

workers' ACTION

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10p

THE T.U.C. reckons that a smooth passage for the Government is more important than workers' living standards.

No union supports the 10% limit. No union has denied that the firemen's claim is justified. No union can fail to be aware that success for the firemen will increase every worker's chances of higher wages.

Yet the TUC simply said to the firemen: take what the Government offers you. Now they are discovering that the rank and file of the labour movement is not as servile as our official leaders.

Already the firemen have a lot of sympathy. To push the government into giving the firemen their money, positive action is needed:

□ One-day sympathy strikes, with local demonstrations and rallies.

□ General refusal to work on any processes where there is a fire risk while the firemen are on strike.

□ Meetings addressed by firemen, and regular collections or levies for their strike fund, in every workplace and union branch.

Don't wait

The miners and the local authority manual workers, who are already pursuing claims over the 10% limit, have a special interest in supporting the firemen. A national strike committee, bringing together rank and file FBU delegates with representatives of other unions supporting the firemen, could plan a concerted campaign on these lines which would bring the dispute to a victorious end within days.

We should not wait for the union leaders to move. A campaign for solidarity with the firemen can be organised now, at rank and file level. Support committees for the firemen can be built now in every area. Waiting for the union leaders to move can mean waiting forever.

Rank and file solidarity action will be the best way to protect the firemen against any attempts by the FBU Executive to sell them out. The executive voted

12 to 3 in favour of accepting 10% in the first place, and its next move may be to try to persuade the firemen to call the strike off because the TUC and other unions aren't giving enough support.

If the firemen are defeated, it will be a defeat for every worker's chances of getting a decent wage increase. They will win, despite the TUC, if they get our solidarity now!

As 97pc of workers

line up for

wage settlements...

YOUR PAY

CLAIM

DEPENDS

ON THEIR

VICTORY



HELP THEM TO WIN NOW

Longbridge Action Group meeting

AFTER THE BALLOT, WHICH WAY FORWARD?

12.30pm, Saturday 10th December, at the Labour Club, Bristol St, Birmingham.

Chairman: Frank McGuirk [Longbridge steward]; speakers include militants from Rover [Pat Hickey], Cowley [Alan Thornett], and Longbridge [Jim Denham].



AIRLIE

SLIPMAN

A Party without shame

LAST WEEK shipyard workers in the North East rallied in solidarity with the courageous stand of the outfitters at Swan Hunter.

The outfitters have refused to call off their overtime ban in pursuit of parity with the boiler-makers, and in a blatant piece of blackmail British Shipbuilders have declared that seven vessels from a Polish order will be redirected from Swan Hunter to other yards.

But "we're not cannibals" commented John Toomey, AUEW fitters' senior steward at Sunderland shipbuilders; and workers at the Austin Pickersgill yard, too, refused to aid the bosses' blackmail by accepting any orders transferred from Swan Hunter. The Haverton hill yard of Smiths Dock, Tees-side, had a sympathy stoppage on 30th November.

Then this solidarity was betrayed by the Govan shipyard shop stewards' committee. On Monday 5th they announced their policy (later endorsed by a mass meeting): to refuse the Swan Hunter outfitters' request to black an order transferred to Govan, and to advise the outfitters to give in. Everything — the Govan stewards said — had to be done to avoid any risk of the 24-ship contract being lost to Britain.

TASS draughtsmen at both Swan Hunter and Govan say they will black any switch in the orders, so the blackmail may not succeed yet; but no thanks to the Govan stewards.

While thousands of ordinary trade unionists had supported the Swan Hunter workers, the man who was responsible for betraying them was Govan convenor Jimmy Airlie — who calls himself a "Communist".

There is an extra twist to his treachery. As a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Airlie must regard the Polish government as his comrades. Yet he accepts without question that the Polish 'Communists' might withdraw the order in retaliation for the Swan Hunter outfitters' strike.

On the same day, Monday, another Communist Party member — Sue Slipman, President of the National Union of Students — was pushing through another betrayal. During the firemen's strike, many student unions (even right wing ones, like for example Aston University) have been giving money to strike funds. Now the NUS Executive and its "Communists" have persuaded NUS Conference to forbid student unions to give funds to such "non-student" causes. The reason given was a risk of legal problems.

Whatever it calls itself, the Party of Airlie and Slipman is not Communist. Communism, for 130 years, has meant the most militant dedication to the struggles of the working class, linked with a drive to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with workers' power. But the Party of Airlie and Slipman takes its inspiration from the Stalinist bureaucratic usurpers of the Russian workers' revolution.

In the 1930s the Stalinist parties outside Russia turned to manoeuvring within the existing system in the service of Moscow's diplomacy. They abandoned their revolutionary aims of the early 1920s. Today, manoeuvring within the system, gaining and keeping positions within the system, is as far as their horizons reach.

Paul Adams looks at the Arab reactions to Sadat's visit to Israel.

SADAT's visit to Israel has so far yielded no fruits. What it has succeeded in doing is creating a temporary pole of 'hardline' opposition to concessions to Zionism. The Arab states meeting in Tripoli last weekend drew up a four-point plan expressing their hostility to the present line of Egyptian policy.

- They decided to:
- boycott Egyptian companies dealing with Israel;
 - freeze diplomatic relations with Egypt and call on other nations to do the same;
 - expel President Sadat from the three-man leadership of the Federation of Arab Republics; and

Tripoli's treacherous unity

□ transfer the Arab League headquarters from Cairo to Tripoli.

There was no decision to accompany this diplomatic 'freeze-out' with any real economic boycott. The final document was signed by Libya's Gaddafi the Algerian President Houari Boumediene, Salem Roubaya Ali of south Yemen, Syria's President Assad and PLO leader Yasser Arafat. The main Palestinian factions also signed a document

committing them to reject "reconciliation, recognition, or negotiation with the enemy".

Against these declarations of Arab and Palestinian unity, Sadat appears to be remarkably isolated. With the unqualified support only of the leaders of Sudan, Oman, Morocco and Somalia, it looks as if Egypt will find itself negotiating with Israel in Cairo on December 14 under the watchful eye of the US. Yet in



Gaddafi with George Habash and Yasser Arafat

fact the Cairo summit could be far more important than the Tripoli gathering.

Firstly, the states pledging their friendship and unity at Tripoli are incapable of forming a stable pole of anti-Zionist action. President Assad of Syria will seek the first opportunity to make a separate deal with Israel in the wake of the Cairo agreements. Indeed, it is nothing short of obscene to see this butcher of the Lebanese Palestinians and the Lebanese left now pledging himself to the Palestinian cause.

President Sarkis of Lebanon only finds himself in Tripoli because he is bound to follow whatever Assad dictates — after all, it is Assad and not Sarkis who is the strong man in Lebanon. While Iraq's President Bakr has been a staunch supporter of the 'rejectionist' line within the PLO — and a supporter of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by George Habash — the Palestinians are to him a pawn in his games with Syria and Lebanon.

Butchery

Presiding over the Tripoli conference was President Gaddafi, the self-proclaimed new leader of the anti-Zionist states. Yet it was Gaddafi's regime (through his deputy Jalloud) which organised the pan-Arab 'peace-keeping' force in Lebanon which became the official cover for much of Syria's butchery of the Palestinians.

Tunisia, Jordan and Saudi Arabia neither attended the Tripoli conference nor have they agreed to attend the Cairo 'summit'. But for these states an open move into the pro-Zionist camp is simply a matter of timing. In particular Saudi Arabia, whose wealth makes it the most powerful of the region's states, is only hesitating the better to be able to prise states out of the Tripoli camp.

Secondly the unity within the PLO around a joint declaration is much shakier than at first sight it seems. The majority at the recent Palestine National Congress was clearly in favour of a negotiated settlement in terms of a West Bank statelet with an additional entity on the Gaza strip. That majority has not melted away simply because of Sadat's open flirtation with Zionism.

Bargain

What will determine the outcome of the Middle East struggle is not the waver-thin 'unity' at Tripoli but the nature of Israeli concessions at Cairo later this month. If Israel concedes very little, she will have wrecked any chance for a Geneva conference and brought down the Sadat regime into the bargain. To make sure that this is not the result the US will be sitting at Begin's elbow helping him to sign away some substantial amounts of territory.

But while extensive tracts in the Sinai will quite likely be returned (in exchange for non-aggression guarantees and military posts leased to Israel at Sharm el Sheikh and elsewhere), Israel will almost certainly not negotiate any change in the status of Jerusalem or any concessions to the Palestinians. The most that it is likely to come up with is a financial offer to Egypt as 're-settlement costs' for the Pal-



Sadat

estinians — a sum which will be forwarded by the US.

What Israel will not do is go along with any West Bank statelet idea. Any possibility of this happening in the short term was dashed by last year's municipal elections on the West Bank. Then the older Arab leaders were defeated by more militant pro-PLO candidates. The vast majority of the West Bank mayors are thus firmly pro-PLO. As the US magazine *Newsweek* reported, "While Egyptian President Sadat was announcing his plans for a meeting in Cairo last week, five leftist mayors on the occupied West Bank were addressing a crowd of Palestinian college students near Ramallah.

"Each of the mayors denounced Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and his invitation to West Bank mayors to visit Cairo. 'Sadat's visit to Israel was a stab in the back for the Palestinian people... He is trying to find substitutes for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, but he will not succeed. From this platform we renew our pledge to be faithful to the land, to our Palestine and to the PLO'".

These words of Karim Khalaf, the mayor of Ramallah, were echoed by Muhammad Milhem the mayor of Halhul: "The PLO has not given us back our land and our homes. But it has made the world realise that we are not just refugees, but a nation".

And that, of course, is exactly what Israel will not admit.

...and Israel's land-grab goes on

AS ISRAEL'S Prime Minister Menachem Begin was being welcomed at Heathrow by representatives of the British government, another Israeli settlement was being established on the occupied West Bank.

Anyone thinking that Sadat's visit to Israel might squeeze some concessions from Israel towards the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank will have been rudely shocked. Nor did the settlement take place, as some have done, against the expressed wishes of the Israeli authorities.

On the contrary, back in September Begin himself arranged for the Gush Emunim (the block of faith) to move in. While in the opposition, Begin was very much the protector of this movement.



Melina Mercouri, elected PASOK deputy

GREECE: No victory for Left

AFTER THE overwhelming victory of the Right in the 1974 parliamentary elections, when Karamanlis' New Democracy party polled 54% of the vote, Greece was undoubtedly the most stable country within the Mediterranean basin.

Yet the result reflected not so much underlying realities, as the ability of the Right to capitalise on the widespread insecurity about the crisis with Turkey over Cyprus and the Aegean, and its ability to cultivate rumours about the risk of another military takeover. The opposition parties were wary, only just having been made legal again (the CP, after 27 years of illegality), and their unwillingness to rock the boat resulted almost in tacit support for Karamanlis.



Since 1974 the working people of Greece have confronted the bitter opposition of the Government over living standards and basic democratic and trade union rights. The May 1976 general strike, timidly called by the GSEE and the CP against the government's draconian anti-trade union legislation, showed the resulting radicalisation.

Against this background a new alignment of forces within the bourgeois parliament was inevitable.

The conservative 'New Democracy' broke apart even before the elections. The most significant split was the extreme right wing monarchists and the post-1967 junta diehards, who formed the Nationalist Front. Receiving roughly 6% of the vote, they helped to whittle down New Democracy's share to about 41%. But even with this vote Karamanlis is able to form a majority government under the system of 'reinforced proportional representation'.

The great winners of the election were PASOK, Pap-

Constantin Giannaris analyses the results of the recent Greek elections, and the rise of Andreas Papandreou's party PASOK.

andreu's 'Pan-Hellenic Socialist' movement, which increased its share from 13% to 25%. It wiped out the Liberals — whose vote declined from 20% to 12% — and became the largest opposition party.

PASOK, contrary to many analyses, is not a classic social democratic party. It does not belong to or espouse the social democratic tradition, which Papandreou has more than once attacked as 'reformist', and it has a different social base. It reflects the radicalised urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, which is able through the charismatic figure of Papandreou to articulate its many anxieties and confusions.

Primarily PASOK expresses an intense nationalism against the USA, viewed as the sole instigator, perpetrator/villain-of-the-piece of the 1967 coup d'état, and against the so-called 'expansionism' of Turkish irredentist aims in Cyprus and the Aegean. Papandreou's chauvinism and hawkish proclamations far outstrip those of the government, despite Karamanlis' massive military build-up.

Within this so-called anti-imperialism, PASOK also opposes Greek entry into the EEC, seeing it as a step towards the further subordination of the Greek economy to the interests of West European capitalism. Lately, in view of the favourable attitude of many Greek farmers towards the EEC, Papandreou has apparently modified his policy to favour a special relationship with the EEC like that of Norway.

Within Greece PASOK envisages a 'nationalist and socialist transformation'. This programme is supposed to be inspired by Marxism, but in fact it is totally petty bourgeois. Not only is the sovereignty of the bourgeois parliament upheld, but also the primacy of the working class in the 'socialist' transformation is denied. Rather PASOK looks to 'the people' — ranging from nationalist Greek capitalists to progressive nationally-minded military officers, some of whom Papandreou has managed to win over with promises of big wage and condition improvements.

PASOK is in fact a brake on the potential of further radicalisation of the Greek petty bourgeoisie towards the workers' parties, a potential which the Greek Stalinist parties have failed to exploit.



The two CPs lost votes to PASOK even in some of their traditional strongholds like Piraeus and Kavala, although the Moscow-line KKE (Exterior), with its vote up from 9% to 12%, has finally emerged as the hegemonic party within the working class. The KKE (Interior), allied with insignificant bourgeois groupuscules and play-acting at a second-rate 'historic compromise', received a crushing defeat, bringing home to them forcefully the working class's mistrust of their openly class collaborationist policies. The Exterior party's relative success probably derives from their more militant posturing, although they differ very little in essence from the Interior party except over the question of the USSR.

The results, with the meteoric rise of PASOK, are a blow for Karamanlis; but they cannot be regarded as a victory for the left.



SAVAGES!



THE U.S. State Department called it "inconceivable". Five professors of Law at Oxford University wrote to the 'Times' to say they were convinced there was "not even the most minimal" justice in South Africa.

A South African court had declared that no-one was to blame for Steve Biko's death.

It was admitted that the South African government's original story that Biko died from a hunger strike was a pack of lies. Admitted, that Biko's fatal injuries came from a beating by police. Admitted, that after that beating he was driven 700 miles naked in the back of a van. Doctors said in court that they had made reports as the police told them to.

Yet no-one was to blame. It was all normal practice.

After all this horror had come out in the press, the governing Nationalist Party won a landslide election majority. Minister of Police James Kruger, who had said that Biko's death "left him cold", had his personal majority greatly increased.

It highlights the macabre unreality of the British Labour Government's policy of "talking to" Vorster. The white racists have given notice that they will resist any moves for black rights with the utmost ferocity. Only militant and unconditional solidarity with the liberation struggle of the black majority can deal with apartheid.

LEYLAND: No to 'blindfold bargaining'

WHEN LEYLAND Cars workers voted in the ballot on 'pay and bargaining reform' at the end of October, the only aspect of the management's proposals to be clearly spelled out was for a 10% increase in gross earnings.

Plans for parity payments and an incentive scheme were outlined in the vaguest possible terms. Most cars division workers thought that negotiations would continue on these other items and that further consultation would take place in January.

Expire

Now, thanks to the TUC's insistence on enforcing the 12 month rule, even that miserable 10% will not be paid until the individual plants agreements expire — and for some plants that is not until April next year. Meanwhile management are using the ballot result as a mandate to press ahead with the incentive scheme — while refusing to negotiate it except with the

'Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee' (which is the un-elected 'national working party' set up this spring, under another name). Last week they got a boost when the trade union side of the National Cars Council (the top 'participation' body) "asked management to be allowed to" call on workers to increase output.

So while the TUC argues that the plant agreements haven't expired, so that Leyland workers can't get their 10%, the management say that those plant agreements have all been replaced by national negotiations!

In Longbridge, "target" figures for various sections have been posted up round the works without any explanation. They are fixed at 90% of maximum production, while current production in a trouble-free week is 77% of maximum.

At this point we have to say: **cards on the table!** The exact details of the management's proposals must be published in black and white before this charade goes any

further — and then shop meetings must debate and vote on those proposals.

We can't be tied by the October ballot result to accept what was never defined in October. Defence of mutuality and manning levels must be ensured, and **Workers' Action** supporters will in any case argue against the incentive scheme.

Folly

Certainly in the meantime we should refuse to accept a single thing that has not been through plant negotiations.

It is still possible that corporate bargaining could be still-born: a fight for a big claim in any one plant could kill the whole scheme. However, it would be folly for militants to stake everything on that possibility — and in any case we will have to try to make any such fight that does emerge as "corporate" as possible.

Big wages struggle or no big wages struggle, manning



levels and mutuality are going to be under attack. It is a united response we need, with these guidelines:

□ We demand management publish their proposals in full and exact detail before they go any further, and shop floor meetings to debate those proposals.

□ Defence of mutuality and manning levels. An end to unfilled vacancies.

□ A fight for the unions to withdraw from 'participation' at all levels, and from the new Joint Negotiating Committee.

□ A fight for democracy and accountability at all levels of the trade union structure in Leyland. Regular stewards' meetings in every section of every factory. A genuine combine committee, elected by shop floor voting in each factory, with recallability of delegates and regular report-backs in work time.

□ Support for the call from Rover Solihull shop stewards for a Leyland Cars national stewards' conference, and a fight for these policies at that conference.

JIM DENHAM

The IRA's solidarity message for the striking firemen

AS PART of the pressure against the strike before it started, it was said the firemen would be responsible for unleashing a new IRA fire-bombing campaign in Belfast and perhaps in Britain.

Of course, such a campaign during a firemen's strike would be doubly the responsibility of the Government: both for refusing the firemen's claim to save the 10% limit and for refusing to let go Britain's grip on Ireland.

But what of the bombing campaign?

At the start of the strike the Republican Army issued a statement saying it was well aware of the opportunities presented by a firemen's strike to step up its military campaign against British rule. But in solidarity with the working class struggle of the firemen, they would not do so. "Such action would be used by the ruling class to weaken the firemen's legitimate case, opening them up to reactionary appeals to return to work on 'security' grounds".

The British press mostly did not see fit to pass on this message. It wouldn't do much for the picture they like to paint of bomb-happy criminals without a thought in their heads, let alone a thought that British workers would appreciate...

Meanwhile in Belfast, the Orange bully-boys of the Ulster Volunteer Force have been down to the picket lines. In the Ardoyne district they pressured firemen to leave the picket and go to a fire in the Protestant Shankill Road. "We told them it would be in their best interests to get down there" and that if the strikers didn't take the fire engine out "it would be taken out anyway".

Bermuda: BRITAIN SAYS 'WE CAN'T INTERVENE...BUT WE CAN SEND TROOPS'

BRITISH TROOPS entered Bermuda on 4th December to help suppress protests after two black Bermudians had been executed by a British hangman. It was ironic, as Arthur Latham MP pointed out, that after saying it could not intervene against the hangings the British government intervened so promptly against the protests.

Larry Tacklyn and Erskine Burrows were the first people to be hanged in Bermuda for 30 years. But both were black, and they were convicted of killing rich white men — Burrows, of shooting the Governor, Sir Richard Sharples, with an aide-de-camp in March 1973, and

Police Commissioner George Duckett in 1972; Tacklyn, of killing two supermarket executives.

The campaign to save them from the hangman lasted 17 months: they were sentenced in July 1976, Tacklyn's appeal was turned down in April 1977, and the 'Committee of Mercy' confirmed the sentences in May 1977. Then a 6,000-strong petition asked Britain to intervene, but David Owen decided against it.

Behind the latest protests lie three centuries of resentment. The black people of Bermuda were brought there as slaves for the white settlers, and continue as wage slaves

for tax exiles and rich tourists. Tourism is almost the only industry in the island chain, and there is no income tax, death duty, or any other direct tax.

Protests

Although over 60% of the 55,000 population are black, the colonial government is run by rich white people. British troops were sent in previously in April 1968 to suppress protests. (Bermuda's police force, in any case, is largely made up of British cops on contract). Then a major grievance was the grotesquely unfair electoral system. Even after the extra prop-

erty vote provided by the 1963

Constitution had been abolished, there was gerrymandering on a scale that would make Northern Ireland look like a palace of democracy. One constituency with a black majority had 4,974 voters; another, with a white majority, 331!

The British Labour Government is still protecting the interests of a few thousand white parasites (and of the US Navy, which keeps two bases there) in Bermuda. Who can still believe that this Government's dealings with Ian Smith will do anything to secure the rights of the black majority in Rhodesia?

A test case—not a special case!



FBU Executive visit the Prime Minister...

IF ANY firemen doubted that they had gone into battle as a test case for the working class, James Callaghan set them right last week.

With only 3% of all workers' claims settled yet, the rest of the working class is closely watching the firemen's fight, he told the FBU Executive (according to interviews given by two Exec members to the paper *Newsline*).

Callaghan's government is determined to protect its pay

policies come what may. And the TUC leaders, though they didn't dare put the 10% limit to the Congress, showed that as far as they were concerned the Government can push living standards as low as it likes. They told the firemen to settle for 10% and get back to work.

Last week also saw police harassment of the strikers, with the statement from London Deputy Assistant Commissioner Neivans that

their street collections were illegal and could lead to arrests.

There was a big press witch-hunt, too, of a picket at Bootle, on an army billet. And, after a week or so of near-silence on fire deaths and damage caused by the Government's intransigence, local papers began to carry stories again, hoping perhaps that sympathy for the strike might be running out so they could put the blame on the firemen.

But the strikers weathered these blows. On picket the slogan went up, "TUC Tories". London Exec member Dave Challoner expressed the feeling of his members about the TUC: "Don't get in our way. We're going to win".

Having overcome all the old barriers to striking, the firemen are now hardening up to face a long strike if they have to. Most are prepared to see it through Christmas — and having

done that, just what short of the full claim will get them back?

Labour movement support is more and more rallying around the firemen — whatever the TUC says. It would be even more effective if the FBU Executive appealed for concerted solidarity strikes, over the heads of the TUC. It would also help to bring out more of the Fire Officers, whose active support could help the firemen to quicker victory.

Women take up the fight

"MY WIFE never took any interest in politics or anything like that before the strike. But you should see her now. She puts me to shame. She's really up in arms against the government".

This comment by a Newcastle fireman is no doubt very typical. In complete contrast with women who, to the delight and encouragement of press and TV, put pressure on striking husbands, firemen's wives have been solidly — and actively — behind them. They have organised marches, picketed local papers, set up support committees and collected money; and they have leafletted and picketed the strike-breaking troops.

At Long Eaton near Nottingham a group of strikers' wives have threatened that they will burn their husbands' uniforms and go on a "sex strike" — if they settle for the 10%!

Another group of women are solidly with the strike — those few women who manage to get into the Fire Brigade in the capacity of control room staff. Members of the FBU, their claim isn't due until May. But they've taken their turn on the picket lines. For instance, they made up about half the Bootle picket of the emergency army billet last week.

What a contrast with the officers! It takes a strike to show who your real mates are — the male officers you can be all-boys-together with, or the women insultingly relegated to backroom work and second class status in the trade union movement.

Dear Back-Stabbers . . .

Dear Len, Jack, Hugh and the rest of the Brothers...

Just a short note from a striking fireman to give you the news from the picket lines and to let you know how the lads feel about what you are doing for our strike.

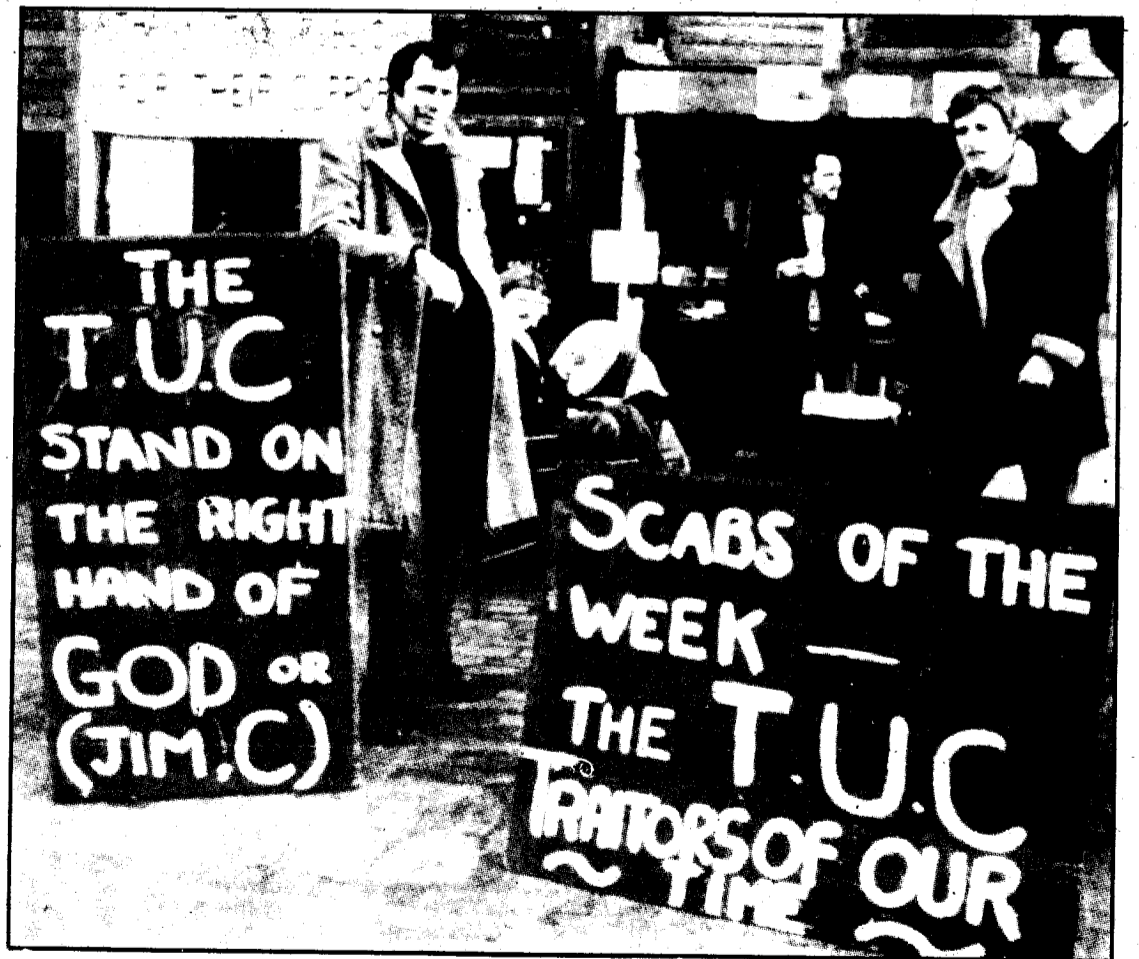
As you know, we are now in the fourth week of strike action for a living wage. The massive support we are getting from other working people has astounded us. The treachery and cowardice of the so-called leadership of the working class has amazed us.

Your 'leadership' amounts to a "get back to work" message. Thanks for the advice, but we've heard it before — from the employers and the government.

We recognise we are taking on the local authorities and the government. Now we are going to have to take you on as well.

We hear that two of you, Jack of the T&G and Alan of NUPE, couldn't find the time to attend the meeting where our Union's demand for a fight against the 10% limit was heard. We know why you weren't there. Your unions are against the 10%. But you yourselves are more concerned with keeping Sunny Jim and Magic Merlyn happy and ignoring your own Union membership.

The support we are getting from hundreds of thousands of working people shows they are as sick and tired as we are of the gov-



ernment's policy of wage-cutting in order to pay for the bosses' crisis. The cry has gone out from working people across the country: "We support the firemen. We want more than 10% too".

Why don't you listen to them...

Firemen have yellow helmets. You have got broad yellow streaks all down your backs

A STRIKING FIREMAN

Racists out!

AT a Black Country fire station the racist rantings of a National Front member had long been tolerated. Which is not surprising when the FBU tolerates such discrimination in the Fire Brigade that there are only two black firemen in all the West Midlands. But when workers from the mainly Asian Birmid foundry came to the picket with a £300

donation, the fascist on the station was told in no uncertain terms by his workmates that it would be quite unhealthy for him to open his big racist mouth again.

When workers are passive or in retreat, racism can pass or flourish. But when workers go forward together in action, racism doesn't get such an easy hearing.

TER FOUR WEEKS

WHILE THE firemen themselves are holding out strongly against financial pressures and the brick-wall pose of the Government, the Officers are none too cocksure in face of the firemen's hostility.

They're going to enormous and often uncomfortable lengths to avoid the picket lines, establishing out of the way temporary billets and skulking around the back of fires.

In West Yorkshire NAFO tried to appease the FBU with an offer to raise money for the strike. It was unanimously refused by the West Yorkshire FBU Brigade Committee. "We only call on them to withdraw their labour", Brigade Secretary Jack Oake said, and added ominously: "All we have done is decide that at this moment in time we have better things to do than word a resolution as to how we will treat them on return to normal working".

West Yorkshire NAFO were left wondering whether they'd be hung, drawn, quartered, or just blacked and run off the job like everywhere else.

NAFO leaders followed the FBU Executive into Downing Street last week, no doubt hoping for an offer on their claim that would buy off the officers and help keep the different Fire Brigade ranks divided from each

GLASGOW FIRE OFFICERS URGE STRIKE ACTION



... followed by NAFO leaders

other. They were to be dismissed and appointed.

Meanwhile, further attempts were made to bring the officers into the strike in support of the FBU. A resolution has gone to NAFO Executive from Strathclyde calling on it to bring the Union out. And this itself was a softer option, with many members wanting Strathclyde to come out unofficially and 'set the ball rolling' for a general revolt.

In London, a mass picket will be mounted on the Flood Control Centre in Holborn, which the Army is using, with essential NAFO help,

as its control HQ.

Meanwhile, results of the ballot of NAFO's membership on action for their own 40% claim were expected every day last week, with questions asked about why 4,000 ballot papers took so long to count.

And in the areas, more officers resigned to join the FBU and the strike.

LAST MINUTE NEWS: On Tuesday 6th NAFO ballot results were announced: four to one against industrial action on their own claim. As we go to press, it is not clear what will happen next.

Support is growing

THE PAPERS are pushing the results of an opinion poll taken last weekend, which made out that two-thirds of ordinary people think that firemen should accept 10% (it was financed by a group of businessmen). The previous week another poll said two-thirds supported the firemen!

The reason is: the question you ask very often decides what answer you get. Here are just a few examples of the support the firemen are getting:

* MARCHES, SUPPORT COMMITTEES, DAYS OF ACTION

North-East regional FBU chairman Harry Louvre has invited Swan Hunter outfitters to join the firemen's march organised for December 10th by the FBU and Newcastle Trades Council. In Paisley, 400 marched on Wednesday 30th, including delegations from Chrysler Linwood and striking Renfrew dustmen.

Liverpool firemen, with Trades Council backing, are calling a day of action for Friday 9th. Liverpool Trades Council has also established a strike support sub-committee. Support on the 9th is also expected from Widnes, Runcorn, and St Helens.

In Manchester, there were 3000 marching on Saturday 3rd. In the Black Country, a support committee has been formed with representatives from several fire stations, NUT, TASS at GKN Sankey, Dudley NALGO, and Longbridge. It is organising street collections and a public meeting on the 7th.

Birmingham Trades Council have set up a strike support sub-committee. Birmingham Central fire station have organised a stall in the Market to win support for the strike, and one is being arranged at Acocks Green.

Cardiff's demonstration gathered 1,000; Belfast's, 300.

In Cambridge there were 1500 demonstrators on Thursday 1st,

including firemen from the East Anglian region with their wives, plus students and local trade unionists.

In Basingstoke a support committee has been set up and is producing a twice-weekly bulletin, the first one to appear on the 5th.

* SPECIAL ACTIONS

NUPE instructed local branches to 'adopt a fire station'.

Birmingham dustmen said they would refuse to collect from doctors who had threatened to refuse to treat striking firemen.

Sunderland shipyard workers organised a visit by firemen to the yard to raise money.

Merthyr councillors voted to support the strike and wrote to three local MPs urging them to help the strike.

Tyne & Wear. Free pizzas daily

from local restaurant.

Bradford. Butchers offer to sponsor Christmas dinners for firemen
Crawley POEU to organise pantomime outing for strikers' children.
Hull dockers won't unload chemicals requiring a fireman to be present, and won't do the work with scab officers or troops.

* MONEY

£41 collected in Bristol by CPSA pickets on their anti-10% day of action;

£500 from Haringey NALGO;

£100 from Huddersfield ICI;

£50 from Huddersfield Indian Workers' Association;

£300 from Snowdown pit, Kent, plus 50p a week levy on 1,000 NUM members there.

£10,000 from NUPE;

and £250 from the London Co-Op Political Committee.



Peter, John and Mark Smith and their friend Rory, who raised £10 to buy groceries for their local firemen at Tottenham. Their story got into the Tottenham Herald, which says it will pass on to them money sent in by readers. Now they plan gifts or a Christmas party for strikers' children.

Trimming the facts to fit their opinions

LAST WEEK Workers' Action reported the 'Rank and File' conference, held in Manchester on 26th November. The main force behind that conference was 'Socialist Worker', and in their issue of 3rd December they reported the event.

In two pages of report they make no mention at all of any of the political debate at the conference. That, in the final analysis, is their right, if they think the debate wasn't important. But they are also selective in their report on the speech by Geordie Barclay, from the Stanton steelworks strike committee.

Of the strikers' demands, they mention only the claim for a £15 increase (which 'Socialist Worker' approves of), leaving out (besides some smaller items) the strikers' call for a cost of living clause giving 40p for each 1% rise in the cost of living. (This, as it happens, is also the element of the claim which has met the fiercest opposition from management!)

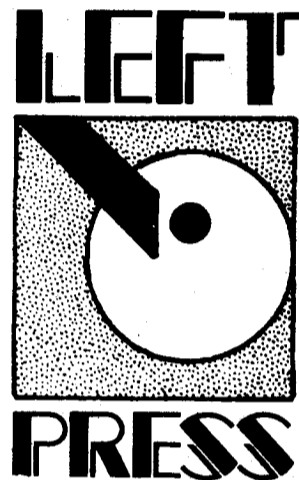
When 'Socialist Worker' oppose cost-of-living increases (as they did in debate at the conference), they have a right to their opinion. But to censor reports of workers fighting for such increases — that is a different matter!

The following letter has been sent to 'Socialist Worker':—

Dear comrades,
At the Rank and File conference on Saturday November 26th I spoke on behalf of the Stanton strike committee. I pointed out explicitly our demands for £15 across the board, a cost of living index of 40p per %, average holiday pay, 4% for anomalies and for differentials, and a nine-month only agreement. I was therefore surprised and annoyed that these demands were not accurately reported in your account of my speech in 'Socialist Worker', which gave only the £15 demand. Possibly the omission was only carelessness, but the cost of living element was the subject of a debate at the conference itself. Apparently many of the delegates, and especially the conference arrangements committee, had taken little notice of what I had said.

When the resolution came up about the sliding scale of wages it was opposed on the grounds that it would be unacceptable to the trade union movement, that workers would not fight for this demand which would protect their wages from inflation. And yet at the very same conference a report had been given by myself from our strike committee which had drummed out the argument on this level.

Admittedly it was 40p per % rather than the £1 per % which the resolution proposed. But the principle of monthly adjustments of our wages to protect them from inflation was in our demands. Our purpose was to impress upon people's minds how important this



principle was and to increase the amount after the principle had been accepted.

I would ask you to print this letter in your paper. Many of the delegates at the conference who I spoke to agreed that the sliding scale of wages was a valid and important point of negotiations today. Those who are opposed to it I would ask to reconsider, after looking at the experience of our strike for cost of living protection.

GEORDIE BARCLAY

Mumbo jumbo & criminal libel

IN ITS ISSUE of 1st December, the *Newsline* explains "How and What the Workers Revolutionary Party learns from the firemen's strike":

"Our Party must listen carefully to the firemen and the working class in order to penetrate with its political knowledge and advanced practical experience the ever-changing words which the firemen use in order to express themselves in phrases which appear in the form of contradiction.

"The starting point is not the limitations of what is said — the source of the contradiction is contained in the objective world capitalist crisis behind what is said. The interaction of the 'essence' in the source of this contradiction with the appearance under conditions in which the essence is transformed into appearance and appearance into essence is the starting point for our Party".

That is just tragic to the extent that there are sincere people who still take such mumbo-jumbo to be Marxism. The *Newsline's* editorial the next day was equally gibberish but wistful and more dangerous.

It insinuated that the SWP has been sequestering funds collected for the firemen and that the IMG cynically set up Pete Cooper [who made the tape-recording of Sir Richard Dobson] for victimisation. Nothing was stated clearly — it could not be, because there is not a shred of evidence for these monstrous smears — but the implication was unmistakable.

Already the WRP's long record of vicious, lying factionalism makes their name stink in the labour movement. Every trade union branch or Trades Council where there are WRP members should bring them to account before the workers' movement for criminal libel for circulating this infamous rubbish.

'The broken teeth shoot past my head like bullets'

BY THE side of each machine is a list of petty regulations governing your working day; the foreman is always breathing down your neck; the boss is a distant, unapproachable tyrant; the trade union official is a miserable creep who always sides with the boss; the speed of your machine is driven ever faster because of the system of piece work.

It could be a factory anywhere in this country. But it's not. It's the Red Star tractor plant in Budapest, in the heart of a supposedly socialist country.

Miklos Haraszti, a young Hungarian writer, took a job as a miller in this factory to find out what life was really like on the shop floor. His book, circulated secretly in type-written form in Hungary four years ago, was the result. It painted such a bleak picture that the Hungarian authorities prosecuted him for "grave incitement" and spreading "hatred of the State".

'looting'

The original title of the book was *Piece Work*, and its central theme is the effect of the piece work system on working conditions. Haraszti worked on two different types of milling machine simultaneously and was paid on a complicated piece rate system that few workers in the factory understood.

When he first arrived he spent some time keeping records of times and production and discovered that the required "norm" set for production could not be reached according to the proper rules and regulations. So all the workers in the factory carried out what they called "looting" — running the machines faster than they were supposed to in order to exceed the "norm" and get a good bonus. Only by driving themselves on in this way could they make sure of a decent wage. "Step up the cutting speed and feed the job through faster. If you want to make a living wage here you can't let things run smoothly", he was advised soon after he started.

"It's not easy. As soon as I start the accelerated pace brings on an extreme state of nerves. My eyes are transfixed by the hail of sparks; my whole body strains towards the lever; sometimes I can't bear the tension any longer and pull too soon. The machine trembles and shrieks. The excessive stress on the material induces ominous knockings and vibrations... the milling disc hits against harder material and breaks, making an infernal din. The broken teeth shoot past my head like bullets."

Accidents like this are common. Even the most experienced workers suffer from the constant strain on their nerves. Haraszti was lucky to escape without injury. In the next section a miller trying to save time by moving the pieces without stopping the machine had all the fingers of his right hand torn off.

Each year the "norm" is raised and the workers forced to step up their "looting". This in turn simply paves the way for another rise in the "norm". Because the workers are producing more than the norm in their desperate efforts to get a living wage, the managers can then argue that the norm is too low. They raise it again, the workers go even faster, and the vicious circle spins on.

More and more production — but no increase in wages. And those who criticise this brutal "incentive" system are accused of "vulgar egalitarianism".

The trade union is no protection against this savage exploitation. The union is run by the foreman and the union official, who is nominated for the job by the head foreman.

Haraszti's union official was once a turner — "a painfully meticulous worker who was never late and did a lot of overtime." His main trade union function is to pass on messages from management to the workers. Otherwise he just loaf around and chats to old friends. If anyone brings him a problem "... the usual result is 'It's not on, as Gyula [the head foreman] explained at the collective meeting, and he's quite right.'"

bonus

With a compliant union like that it's not surprising that the management can pull some amazing tricks. Haraszti describes one: "Once the foreman read out a personal appeal from the managing director, calling on us to make collective sacrifices. He, the foreman, interpreted this to mean that we would have to put in more overtime in order to get the profit-sharing bonus at the end of the year. But at the end of the year, no such bonuses were distributed. The factory journal gave an astonishing explanation: 'In spite of production reaching the planned schedules the money allocated for bonuses has already been spent in payment for overtime.'"

This of course didn't apply to the managers, who have the annual profit-dividends built into their monthly salaries. They did very well out of the increased production.

Haraszti builds up a comprehensive indictment of the



Neal Statham reviews "A Worker in a Workers' State", by Miklos Haraszti. [Penguin, 85p].

bureaucratic oppression of the working class in the factories of the deformed workers' state in Hungary.

For that he was brought to trial. The Stalinist court ordered that all copies of the book be confiscated and that Haraszti be sentenced to 8 months' jail, suspended for three years.

It wasn't his first trouble with the police. Twice before he had been placed under Police Control: a mixture of surveillance and house arrest. He was allowed to work, but any other form of public life was forbidden: travel, entertainment, use of restaurants... It was during one of these periods that he worked at the Red Star tractor works.

'homers'

His book isn't a dreary sociological tract — its pages capture the sounds and the sights of the factory: the sardonic humour in response to the grinding labour, the slick operations of the head foreman, the jaded nonsensical official slogans plastered about ("For the expansion of trade union democracy with the election of management", for instance) bring the factory alive.

Can this be socialism? After reading this book alone, only the most hardened Stalinist hack could think so. It shows the worker in "socialist" Hungary as worse off than his British counterpart in a moderately well-unionised factory. Few other books capture the differences — and the similarities — as vividly.

Haraszti's own preference comes out when he describes, near the end of the book, the making of "homers" — items that workers make in their spare time for their own use.

"By making homers we win back power over the machine and our freedom from the machine; skill is subordinated to a sense of beauty. However insignificant the object, its form of creation is artistic. This is all the more so because homers are rarely made with expensive, showy or semi-finished materials. They are created out of junk, from useless scraps of iron, from left-overs, and this ensures that their beauty comes first and foremost from the labour itself."

The ideal of such a labour of love expresses the aim that work be something more than a daily grind, that machinery should be subordinated to people's drive to create, rather than the other way round. Haraszti gives us more than just a vivid picture of drudgery but a pointer toward socialism.

CP BUILDERS MOVING TO THE RIGHT

AS THE next issue of "Building Worker" will not appear till the new year, we are issuing this statement in response to building workers asking us what our attitude is to the election taking place in December and our policy for an election next year if the General Secretary's position becomes vacant.

During December members of UCATT will be voting for candidates to fill the vacancy on the Executive Council of their union. At the moment the EC is composed of three 'Left' and three 'Right' and in theory whoever is elected will determine the political majority of the EC of UCATT.

The labels 'Left' and 'Right' can be misleading and often only indicate which group can help you in furthering your career. For example George Smith was elected as a 'left' candidate. The only guide to voting is what policies are put forward in the election address and even more important, a principled fight to put those policies into operation. Election addresses of all the candidates should be read out at the branch before voting takes place.

Of the seven candidates, only four can be considered serious contenders.

Bro. McTurk, a full-time elected organiser, is an ex-member of the Communist Party but now (according to 'Contract Journal', 27.10.77) "said to have the backing of the union's general secretary George Smith". He was responsible for this famous quote (Laings, Heriot-Watt University, Rickerton: "I don't know anything about this strike, but your stewards are wrong").

Bro. Rea is a regional organiser and the union Referee. He is also reported to be closely associated with the Orange Order in the North East of England.

Bro. Graves is a full-time appointed official of the union. Although living in Norwood in South London he recently transferred from his branch in London to a branch in Whitby in the North of England in order to stand in the election. Bro. Graves made legal history by taking the union to court earlier this year when he thought there would be an attempt to disqualify him from standing because of his 300-mile plus branch transfer.

As Bro. Graves is standing as a non-aligned candidate, whatever that is, it would be fair to describe him along with Bros. McTurk and Rea as not on the Left.

Policies

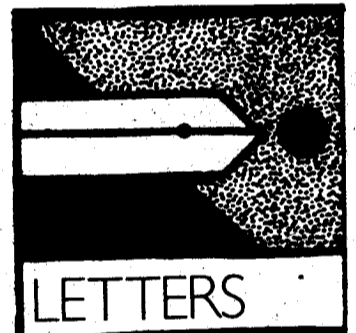
Only Bro. Kelly describes himself as on the "left of centre". Bro. Kelly is a regional organiser in Aberdeen.

Although the candidate has to be a member of a branch in the North East and Scotland area, voting takes place all over the country. Judging by the known facts and the election addresses of the candidates, a vote for Bro. Kelly would appear to be in the best interests of the members of UCATT. However, anyone who suggests that the election of one or even seven "left of centre" members of the UCATT EC is all that is necessary will be seriously misleading building workers.

Correct policies must be explained and fought for through all levels of the working class. Attempts to "build from the top" whether in trade unions or political parties have always proved a failure.

If George Smith passes on to the House of Lords some time next year there will be an election for general secretary. At the last election which the left contested, the Communist Party put up Jack Rusca against Smith. Rusca was district secretary of the then ASW in London, although he was later removed from office to be replaced by an appointed official, Len Eaton, under the new rules to wipe out the elected CPers and left-wingers all over the country.

With the rapid move to the right by the CP in the building industry, such gangster tactics by the right wing are no longer needed. The CP do not intend to put up a candidate for the general secretary's position, and therefore will not be campaigning for a policy, but intend to support the present assistant general secretary, Bro. Woods, who is not quite so right wing as Bro. Hardman.



In the past the CP have decided who the 'Left' candidate was to be, and in most cases we would have voted for the candidate anyway, although there was never any discussion as to who the 'left' candidate was to be. For example, in London, at no time did the Joint Sites Committee, since its creation in the mid-sixties, hold any discussions on which candidate to support for any elections at either a local or national level. Word was given from King Street "which of the lads had the right progressive policies".

This is no longer acceptable, and in any future elections either at a local or national level candidates will be taken on their record and if needed a candidate will be put forward. Certainly an election for general secretary will not be allowed to go by without putting up a candidate for the left.

The policy of supporting a "lesser of two evils" right winger for office is in line with a Communist Party which shuts down the Building Workers' Charter because it criticised Smith and Jones, and allows its leading members to cross a picket line maintained by principled CP members on Roberts site, Kennington.

From the national committee of the rank and file paper, "Building Worker"

For information, and for copies of the latest issue of "Building Worker" (no.9), contact 19 Red Post Hill, London SE24.

LAST SATURDAY, 3rd,
150 DELEGATES ATTENDED
A JOINT ANTI-APARTHEID/
LABOUR PARTY CONFER-
ENCE ON SOUTHERN
AFRICA. NEIL COBBETT
REPORTS.

FOREIGN Secretary David Owen was there to try to justify the Labour Government's record. His speech was exactly what we might have predicted — a grovelling apology for imperialism in Africa. He said that "we" would not see any settlement in Southern Africa, let alone a desirable one, without involving Smith and Vorster in negotiations. But who are the "we" that Owen constantly referred to? The freedom fighters in Southern Africa? The labour movement? No! Owen was referring solely to himself and his opposite numbers in the Carter administration — the representatives of US and British imperialism and all their

ANTI-APARTHEID/LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE ON S. AFRICA

ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN THROWN OUT

vested interests in Southern Africa.

There was a good deal of opposition at the conference to this sort of imposed 'solution' for Southern Africa, but it was not focused on practical campaigning in Britain.

Unfortunately the vast majority of delegates missed the commission on campaigning in Britain. Here again, however, there was much general

talk, with practical proposals mostly centred on individual action or pressure-group politics to influence 'world' (i.e. ruling-class) opinion.

Mick Woods, delegate from Moss Side LPYS and a Workers Action supporter, said that individual boycotts were not enough. Only a complete trade blacking, with a fight for action on the docks, could be adequate.

At the same time the labour movement must demand that the Labour government renounces any attempt to impose an imperialist solution. We must demand that modern military equipment be sent to the nationalist movements. We should also give active industrial and financial assistance to the organising of mass black unions. The TUC must be forced to withdraw its recognition of the white-dominated TUCSA.

If the leaders of the labour movement refuse to carry out these policies, a campaign must be launched to remove them and replace them with people who will.

After Joan Lestor had delivered a pious justification of the 'humanitarian' pleas of the Labour left for the last twenty years at a reconvened plenary session, there was a question and answer session with a panel including Joan Lestor, Abdul Minty, and re-

presentatives from ZANU, ZAPU, and the ANC (SA).

WA supporter Pete Keenlyside pointed out that the day's discussions had shown that the Government takes no notice of, and has an opposite policy to, the CLPs. There is a split between the Government and the Party. One seeks to preserve white supremacy by modifying it, and the other wants to smash it.

If Owen refuses to carry out the policy of the Party, he is not representative; there should be a campaign to remove and replace him. Keenlyside asked Lestor what she thought of such a campaign in the Labour Party.

She excused herself from a definite answer by saying that although it is easy to pass resolution, the CLPs and trade unions don't keep up enough pressure. A 'psychological commitment' should be followed up by making sure that MPs don't escape their responsibilities. This is the only way of influencing the government....

The conference passed three resolutions. The first rejected the Anglo-American proposals for Zimbabwe, the second called for an International Tribunal on the death of Steve Biko, and the third called for more fund-raising activity for the Patriotic Front in CLPs and trade union branches.

Some more points on CPSA Conference

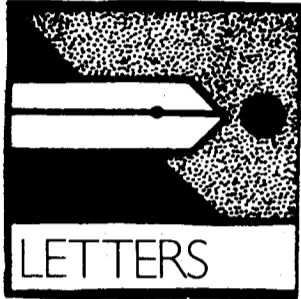
Comrades,
Stephen Corbishley's report of the CPSA Rules Revision conference (WA81) misses several important points.

1. While the defeat of the Right wing rules was important it is equally important that the left come up with replacement rules for the CPSA Annual Conference in May 1978. Both Left and Right have realised that some parts of the rulebook are a mess and that this needs to be cleared up. But a majority of the Conference realised that the Right's way of doing so was wrong.

What is needed now is for the left to capitalise on this situation as soon as possible by putting forward its own draft rules to replace those thrown out. This must be done as soon as possible to prevent the right regaining the initiative and to keep alive the debate in CPSA on the nature of union democracy.

2. During the Conference over £1000 was collected for the FBU from 1,200 or so delegates. Also, Southport saw its first trade union march and mass picket when half the conference marched to the local fire station on Tuesday lunch time and joined the picket there for an hour.

3. Conference also voted by 497-419 to send a telegram of support to the Grunwick Strike Committee after they had been suspended by



APEX. After this vote the anti-democratic nature of the Right was clearly seen when they tried to water down the support by stating that the telegram only came from a majority of delegates, or that we couldn't send anything as the branches had not discussed the issues. The President finally insisted that the message would go in the name of the CPSA Conference.

4. Redder Tape, the SWP-backed rank and file group in the Civil Service unions, was in total disarray. There was no issue if their paper for conference; indeed the last one came out in August. Their Conference public meeting was badly publicised, then postponed, and finally cancelled. Their intervention at Conference was not noticeably different from that of the Broad Left.

It is now clearly time to take another look at what is going on inside the SWP Rank & File Movement — and their National Conference should provide the opportunity to do so.* In fact the policies that Redder Tape adopted at its Conference in the beginning of January have virtually all been abandoned by now, so the question must be asked: has Redder Tape a future or should socialists join the Broad Left and fight for revolutionary policies there?

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD
Bristol

Corrections...

Comrades,
I must protest about the article 'Blame the Blacks or Blame the Jews!' (WA 82), which appeared under my name. Admittedly I submitted the copy late, and it may or may not have needed editing! But in two important respects the article as printed differs from the article that I wrote, and in both cases I believe the 'amended' article is wrong.

Firstly, you have me say that 'It is quite futile to measure and rationally compare precise points in such a nightmarish and irrational ideological concoction' (as fascism). The implication of this sentence is that David Edgar's attempt to analyse the ideology of the National Front is a worthless exercise. I do not hold this position. On the contrary, in my view Edgar quite correctly identifies the main basis of NF ideology — the International Financial Conspiracy — and correctly associates this with Hitler Nazism rather than, for example, Powellism.

Not in this point academic, since I believe that the Front's attempt to reconcile this hoary doctrine with present-day political realities leads them into practical difficulties in the consolidation of a stable 'cadre' recruited originally on the basis of simple anti-black racism.

Moreover, a conspiracy theory of sorts (whether anti-semitic or not is another discussion — though the fact remains that the NF are anti-semitic) is a necessary part of their ideology, not merely 'an opportunistically concocted demagoguery'.

I went on in the original article to warn that the NF are entirely capable of 'opportunist' deviations from the 'pure' Hitlerite schema, and more importantly that despite the analytical differences between fascism and State racism, the two phenomena reinforce rather than simply compete with each other. From this it follows that Edgar's conclusion that the fight against State racism and the fight against fascism are not inherently connected is dangerously wrong. In your revised version of my article you have me condemn this mistake as 'positively reactionary'. But, mistaken though Edgar is in important respects, he has attempted, in his pamphlet to make a serious analysis from the standpoint of militant anti-fascism. Throwing around the epithet 'reactionary' in this context is uncharitable to put it mildly. Edgar's is so far the only attempt to examine seriously the Front's politics, and for this reason alone it is well worth reading.

With comradesly greetings,
JAMES RYAN.

What the Court wouldn't do the NEC did instead

THE ATTEMPT to commit seven members of Newham North East Constituency Labour Party to prison for contempt of court, instigated by Julian Lewis and Paul McCormick, was quashed, at least temporarily, at the High Court hearing at the end of October.

The action was brought as a result of the General Management Committee meeting on September 28th, which continued in defiance of injunctions served on five of the seven. A 'left wing' judge, Mr Peter Pain, was appointed at the last minute to hear the case, and the defendants got off on all the charges.

As the court case was proceeding, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party stepped in and passed a resolution suspending the officers, the GMC and the Executive Committee of the CLP, and setting up a four-man inquiry committee into the Newham party. This committee, which includes Heffer and Tom Bradley, has already taken evidence from party members, and will report back to the NEC.

Thus for the second time in twelve months legal action by Lewis and McCormick has resulted in the CLP being placed in a state of suspended animation, with the dissolution of the party by the NEC now seeming on the cards.

Meanwhile, Lewis and McCormick appear undeterred by their temporary setback in court, and are continuing with their legal actions with as much enthusiasm as ever. They have appealed



Julian Lewis

against the decision on the contempt charges. The chairman and the secretary of the local Co-Op party have had writs served against them which seek to have the last three Co-Op party meetings declared unconstitutional. The significance of this is that the Co-Op party sends six left wing delegates to the GMC of Newham North East CLP.

Most interesting is that Lewis and McCormick have finally taken action against the NEC itself. They are asking that the suspensions made by the NEC on the 26th October be declared null and void. To this end they have issued writs against the national agent, Underhill, the general secretary, Hayward, and several NEC members including Mikardo, Heffer, Allaun, Nick Bradley and Joan Maynard.

N.A.G. DISCUSSES STEWARDS SYSTEM

THE NALGO Action group held its annual conference in Leeds on the weekend of November 19-20. No resolutions were received in advance, and so it was called a 'working conference'. It was more like a weekend school, in fact.

Useful for discussing matters like expediting Nalگو's transfer from Whitleyism to the shop steward system, the meeting did not match up to being Nalگو Action's sovereign policy-making body. NAG policy on pay was challenged, but the meeting reaffirmed the old line: for a flat-rate increase, now set at £20.

At the Conference were Terry Skyrme and Valerie Beint, social workers with Hereford and Worcester Social Services, who have been victimised at work as a result of arrest and conviction, respectively at Grunwicks and at an anti-NF demonstration.

The campaign against the victimisations is being organised from 8 Gordon Road, Birmingham 17, where fuller details can be obtained, and where messages of support should be sent.

FOULING UP THE SCHEME

IN SPITE of the fact that all the major Post Office unions have accepted the scheme, the 'Industrial Democracy' experiment looks more and more shaky. The new Post Office Chairman, Barlow, is asking the Government to defer the starting date, and inter-union squabbles are fouling up the scheme. The UPW executive, for example, have demanded that the same ratio of union representation as at national level should be applied all across the Post Office, even in businesses like National Giro and Data Processing where they have no members working.

However, this should not encourage militants to think the idea is dead yet. It must be killed by forcing the unions to withdraw and by refusing to participate in any way.

AFTER little more than a month of limited non-cooperation [WA 76] the Post Office Engineering Union have suspended their action until next year because the Government have ruled that their claim for a 35 hour week would count as part of any pay settlement under the 10% rule.

It is clear that the POEU NEC have no intention of fighting for a 35 hour week, although engineers' jobs are threatened by the introduction of electronic exchanges requiring fewer staff for maintenance.

BIG BRISTOL PICKET AGAINST N.F.

A PICKET outside a National Front election meeting in Sifton Park school, Bristol, recently, gathered 1000, including many local people and parents. The NF meeting was part of their election campaign in an Avon County by-election caused by the death of a Tory councillor recently. 50 NF supporters were protected by 100 police.

An attempt by parents and local residents to have the meeting banned by the Council education committee had failed as the committee decided there was no legal way they could prevent the meeting during an election. The Education Committee have decided that Avon should take a lead in getting the law changed.

Unfortunately, during the picket six anti-fascists were arrested, including three coloured people. The treatment that whites and coloureds received from the police differed considerably, and the picket organisers are considering an official complaint about the police behaviour.

The picket was supported by the Labour Party, IMG, SWP, and other anti-fascists in Bristol. It is seen as the first step in building a strong anti-fascist movement in Bristol, where the NF claim they will run candidates in all five constituencies at the next General Election.

C.W.

WORKERS IN ACTION

POLICE OUT IN FORCE IN STANTON STRIKE

"SENIOR Management also particularly thank the Derbyshire County Constabulary whose assistance at a particularly critical stage in the picketing has been crucial..." said British Steel, Stanton, in an advertisement in the Nottingham Evening Post. On Wednesday 30th November pickets arriving at the Central Melting Plant had found 92 policemen there, with spotlights on the plant gates and two coaches of policemen in reserve.

In an effort to draw the Central Melting Plant workers into their strike for £15

increase plus an agreement giving 40p for each 1% rise in the cost of living, 120 of the 1,000 Stanton strikers had picketed the plant the previous night. The work-

force finally got into the plant through side entrances — but, unwilling to take any more chances, the bosses made sure the police were there the next day.

Since the police show of strength, even the few militants who had come out at the Central Melting Plant have returned to work. But the strike is still solid at the Spun Plants and parts of the Concrete Linings Plant.

At a Workers' Action meeting in London on 4th December, on "The Firemen's Strike and the 10% Limit", Pete Radcliff, a member of the GMWU strike committee, described the dispute and said that its success depended on three factors.

Firstly, the firemen's strike. "We would have been totally incapable of persuading our brothers and sisters to come out if the firemen had not been on strike... We depend a lot on the firemen's strike". The Stanton workers are confronting not only the Government's 10% limit, but also a 7% limit which British Steel are trying to impose.

Secondly, financial supp-

ort. The strikers are trying to get levies from other steelworks and are also approaching local miners for support. The London meeting took a collection of £15.04 which was split equally between the firemen and Stanton.

Thirdly, holding out on strike into the New Year when there is a chance of other steelworks taking strike action over pay.

The GMWU regional officer has recommended that the dispute be made official. If the Executive accepts this recommendation, it will of course help both financially and with keeping the strike solid at Stanton. The strike leaders, however, aren't placing any reliance on getting that help.

Pete Radcliff described why the strikers felt they had to hold out. It wasn't just for the wages. "In the steel industry, we've taken a lot over recent years, in terms of

redundancies and job loss. If we lose this strike they probably will force down us a productivity deal which will mean a loss of one in five jobs".

The threat is underlined by letters sent out by management to all strikers warning of lost export orders "and the obvious consequence of unemployment". There has also been red-baiting directed against the strike leaders, even — as Pete Radcliff told the London meeting — talk of the strike being "led by the IRA" because of the role of Irish militants on the strike committee. But the immigrant workers at Stanton, especially those from the West Indies, "more than any other section of workers realise the necessity of our strike".

Messages of support and donations to Brian McGinley, 29 Glendon Rd, Kirk Hallam, Derbyshire.



Civil Service unions put brake on pay fight

LAST WEEK was the Civil Service unions' Week of Action. And it got only a token report in the national press, despite over 10,000 CPSA members taking industrial action against the Labour Government's attitude to public sector pay.

The Civil Service has a pay agreement based on 'fair comparison' with similar jobs in outside industry. This has meant that Civil Service pay has always lagged behind other workers, and also that they have rarely had to fight for a pay settlement. Instead they have usually got just a bit less than similar jobs elsewhere.

When the pay controls began in August 1975 this scheme was suspended. The Civil Service like most others got its £6 and 4%.

In August this year the unions pressed for a return to the old method, based on the Pay Research Unity (PRU). The Government refused. The SCPS (in November) and now the other unions have staged protest actions against this. Within the overall 10% limit, it appears that the Government hope to restrict public sector and civil service workers to less than 10% to balance out 10%-plus

rises elsewhere. They are talking about 5 to 6% with consolidation.

However, the Civil Service unions are not going out for increases to restore the living standards of their members; they are after the best they can get in the present pay policy. In contrast, there are rank and file demands for £25 now and protection against future inflation through agreements giving £1 for every 1% rise in the cost of living.

The union leaders are sabotaging the fight and trying to put the blame for the lack of an effective campaign on other Unions. The CPSA leadership, for example, blames the SCPS for calling its own day of action in early November rather than waiting for the rest — and forbade strikes of more than a day during the week of action!

The London Area Committee of the CPSA, no. 4, has called for a London conference of branch delegates to discuss pay. This should be the first step in building towards a conference involving all unions in the civil service to prepare for a national fight on pay before April 1978.

SC/CW

EVENTS

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

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER. Longbridge Action Group meeting, 'After the Ballot, What Way Forward?' 12.30pm at the Labour Club, Bristol St, Birmingham.

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER. 'Campaign for Action in NUPE' conference. 11.30am at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1.

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER. The International-Communist League public meeting advertised for this date, on 'Marxism and Terrorism', has been postponed. A new date will be announced later.

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER. Cardiff Workers' Action meeting: "Violence, the State, and Revolution" 7.30pm at VCS, St Mary Street.

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER. Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'Ireland: the Law and the Working Class'. Speakers: Jennifer Tait (RCG), Brian Rose-Smith, and a speaker from the TUCPTA. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. Adm. 20p.

15-16 APRIL, 1978. Twelfth National Workers' Control conference: Workers' Control and Full Employment. At Sheffield University; organised by the Institute for Workers' Control. Credentials from IWC, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET; cost, £13.00. Papers can be circulated in advance if submitted before 15 February.

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SOGAT'S WRONG KIND OF SOLIDARITY

IN THE Financial Times of 30th November, Beaverbrook chairman Victor Matthews summed up the millionaires' view of Fleet Street: "It sickens me to see how little work some people do in Fleet Street. I am not talking about the Express particularly, but about Fleet Street as a whole; but I cannot change the rules overnight".

In the same article, Matthews chalked up one victory in 'changing the rules': an agreement to cut journalists' jobs at the Express by 10%. And within a few days there were two other victories for the press magnates.

The High Court ruled that it was illegal for the print union SOGAT to stop the Express printing extra copies during the journalists' dispute at the Daily Mirror. (Previously there has been an unwritten agreement against such extra printing). And on Friday 2nd the Mirror journalists went back to work on management's terms.

The Daily Mirror journalists had claimed £3,000 a year increase. Management refused even to discuss this claim, and offered £1533 increase with a merit review to cover new technology — and the loss of 45 jobs. Even that offer was withdrawn after the Department of Employment said it broke the 10% limit.

Mirror management locked out the journalists on November 21st after they had held a series of union meetings in work hours to press for the claim. The dispute soon spread to the Sunday Mirror, Sunday People, and Reville, but not to the Manchester Mirror journalists, who had accepted a deal similar to the London offer.

Finally the journalists returned to work promising to stop union meetings in work hours and to negotiate on the basis of the management's offer.

There was the traditional lack of cooperation between Fleet Street unions. NATSOPA and SOGAT were both willing to print the paper during the journalists' dispute from material supplied from Manchester, and were stopped only by the refusal of the Manchester journalists.

Both NGA and NATSOPA Clerical have signed agreements with the Mirror on new technology — the NGA deal permitting the loss of 247 jobs, and the NATSOPA one losing 120 jobs and permitting complete flexibility in all departments.

SOGAT's attempt to stop the Express printing extra seemed to show more solidarity. It brought an angry reaction from the Newspaper Publishers Association: they "could not accept that a union or any other group had the right to determine or place restrictions on the numbers of copies of newspapers which could be printed". But SOGAT explained their action this way (in a letter to Matthews): "You seek to promote the declining sales of the Daily Express to the disadvantage of the Daily Mirror when the paper has no means of defending itself".

Solidarity with the Daily Mirror's sales figures, but no solidarity with other workers! That's the typical attitude of the craft-conscious print unions; and the events at the Mirror and the Express show how suicidal it is.

CLARE RUSSELL