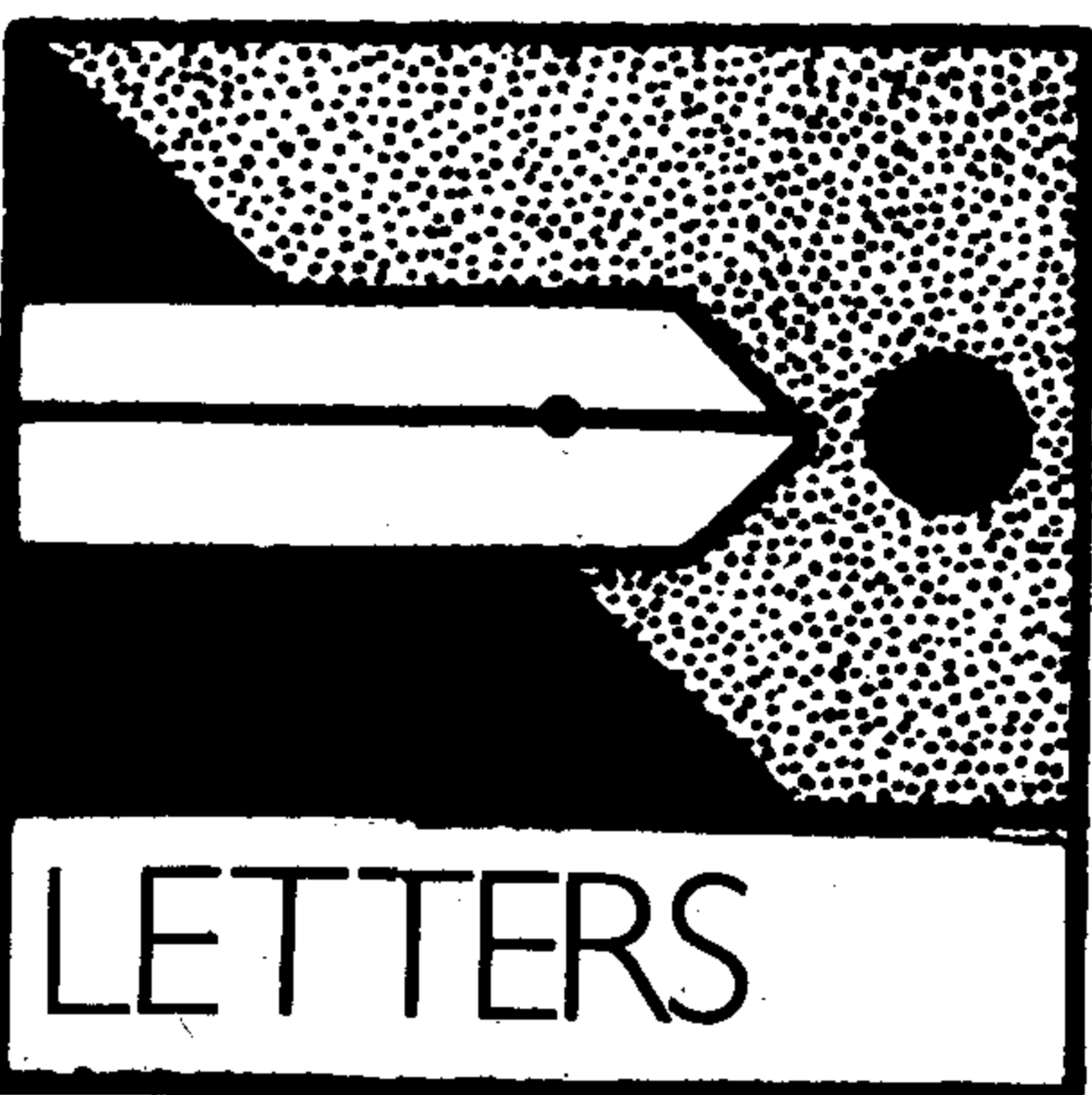
Local labour movement conference on unemployment and the cuts: organised by Lambeth Trades Council and Norwood Labour Party, Saturday 3rd April, at Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Walk, SW2. Details from V.Wiseman, 23 Saunders House, St Martins Estate, SW2.

International Women's Day demonstration: 2pm, Saturday March 6th, assemble at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.

Introducing Workers News — a new socialist paper. 7.30pm, Monday 8th March, at the Small Hall, St Pancras Assembly Rooms, St Pancras Town Hall, Euston Rd, NW1. Speakers: Harry Wicks and Roger Protz.

Bala Tampoe (General Secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union) will speak, 8pm, Thursday 11th March, at Isleworth Town Rooms, South St, Isleworth, Middlesex. Workers League and South Asia Socialist Forum joint meeting.

Ernest Mandel speaking on the European Revolution and Building the Fourth International. 7.30pm, Friday March 5th, at St Pancras Assembly Rooms. Admission 50p.



Getting to grips with the wider world?

YOUR editorial on unemployment last week (WA6) was a classic piece of Economism. Arguing that "the shop floor is the key" you stated that: "a successful struggle on a large scale against overtime working would have the effect of making available 13,847,500 hours' work — enough for 346,200 workers working a 40-hour week. And a successful struggle for a 35-hour week would almost eliminate unemployment."

This is just nonsense. Unemployment is not caused by overtime or the 40-hour week. Employers who were restrained in this way from rationalising would simply go bankrupt. This is why the answer to unemployment precisely does NOT lie in "strengthening shop floor organisation", important though that is.

On the contrary, it is necessary for workers to look beyond the narrow

confines of the struggle on the shop floor and to get to grips with the wider world of politics and power, if an effective fight against unemployment is to be waged.

That is why your contemptuous dismissal of nationalisation as a solution to unemployment (on the unbelievable grounds that there has been "a 7% fall in employment in the nationalised industries over the last ten years") is particularly to be deplored in a Marxist newspaper.

For what is needed is a perspective — not oft-repeated slogans, but real answers to basic questions like where is the money going to come from to finance all these workers working only a 35 hour week or less?

And if you don't know, or haven't thought about the answer to that one yet, surely it would be better to keep quiet than to prattle on mindlessly about more shop floor militancy being the "key" to the fight for jobs.

JOHN BERESFORD

REPLY

OUR EDITORIAL in WA No.6 contrasted the passivity of the trade union leaders and the spinelessness of Tribune with the urgency of the task "to create in every union and in every locality bodies capable of taking up a struggle against unemployment."

These bodies, the editorial argued, "must base themselves above all on the principle of cut the hours, not the jobs, under workers' control and with no loss of pay". In developing this far from "non-political" idea, the editorial pointed out the obscenity of the enormous number of hours of overtime and hours over 35-a-week that are being worked at a time when there are one a half million officially unemployed.

What is John Beresford's objection? The capitalists could not afford to concede a 35-hour-week, he says; therefore it is utopian to demand it.

What is his solution? Actually, for all his abuse, he doesn't say. But he

does imply some redistribution of wealth.

This is at the heart of his difference with us. Faced with the prospect of ruining the capitalists, of destroying the system, he proposes a different way of dividing things up within the framework of the system.

John Beresford thinks that a "solution" is an alternative plan for the running of society. Tribune and the Labour Left have always peddled this proposition, along with the Communist Party. The *Militant* group do the same. And today, even the IMG, emerging from its intoxication with the all-purpose General Strike slogan, has gone over to this left social democratic plan-pushing.

But social change is not brought about by convincing people of the alternative "superior rationality" of a plan, but rather by the development of a force capable of fighting for and asserting interests opposed to those of capitalism.

Workers Action believes therefore that the only "solution" lies within the combativity of the working class, its struggle and its creative energy. This struggle finds its first and most fundamental focus on the shop floor. Those who place their faith in a "plan" rather than a programme of action for that shop floor struggle inevitably relegate shop floor strength to playing an occasional, auxiliary part.

John Beresford says that "what is needed is a perspective — not oft repeated slogans, but real answers..." Sounds good; but it is quite wrong. What's meant by a perspective here is a substitute for a programme. There are no answers that a separate from struggle; struggles need slogans and demands. Actually "oft repeated slogans" (which is just a dismissive way of saying 'targets and signposts for class struggle') which are capable of focussing the fight and raising consciousness, are exactly what are needed.

As to the remark about nationalisation, we leave it to our readers whether the 7% fall in employment in the nationalised industries makes them a "solution" to unemployment.

WIDIRKIEIRS IN ACTION

London nursery campaigns and 'Charter' groups link up

A couple of weeks ago, 20 men and women from South London Working Women's Charter group and Norwood Labour Party Under 5s Campaign lobbied Lambeth Social Services Committee against a cutback in nursery places.

The cut is probably typical of many: two nurseries have been merged into one in a new building, with a loss of 13 places. One of the original nurseries, St. John's has already been closed; plans to redevelop the site have been scrapped, and there is no reason why St. John's should not continue as a nursery — except for the reluctance of Lambeth to bear the running costs.

Victims

Lambeth say they are applying for Urban Aid to finance it. But Urban Aid is itself one of the victims of the Government's cuts; and if money were taken from that source, it would be at the expense of other projects, such as the local Women's Aid refuge for battered women, which is in desperate need of funds. If Urban Aid is refused, Lambeth have given no undertaking to finance the nursery themselves.

Lambeth has some 20,700 under fives. Many are in one-parent families, or families where both parents work.

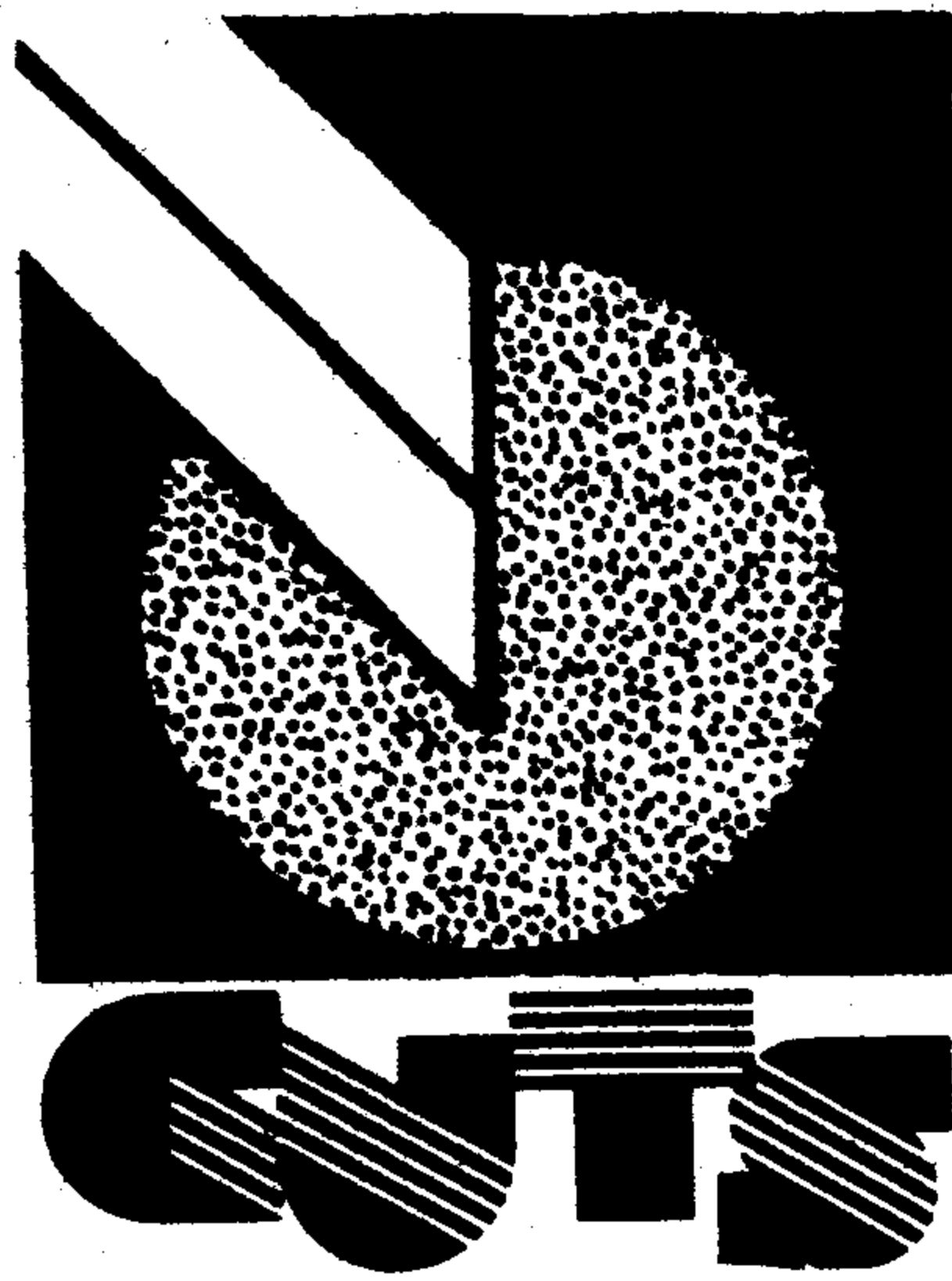
Many live in very bad, cramped housing conditions, far removed from the cosy image of 'home' so beloved of the anti-nursery propaganda. There are around 130 families in bed & breakfast accomodation, another 1500 on Lambeth's housing waiting list, countless mothers under stress.

To meet this need, there are only 693 full time places in council nurseries. There is a waiting list of more than 600 top priority kids: children of single parents, children considered at risk of damage. Thousands more, seeing the situation, won't even have put their names to the list.

In addition, there are 208 places in private nurseries. But these are too expensive for the people who need them most. The council used to sponsor places in these nurseries, but is now phasing out these sponsorships: in one nursery alone there was a drop from 17 to 4 of these sponsored places.

Scrapped

Playgroups and nursery classes exist as well, but only for 3-5 year olds, and their limited hours (such as 9.30 to 11.45) are little use for working mothers, even those with part time jobs.



There had been plans for new nurseries in Lambeth. One at Central Hill, providing 60 places by next year, has already been scrapped. All other planned nurseries have been postponed indefinitely. This cutback is part of the pre-White Paper reduction in Government spending on nurseries from £21m to £9m.

If there were a labour shortage, the Government would be falling over itself to provide nurseries. As it is, women shut away at home with toddlers don't even show up on the unemployment figures. What should be the concern of society — the raising of kids, the care of the old — is heaped on the backs of millions of women.

London's various nursery campaigns are now making moves to join up. The experience of the more successful ones, like Hackney & Islington, can help others. London Charter groups will be getting together to work out a common perspective for a struggle against the cuts and for fully adequate facilities. The fight for nursery places is part of the fight by women for an equal right to a life of their own.

MARGARET PAGE

Work permits trap for immigrant teachers

AS IN ALL other areas, the cuts in education will hit the weakest first and very soon. The first victims being lined up now in teaching are the large number who are employed on some form of temporary contract.

This category includes part-timers, supply teachers and temporary terminal contract teachers. In all these cases, the prospect of sacking is imminent.

Many of those on temporary terminal contracts face a double threat: large numbers of these teachers are immigrants who are here on work permits. That means they are allowed in only to do a certain job, and when they lose that, they can be deported.

The temporary terminal contract was originally intended for graduates who were doing post graduate courses and who wished to teach for just one term. It was intended to be a voluntary contract, making it easier for the teacher to leave, rather than easier for an education authority to sack teachers. Certainly, first-year teachers (who do a semi-supervised 'probationary' year) were not supposed to be employed in this way.

In fact, the vast majority of immigrant teachers are probationers; yet they are employed on this contract. This means in real terms that at the end of each term the teacher has to re-apply for the job, and an Authority can simply refuse to renew the contract without giving any reason whatever.

In most cases, this means the end of

the work permit, and probable deportation. It also means the total humiliation and intimidation of the teachers involved. One teacher in Little Ilford School in Newham refused to allow the school NUT group even to discuss his case, for fear of victimisation if the Head thought he was in any way political.

The sackings could start soon; it is important for us to mobilise immediately — or such lack of confidence will prove to be justified!

Already immigrant teachers are being harassed — or, as one Indian teacher in Newham put it "we have always been harassed, but it's got worse recently". This teacher was talking about veiled threats, and of being told to take his passport and work permit to be photocopied. Others have been summoned to the Home Office to have their work permits checked.

Contract

This is just one aspect of how the cuts are going to hit us. But it is the first, and we must make our position very clear. The Union must give full support to sanctions or strike action, as and where teachers decide these are necessary, in schools where the Authority refuses to renew on a permanent basis these teachers' contracts. The NUT should take an initiative on a national level to compel Authorities to stop using this pernicious device and employ all teachers on a permanent contract if they so wish.

RON HAYCOCK
Newham NUT

NUPE workers win in 24 hours

by Andy Hindley

A two-month work to rule produced no results. Then the NUPE district Committee intervened at the workers' request, and imposed a ban on handling of laundry by porters throughout the area. Management gave in after just 24 hours, and offered to employ an extra 6 workers immediately and the rest over 16 months.

The conference heard about the growth of private medicine: plans to build an £80,000 private clinic in

Solihull — at the same time as wards were being cut in the NHS and infant mortality was on the rise locally. But a proposal for a workers' inquiry into the health cuts was not taken up, some speakers commending instead the Community Health Councils, although half their members sit on local councils. And a resolution for the SMA to form its own Committee against the Cuts was opposed rather bureaucratically by the platform.

Thus nothing much came out of this conference of about 70 people — doctors, nurses, porters, technicians and CHC members — except for the powerful example of the fight at Moseley Hall.

Cardiff demo protests at cuts threat

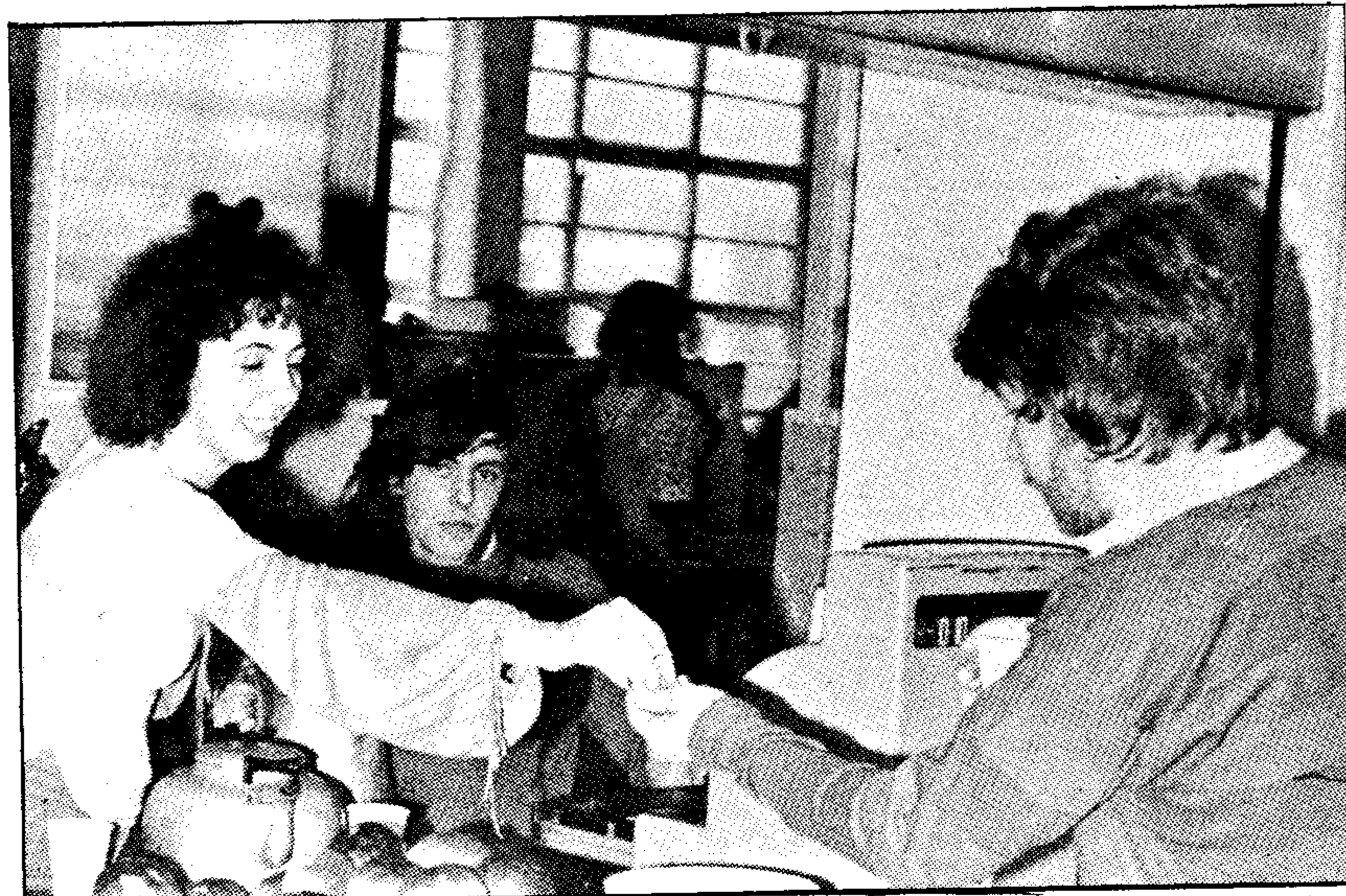
MORE than 100 people marched through CARDIFF last Saturday in protest against the Healey axe on social services. The demonstration was organised by NUPE, and attracted the support of trade unionists representing Swansea and Cardiff Trades Councils, Tynamr Lodge miners, Nalco branches, a large NUPE contingent, and also LPYS members and students from many colleges in Wales.

Other than miners' marches, this was the biggest demonstration in Cardiff in years, and it well reflected the anger felt in the labour movement over the cuts. Unfortunately, neither in the leaflets put out by the organisers nor in the speeches at the rally afterwards, was any strategy put forward of how to build a struggle from this good start.

Workers Action supporters' leaflet called for a campaign around demand which clearly put the onus on the bosses to pay for their crisis. Instead of mere appeals to the Labour Government to implement their manifesto, we should demand an immediate and massive infusion of funds into the social services and an automatic increase in these funds to keep up with inflation. The books and accounts of local authorities should be opened to our inspection so that we can see where the money is going, and we should insist that Labour councillors refuse to implement the cuts. The slogan must be: not one, but a thousand Clay Crosses!

Clear heads as well as strong hearts will be necessary if the present anger against the cuts is to be transformed into a mass campaign to force the Labour Government to roll them back. The real work is still to be done.

PETE KEENLYSIDE



ABOUT 25,000 students marched through London on Friday 27th February to protest against the cuts in education. The demonstration was a success, but the week of action of which it was the culmination proved disappointing.

In London the main action came from Middlesex Polytechnic, where the Enfield and Hornsey sites were occupied for a week. This action, however, not only gained large scale support among the students, but was also backed by the Trades council and shop stewards

2000 A MONTH FIGHTING FUND

Last month's Fund floundered badly; it got just past half way after two weeks, and then petered out. Could be our fault for not reminding readers. So there's a lesson for all of us — don't leave it to chance. Get collecting now to keep Workers Action going. Let's hit the target in March!

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RULE 14

AT ITS February meeting, Southwark Trades Council (South London) followed the example of Camden and voted to reject the TUC's new Rule 14 which forbids Trades Councils to enter into political activity against TUC or Labour Party policy, or in alliance with political parties other than the Labour Party. But the vote was narrow: a large number of abstentions meant that the necessary two thirds majority for adoption of the rule wasn't reached.

BLACKMANS STRIKERS RE-OCCUPY

THE lock-out of 350 men at Keith Blackmans (Tottenham, North London) is now entering its seventh week.

The dispute, which started when management tried to sack a steward in an attempt to destroy union strength in the plant, has now entered a new stage.

On Wednesday February 25th the workers re-occupied the plant to try to force an outcome to the dispute. However, the bosses are still sitting tight in a plush hotel in nearby Finsbury Park.

Tom Eastwood, the strike committee spokesman, told *Workers Action*: "We realise this dispute may go on for some time. Management is trying to sit it out in the hope that we'll become demoralised." In order to make sure this doesn't happen, the workers are planning to use the occupation to launch a national campaign to broaden support and put pressure on GEC, the parent company, from as many sides as possible.

March 17th has now been chosen for a national day of action. GEC headquarters at Stanhope Gate in London will be the scene of a mass picket. Other plants in the combine will be asked to send delegations or, alternatively, to hold mass meetings about the Blackmans dispute in works time.

Speakers from Tottenham will be touring the combine and calling on other plants not only to continue the collections, but to step up support action.

The Chloride plant in Dagenham, Essex, has already shown the way. All GEC work has been blacked in support of the Blackmans workers.

All GEC plants should be supporting the day of action. This will mean inviting speakers to mass meetings before the 17th and sending delegations to the mass picket. In other plants, the blacking of GEC and of Blackmans goods should be spread. And of course, money is necessary to finance the speakers' tours, the nationwide leafletting campaign and the hardship fund.

Donations should be sent to: Jim Pickering, AUEW, Suite 3 Second Floor, 128-136 High Street, Edgware, Middlesex.

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