

# workers' ACTION

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10p

## RACIST GRAND RAT GOES ON A SPREE

# It's different if you're black



**'I FEEL this is very unfair. Whatever you may think of this man he is not a dangerous criminal. It is a matter of priorities'.**

Police Federation leader Jim Jardine was replying to criticism. Why had Scotland Yard allowed Ku Klux Klan 'Grand Dragon' David Duke to go on a 12-day spree of cross-burnings, TV interviews, hour-long radio phone-ins, meetings to galvanise the most twisted, poisonous racists to violent action, and finally to have himself photographed outside the Home Office and Scotland Yard itself, before they got around to serving him with a notice to quit that had been meanwhile gathering dust?

When they did 'find' him, he was served with an Order to leave the country at once — and left at liberty to take fourteen days to appeal.

That's how the Home Office acts when it's a matter of dealing with racist scum. It puts on its Dad's Army hat while Merlyn Rees ponders on whether he should bother

**Star treatment for Ku Klux Klan man Duke, jail for black worker Rupa Ali**

himself to 'crack such a little nut'.

All very cosy. Aren't our police wonderfully genial idiots...

**Rupa Ali is unlikely to see them that way. In his case things were different.**

Rupa Ali isn't a dragon or a wizard or anything like that. He doesn't burn crosses or dress up in a hooded white nightie. He's just a working-class youngster who earns a honest living working in a restaurant.

But when Newcastle police suspected he might have been living here for seven years in breach of their immigration rules, they came charging into



his house at dawn and carted him off to Durham jail, where he stayed for six weeks before being released — and then only on £15,000 bail.

But for the action of Newcastle Trades Council, who campaigned for his freedom, he might have been bundled out of the country, just like dozens of others from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh, or Cyprus, or Turkey...

**Not for them a dithering, dopey police force too busy with dangerous criminals or 'other priorities'.**

**Or is it that they themselves are the 'other priorities' of Britain's police?**

## SUPPORT THE U.S. MINERS!

Solidarity picket at the U.S. Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London. Noon to 2pm, Wednesday 22nd March.

Organised by Socialist Challenge and Workers' Action.

# AMERICAN MINERS' STRIKE IN THE BALANCE

**THE U.S. coalminers' strike is in the balance this week.**

President Carter pins his prayers on using the Taft-Hartley injunction served late last week to split the miners. "If we can get a moderate number to go back to work we can prevent a crisis. I believe an adequate proportion will comply with the law".

The idea is that a return to work in the less militant areas, combined with massive repression to get the coal moved, will see supplies through to the warmer weather and cut a lot of ground from under the miners' bargaining position.

1451 local, district, and national leaders of the miners' union have been served with Taft-Hartley injunctions to order their members back. From this week, the flying pickets that have closed down many non-union miners become illegal. So do any actions, however peaceful, to stop the movement of coal.

While miners met in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Indiana to burn the injunctions and draw up plans to defy "this rich man's law", state troopers and National Guards arrived to take up battle positions, many hastily billeted in local hotels.

## DEAL

In Washington, in a last-minute bid to avoid bloody class war (and unhappy about an enforced return to work which could entail sabotage of machinery or underground go-slows and sit-ins) the employers are negotiating again.

They have dropped from their team the steel industry representatives who were foremost in pushing for a union-bashing deal. But so far the only concessions reported are minor changes in health charges and a slight equalisation of pensions. (Miners want pensions of those who retired before 1974 brought up to the level of those retiring after that date).

It seems that the employers are still not backing down on their demands to be

allowed to victimise local strike leaders and wildcat pickets. And in return for the small concessions, they have tried to re-introduce an incentive scheme go-ahead which the union threw out last month, and which the employers had dropped from the most recent deal.

The employers provoked the strike in early December, planning to break the power of a Union which had seen better days. Now that Carter has weighed in with the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act, they are clearly sticking to a gamble which a couple of weeks ago had begun to look like a bad one.

## UNITY

The 160,000 miners have shown exemplary unity and determination so far, in the face of bitter hardship. They have brought 12 states and many key industries near to crisis point. They have brushed aside a leadership which tried to sell them out. And there is as yet no sign of even a 'moderate number' knuckling under to Carter's legal bludgeon, though the UMW's Executive Board voted 17-5 to order a return to work.

Their brave stand in face of Carter's violent assault is winning the miners growing support from other workers. Under rank and file pressure, even the bureaucratic leadership of the carworkers has come up with a \$2 million donation — despite the refusal of UMW chief Arnold Miller to call for union support.

**In face of Carter's split tactics, the miners desperately need to forge a national strike leadership committed to winning all their demands, prepared to seek solidarity action, and able to prevent the Miller clique from any further double-dealing sell-outs.**

This old leadership is thoroughly discredited and despised in the coalfields; but its continued existence as the only national leadership leaves it, though wounded and weakened, still a very dangerous threat indeed to the rank and file miners.

# Baader- Meinhof Guilt by association spreads

KLAUS CROISSANT is suspect for having defended the Red Army Faction terrorists in court. And now Croissant's lawyers are suspect for defending him.

On Thursday 9th Croissant's trial opened. He is charged with operating an information service between the RAF prisoners, by transporting papers and books between their jails, and thus aiding a 'criminal association'.

All the defence lawyers, journalists and visitors were told they would be searched. If a metal detector showed positive, they were required to strip. Every visitor had his or her identity card taken away by the police and photocopied.

One defence lawyer submitted to the searches in order to be able to make a protest in court (the rest refused). "These measures", declared Eberhard Kempf, "infringe the rights of defence."

"My client is not charged with having taken weapons into the prison, but with having exceeded his functions as a defence lawyer by taking in papers. Klaus Croissant is not accused of terrorism, but these searches show that we lawyers are already suspected of carrying weapons."

"We demand that you should say that there is not the least suspicion against us; without that we cannot work..."

"The searches are discriminatory measures. We will not accept them unless they are also carried out on the prosecutor and the judges. Only on that condition will the security argument have any credibility."

"Everybody here could bring weapons in, even the prosecutor, and not only the lawyers defending Klaus Croissant."

The prosecutor and the judges were taken aback, but the court finally ordered that they should be searched too. Then the case was postponed to Tuesday 14th, while consultations were made on the legality of the searches.

The German Lawyers' Association has denounced the searches as 'disgraceful'.

# ISRAEL: WHAT THE RAID WAS FOR

THE PALESTINIAN raid into Israel was undoubtedly designed more for a diplomatic than a military effect. Its timing was unmistakable: Israeli Defence Minister Ezer Weizman was in Washington, Prime Minister Begin was due to fly there for talks with President Carter.

According to British press accounts, a Palestinian guerrilla unit launched an attack near Tel-Aviv, killing 30 Israelis but losing nine of their own people in the operation.

By the boldness and relative success of the action [it is doubtful that either side's

figures are accurate], the main armed Palestinian movement, Fatah, wanted to demonstrate its continued commitment to the armed struggle against Zionism, and its continued potency in that struggle.

## Disrupt

It wanted to disrupt a possible sell-out of the Palestinians in the Carter-Begin-Sadat talks. But it is unlikely to succeed. Begin has used the atmosphere created by the attack to increase support for his hard-line stand, but with US pressure on him mounting, he is still likely to come to terms, eventually.

Exploiting the situation, Begin stated, "We believe that no additional outrage was necessary to make it clear that a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district would be a mortal danger to our people and our country". He went on to repeat the disgusting lie: "They [the

guerillas] came to kill Jews because they were Jews".

For a short time Begin's position will be strengthened — just when his cabinet was split on the question of the building of new settlements, when the government's economic policies were threatened by crisis, when a protest movement was growing in the universities and among young reserve soldiers, and when the US was building up Weizman as Begin's successor.

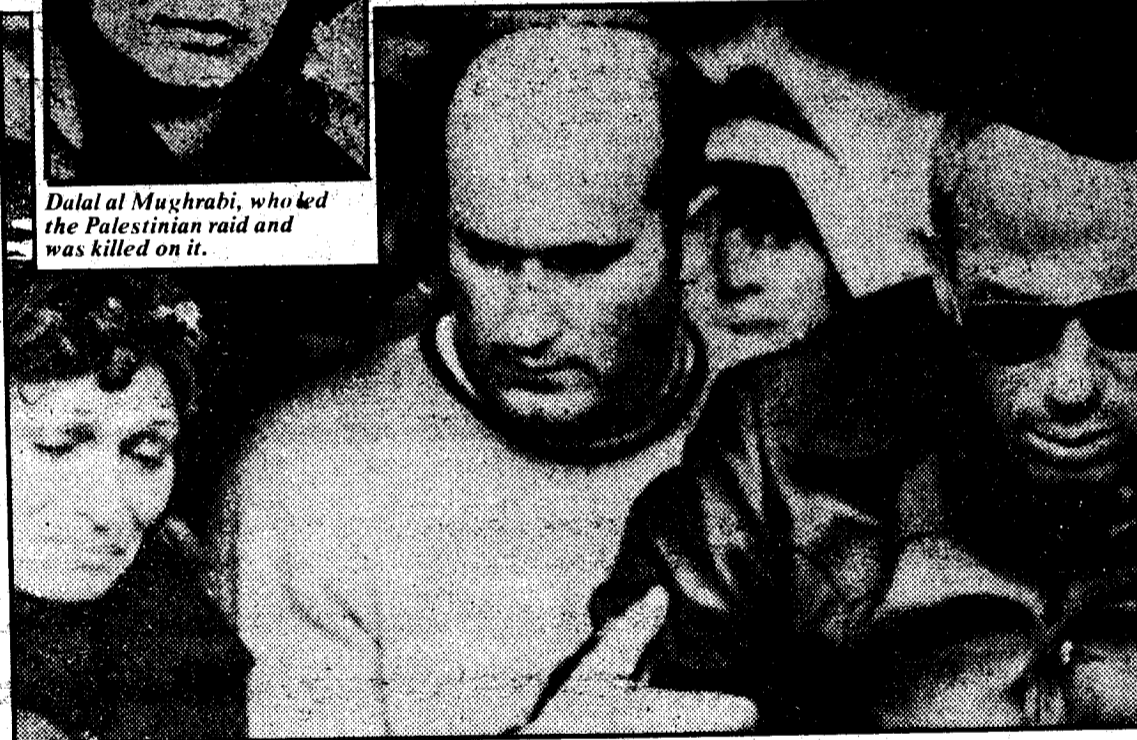
## Right

We support the right of the Palestinians to strike at the usurper state of Israel. If the report the facts of the raid correctly, however, it must be said that the raid chose the wrong victims — Israeli civilians rather than Zionist state or military targets. And any gains from the raid for the Palestinians' cause will be slight and short-lived.

PAUL ADAMS



Dalal al Mughrabi, who led the Palestinian raid and was killed on it.



Israeli mourners at the funeral of victims of the Palestinian raid

## NYERERE

## EXPELS

## REBEL

## STUDENTS

350 students — almost 20% of the student body of Dar es Salaam University — were expelled last week for a peaceful "illegal" demonstration.

They had marched the 12 miles from the University to the offices of Tanzania's only (govt.-controlled) newspaper, the Daily News, to protest against 100% pay increases recently awarded to MPs. The demonstration was attacked several times by police trying to disperse the students. But as they marched through the working class areas on the way to the town they were cheered by the people.

With the new salary increases, MPs will get 3000 shillings (£200) a month, and those who serve only one 5-year term will receive a £3000 tax-free gratuity. In addition to their salary MPs get free water and electricity, and a house-servant, all paid for by the people of Tanzania.

At the same time, workers and peasants are exhorted to great sacrifices so that the backward peasant economy can industrialise and become self sufficient.

The students' protest action was important for several reasons. This was the first time that students have been involved in an openly political issue rather than student questions. Last Autumn the students protested at the lack of democracy in the university and since then they have refused to elect the mandatory student representatives.

Second, the students knew that the government's reaction to their protest would be severe, as students who have protested in the past year have been instantly expelled.

But the university students' action is especially significant because of the position of students in Tanzanian society. They are a small elite, and competition for places is very stiff. Most of them are over 30 years old, as they have to work for several years to become eligible. When they graduate they are guaranteed government jobs.

Until recently, any sign of dissent has been stifled by the threat of loss of future employment.

Feelings must have been running very high to fuel this political action. It could be the beginning of a political attack on the running of this society which President Nyerere claims is 'socialist', but in which inequalities are blatant and the mass of peasants still exist at subsistence level.

ROS MAKIN

# The tangled knot of war

ETHIOPIA's war has been a war on many fronts. In the north the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam has been fighting to put down the national liberation struggle of the Eritreans. In the east it has been fighting the West Somali Liberation Front, based in the Ogaden province, and the army of the Republic of Somalia, which demands the extension of its territory to include the Somali-dominated areas of Ethiopia.

The intervention of the USSR and Cuba has proved decisive for the course of the war on the eastern front. With the virtual rout of the West Somali and official Somali armies in this area, the regime of the Dergue can concentrate its efforts against the Eritreans. For the time being a victory is therefore likely on the northern front too.

For socialists the issues in

the war have been complex. What attitude should be taken to the Eritrean and West Somali revolts? How should the intervention of Somalia and its claims for a 'greater Somalia' be viewed?

## Proxy

To what extent was the war a 'proxy war' between imperialism and the USSR? Was this a major or a secondary aspect of the situation? Was the Ethiopian-Somali war in essence a war by imperialism, cloaked in the guise of national liberation, directed at the radical aspects of the Ethiopian revolution?

In our view, the dominant aspect has been the struggle of oppressed nationalities against the Ethiopian regime. As socialists we support the struggle of

oppressed nations for self-determination, whether this is expressed in the form of the establishment of a new national state (as is the aim of the Eritreans) or the secession of people held within one state and their merger with a neighbouring state (as is the aim of the West Somalis).

Somalia's war against Ethiopia was not essentially a war against that country's revolution, or its radical aspects. In fact the war began when the Ethiopian regime, silencing its own more radical elements, shifted to the right. Certainly Somalia used the fact of Russian and Cuban intervention to try to interest imperialism in her venture against Ethiopia, but even then imperialism showed very little interest in the war (though things would be different if the Ethiopians crossed the Somali border).

Somalia was supported by Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both could easily — if imperialism so wished — arm Somalia to the teeth. Iran could even supply troops. This did not happen.

## Angola

Likewise Israel would not have continued to support Ethiopia — despite its strategic and economic interests there — if Somalia had become a spring board for imperialism.

And Carter's lack of initiative in the area despite considerable pressure from right-wingers — "Don't let the Russians do in Ethiopia what they did in Angola!" — suggests that it has not been a 'proxy war'.

Paul Adams

# Library workers black Apartheid

ONE OF THE trade union branches giving a lead during the Week of Trade Union Action against apartheid, March 13-21, is the British Library CPSA branch. Its action has the backing of the CPSA NEC.

The British Library has three sorts of connections with South Africa.

"1. Provision of copies of extracts from, or complete articles, books, periodicals, etc, and photographs, including loans of books, through the State Library, Pretoria; the sale of computerised reference systems to South African libraries.

"2. Supply of technical and scientific information and patents held by the British Library.

"3. Acquisition of material from South Africa."

For the week beginning 13th March, CPSA members will not "handle any South African material received from South Africa, or process any orders, payments, invoices, or requests that may be received from South African customers, whether individuals, firms or state institutions..."

A public meeting, a picket of the nearest Barclays Bank, and leafletting at the British Museum front gate are also being organised by the Library

CPSA branch together with the British-Museum CPSA branch.

The action clearly does not have the weight which a boycott of apartheid could have in Leyland, in Shell-BP, or in GEC; but even the British Library plays a role in sustaining the privileges of the white racist minority in South Africa.

Material from the British Library is supplied mostly to whites-only libraries in South Africa. The extent of library provision for the black majority in South Africa can be judged from CPSA figures showing R.85,000 a year spent on library books for 1.9 African pupils in the whole country, as against R.800,000 spent for 350,000

white pupils in Transvaal alone. The supply of technical and scientific information plays a major role in an economy like South Africa, which borrows much of its technology from Western Europe and the USA.

As the Library CPSA members say in a leaflet, "It is our action, as members of the trade union movement, that can end the apartheid system, and assist in the struggle of black workers to free themselves. The multinational investors can't and won't. We can. We must."

Stephen Corbishley

AN 83% poll; 49.5% for the left, 48.4% for the right, and the remaining 2.1% for the ecologists, most of whom are likely to vote left on the second round.

Those were the results of the first round of the French elections, on Sunday 12th March. But it seems likely that the twists and tricks of France's electoral system will stop the left gaining a parliamentary majority in the second round, on Sunday 19th.

Urban constituencies are often much bigger than rural ones, so it takes more votes to elect a left-wing deputy than a right-wing one. The votes of French people abroad — mostly for the Right — can be cast in any constituency, and the Right has been organising to get them cast in key marginal seats. And on the second round, where it is a run-off between a Communist Party candidate and a right-winger, many Socialist Party voters will vote for the right despite their party's instructions.

The franc rose in the exchange markets and the French Stock Exchange rejoiced. But the people of France have shown that they have had enough of right-wing rule, after 20 years, and if there is a new right-wing government it will face a rough ride.

The far left got 952,000 votes according to the official figures — 3.2%, or appreciably more than the opinion polls had estimated. However, those official figures also include the votes

## FRENCH ELECTIONS: NEARLY ONE MILLION VOTES FOR THE FAR LEFT

# The right rejoices, but not for long

for the 'Self-Management Front', led by the PSU, which is closer to the reformist parties than to the revolutionaries.

No full analysis is yet available of the votes of the 700-odd revolutionary candidates — but it seems that they roughly maintained the percentage score obtained by 263 revolutionary candidates in 1973: 2.1%. With revolutionary candidates in every constituency of mainland France this time, it was a much higher total revolutionary vote.

The 470 candidates of *Lutte Ouvrière* did much better than

the 200-odd of a joint slate headed by the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*, giving weight to LO's argument that the LCR's over-emphasis on 'kicking out the Right' would lead workers to think it was scarcely worthwhile voting revolutionary instead of reformist. Arlette Laguiller, presidential candidate for LO in 1974, got 4,577 votes (8.4%) in Thiers-Ambert in the Puy-de-Dôme area.

An analysis of the 52 constituencies of the Paris suburbs gives a partial picture of the revolutionaries' votes. These constituencies, most of them solidly working-class, are the stronghold of the French left: the CP led on the first round in 27 of them, with the right wing leading in only 21.

The revolutionaries got 60,408 votes in the 52 constituencies, as against 53,554 in 1973 (when they had candidates in only 43 out of the 52). The 52 LO candidates got an average of 896 votes each; the 28 candidates of the LCR and its allies got an average of 492 votes.

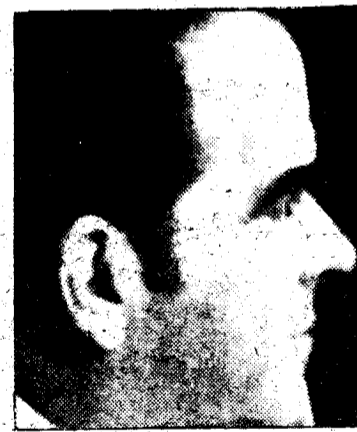
Among the major parties, the big surprise was the smallness of the Socialist Party's gains. From 19.2% of the vote in 1973, they raised their share to 24.6% (if the Left Radicals are lumped together with them) — but they were expecting 28% or even more. It seems they were squeezed on the left by the CP's more radical language, and on the right by the pressure to vote for 'safety'.



Arlette Laguiller

The long-standing quarrel within the Left, between the CP and the SP, ended abruptly the day after the poll. The two parties agreed to leave remaining policy differences to be discussed after the 19th, and pledged themselves to back the best-placed Left candidate everywhere. But the CP had got what they wanted: a promise that in any Left government, they would get a share of the ministries proportional to their share of the votes.

Many French voters must have seen long before this that sordid place-hunting lay behind the high-sounding political debates on the Left, and their disillusionment no doubt helped to eat away the Left majority. But that is another reason to think that the jubilation of the right wing will be short-lived.



Marchais

## Tribunals say the boss is right

LAWS like the Employment Protection Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Equal Pay Act and the 1976 Race Relations Act, backed by tribunal procedures, have been greeted with enthusiasm by the trade union bureaucracy.

While including some measures of real value, the main role of these laws has been to aid class collaboration, with the cards clearly stacked in the bosses' direction from the start. This was confirmed recently with the publication of the detailed figures dealing with applications for tribunal hearings, cases heard and their results, in 1976.

The great majority of applications, and cases heard, concerned unfair dismissal. Many of the 31,614 applications were either withdrawn or settled outside; 13,803 were heard by tribunals. Of these, 63% of the cases were dismissed, and therefore found in the boss's favour. Of the successful cases, most got compensation, and only 2% of the applicants got their jobs back.

Of those who got compensation for being sacked "unfairly", half got less than £350. (Compare this with the thousands sometimes paid in redundancy pay-offs and it's really pathetic.)

The contrast with pay-offs on the docks, or what's being offered at Speke or East Moors, is not because the workers concerned have different needs. It is related directly to the strength of the workers' organisation. The more there is the threat of a fight, the more money appears.

In tribunal cases, the low level of compensation comes from the fact that they are mainly used by unorganised or badly organised workers. About half the unfair dismissal applications have related to firms employing less than 100 people; more than 20% were from workers in firms of less than 20 people.

Under the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Acts, very few cases were heard at all: only 243 cases of sex discrimination and 709 of unequal pay. These figures say a lot about the limitations of the laws.

Only about 10% of cases heard under the Sex Discrimination Act were successful (a quarter of them brought by men), and only half of these got any compensation. Of Equal Pay cases, seventy per cent went in favour of the bosses.

JOHN BLOXAM

## FOOD

# The Social Contact pulls our belts tighter

FOOD NOT only costs us more these days, we're eating less. Our diet is deteriorating, according to two recent reports on the results of the Ministry of Agriculture's national food surveys.

It is not just a matter of cutbacks on luxuries. Two thirds of the fall in average consumption between 1970 and 1975 was in bread, cereals, potatoes, and sugar, and much of the rest in meat. Overall, food consumption fell by over one-tenth between 1970 and 1975.

The reports found "a trend towards more uncooked breakfasts" [or, more breakfasts not eaten at all]. Bacon consumption fell by 30%, and egg consumption by 15%, between 1970 and 1976. Beef consumption rose slightly until 1975 but fell by 8% in 1976, and lamb consumption fell by 10% over the six years.

In 1976 we ate more potatoes — they accounted for 5% of average spending on food — ate 10 to 15% less fish and fruit, and even drank 8% less tea.

Comparing the nutritional value of food consumed with the levels recommended by

the Department of Health and Social Security, the reports find that "the intakes were in general greatest for childless households. In contrast, households with three or more children had the lowest intakes of most nutrients; the amounts of iron, as with energy and vitamin D, were substantially below the recommended intakes". The reports smugly reassure us that there is "no cause for alarm", since the short-fall is made up by food eaten but not recorded in the official surveys. But for many families the situation must be much worse than the average shown by the reports.

The reason we are eating less is that food costs more. Since 1970 food prices have trebled; they have doubled since 1974 alone. Food subsidies were cut by a third in 1976, causing a 25% rise in the price of basic foodstuffs.

During 1976 the cost of living for the poor jumped by 2 percentage points more than for the rich. For pensioners the increase was 3 percentage points more.

LINDA COLLINS



Renault workers march on behalf of CP

# ITALY: THE COMMUNIST SOCIAL CONTRACT

**FOR SEVEN WEEKS** Giulio Andreotti has been negotiating with the various non-fascist parties in Italy and with the right wing of his own party to gain support for a new Christian Democratic government.

The governmental crisis began last December when the Communist Party (PCI) threatened to bring about new elections. It has ended with the Andreotti government continuing much as before.

The new cabinet does not include the 'non-aligned' technocrats the PCI was pushing for. Indeed there are only two changes of personnel. And the new government has committed itself merely to realising the stated intentions of the last government.



Yet the Communist Party sees the situation as a victory: for the Christian Democracy (DC) has been forced now to govern with the open consent of the Communists — expressed in both parliamentary support and political consultation. The PCI sees this as an advance on the situation as it was between June 1976, when the PCI gained 34.4% of the vote, and December 1977. During that period the PCI and the Socialist Party (PSI) supported the Christian Democrats just by abstain-

ing in Parliament. Now they will actually vote for it.

The PCI sees the present situation as at least a fractional advance towards the realisation of its policy of the 'historic compromise'. According to the 'historic compromise' line — first stated in these terms in 1973 — the PCI is striving to form a government including all the parties of what it calls the 'constitutional spectrum': a grand coalition of the Communists, the PSI, and the Christian Democrats (the Italian equivalent of the Tories, and closely allied with the Catholic church).

In order to create this bloc, the PCI has soft-pedalled on several important issues. Many people expected the PCI to press the DC to give in to the policemen, who by an overwhelming majority demanded the right to unionise and to affiliate such a union to the national confederation of trade unions. The DC has agreed on unionisation but refused to permit affiliation.

The PCI has gone along with this.

In addition, the PCI and the DC came to a deal to try to scotch the possibility of a progressive outcome in either of the two coming referendums, one on abortion and one on changes in the 'anti-terrorist laws'. In the latter case, they have agreed to replace sentences of exile and house arrest with imprisonment while at the

same time giving the police new rights to shoot to kill.

Most important to the government is the PCI's agreement to impose continued wage restraint. Communist Party trade union leaders like Luciano Lama are now all the more urgently calling for 'substantial sacrifices'. No wonder the 'Economist' describes the policy the DC have arrived at after consultation with the PCI as containing "precious little a British Conservative would sniff at".

This is not a new feature in PCI policy. The PCI, like its fellow parties of Stalinist descent, ceased to be a revolutionary party when the Stalinist bureaucracy turned its back on Leninism and



Luciano Lama

world revolution almost half a century ago. Yet its anti-working class actions have become increasingly open over the last two years, as the PCI leaders scent the possibility of a place in the government.

In October 1976, in his Report to the Central Committee, the General Secretary of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, had this to say: "What is the primary task today of a party such as ours?"

"Our struggle today must focus on making a concrete start on a new type of development, on a renewal of the whole Italian economic and social structure, and the underlying ideas that will have to guide this general transformation..."

"Today, the dramatic conditions of the country... necessitate austerity measures..." The following January Berlinguer, in a speech to the Assembly of Communist Workers in Lombardy, tried to dress up the sharply anti working class nature of such measures in the tired and treacherous generalities that characterise the public language of the Italian Communists:

"Austerity", said Berlinguer, "by definition means restrictions on certain availabilities to which we have become accustomed; it means renouncing certain advantages that we have gained. But we are deeply convinced that to



Italian metalworkers march on May sixties and early seventies saw ma tenants, and students. More recent

replace certain habits of life with others that are more exacting and not extravagant, can lead not to a worsening in the quality of life, but to substantial improvement, to growth in the 'humanity' of life.

"A more austere society can be — indeed ought to be — a society that is more just, better ordered, with less inequality, in reality more free and democratic, certainly more humane..." This nonsense, dished out in the name of 'Communism', owes more to the hypocritical sermons of the Vatican insisting that 'poverty is a virtue'.

While Berlinguer was declaiming on the need for austerity, the working class

**THIS MONTH'S** Geneva Motor Show has seen some plain speaking from European car manufacturers. Sig. Nicola Tufarelli, head of Fiat's car division, called for an EEC policy on the car industry, as on steel and shipbuilding, which would encourage rationalisation.

He stressed three important points. Firstly, of the three large motor manufacturing blocs (the USA, Japan, and Europe), Europe suffers from tremendous structural weaknesses, with fragmented production, organised on a national rather than pan-European scale.

Secondly, the aggressive marketing methods of the Japanese car makers, in small commercial vehicles as well as in cars, have upset the old international trading patterns, based on colonial ties and so on. Thirdly, the development of new producers in the Third World, behind high tariff barriers (for example, in Latin America, in India, and in South Korea), will make exporting increasingly difficult.

On this last point, Herr Heinz Branitzki, finance director of Porsche, complained: "It is often argued that we sell too large a part of our output in the USA. In a normal free trading climate this would be a fair criticism. But in our view we have come to the end of free trade all over the world". Sig. Umberto Agnelli, overall head of Fiat, echoed these remarks: "I don't think Europe is going to remain a very big exporting area".

Sig. Tufarelli's speech reflects a very cold and sober look at developments in the international car rat-race. Most of the European national car manufacturing groups rely heavily on their home market. In this context, British Leyland's performance in the UK, while worse than it used to be,

is still respectable. But Leyland has clearly failed to break into other markets — while its competitors have surged ahead.

Fiat's target for this year is 6% of the European market outside Italy. In the UK they have recently gained 100 new dealers to take advantage of Leyland's miseries and the voluntary curbs on Japanese imports. When asked if this was not unfair to Leyland, a Fiat spokesman replied: "But this is what the EEC is all about".

It has been said that 1977 was a record year internationally for car sales, and that expansion is likely into the 1980s. But the massive amounts of investment needed to keep in the rat-race — at least £2 billion — mean

each firm trying to grab a large share of the expansion, and hence overproducing. This is one reason for the present worry about Japanese car firms, which are said to have put down enough new capacity for about two million more new cars each year.

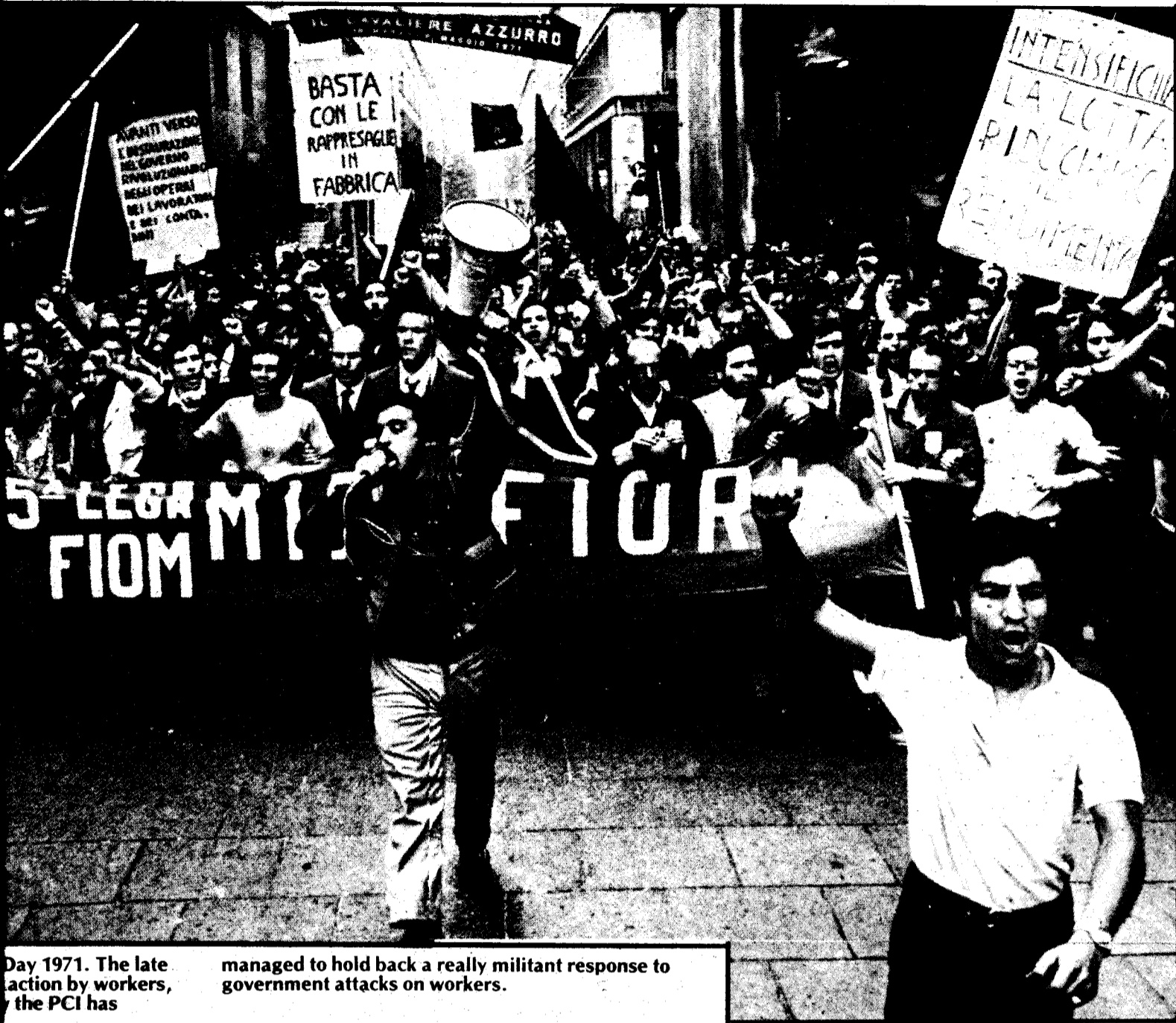
The 'Financial Times' (8th March) stated that 41 million cars and commercial vehicles were produced world-wide in 1977, compared to 29 million in 1970. This corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 4.9% in the last seven years. It was 8.6% during the 1960s. In the last seven years, Japanese output has increased by 60% (from 5.3 million to 8.5 million), that of the USA by 50% (9.5 million

to 14.5 million), and that of the Eastern bloc by 114% (1.4 million to 3.0 million).

One factor not mentioned by Sig. Tufarelli was the state of the car industry in the USA: The 'Big Three' (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler, in that order) are nearly always seen as ever-powerful and everlasting.

Yet last year's results have shown Chrysler to be in a very weak position. A company spokesman commented: "Chrysler are on the ropes but it is some way yet from a final count". Whilst GM and Fords showed record sales and profits, Chrysler's sales were down over 1976 (1.3 million to 1.2 million), their profits were down from \$422.6 million to \$163.2 million, and their share of the US home market went

## An 'Edwardes Plan'



article opening debate on the Party's 'medium term' programme. Napolitano praised "the choice made by the trade union movement as a whole to give priority to the objectives of a well-balanced discriminating development of productive investments and employment". He stressed that: "the choice made by the confederations of trade unions has its independent and deep *raison d'être*: and one aspect of this is a careful estimation of the level to which it is possible and necessary to push wage demands and the overall cost of wage bargaining..."

The PCI's line of 'due tempi' (two phases) is exactly the same as Callaghan's or Chancellor Schmidt's in West Germany: a policy of first create the profits, then let the profits create jobs and decent wages. In short, a policy of working class defeat for now, and empty promises for the future.

In line with this general policy, the PCI has also toned down its attacks on its customary target, the "monopoly concentrations, the big financial groups and the multinationals". Instead it concentrates on "the war on waste", on "parasitism", "corruption", and "inefficiency".

Amendola's speech to the Central Committee could equally well be a speech of Wilson's or Callaghan's announcing a new attack on the workers: "The struggle against inflation ought to be accompanied by action directed towards increase in the productivity of labour, since increase in productivity is the most effective means of combatting inflation".

This is little more than an adaptation to Italian circumstances of the kind of policies proclaimed by Wilson in the middle '60s.

Day 1971. The late action by workers, the PCI has

managed to hold back a really militant response to government attacks on workers.

is facing the most concerted attack on its living standards for many years. In October 1976 Andreotti decided a drastic attempt to balance the books and put a brake on the increasing budgetary deficit. Controlling prices on many basic consumer goods and on public transport were raised sharply.



The price of petrol was raised for the ninth time since 1973. The prices of artificial fertilisers rose 12% and rail fares jumped 10%. Price rises for electricity and telephones

were announced too. The main burden of all this fell on the working class and the poorer middle class of city and country.

This policy was combined with an attack on the sliding scale of wages (the 'scala mobile'), the agreement which allows wages to rise quarterly in line with the cost of living.

For the first time in years a government was bold enough to attack the 'scala mobile' directly. Workers receiving more than 8 million lire a year ceased to be covered by it, while those earning between 6 and 8 million now got only half of what they lost through inflation.

The unions put up only

very limited opposition to this serious attack on workers' living standards. The PCI encouraged them not to resist. In the end they went along with the worst aspects of the government proposals, even agreeing to the cutting of one day's annual holiday. They sharply opposed only the increase in petrol prices.

But big struggles against these measures broke out. In the North the workers at Fiat and Alfa Romeo went on unofficial strike. Eventually the unions felt compelled to call a four hour general strike in Turin.

In early 1977 Andreotti introduced stage two of his 'austerity programme', a Social Contract Italian-style.

First, pensioners were excluded from the benefits of the 'scala mobile'. Then the state declared itself willing to pay the employers' contributions for national insurance etc. In the year following the beginning of the 'austerity programme', strikes were held down by the unions, and unofficial strikes fell by about 60% in the number of days lost.



The PCI's commitment to a strategy of increasing the profits of industry and reducing the costs of labour were spelled out clearly by Giorgio Napolitano in an

# ... for Europe?

down from 15.1% to 13.4%. This week Chrysler have shut two assembly plants in the USA, making 9,300 workers idle, because of excessive stocks.

Although these may seem minor upsets, in fact the *Financial Times*' (24th February) commented that Chrysler's results are "seriously out of step with the industry's sales and earnings cycle", and that there are real anxieties about Chrysler's capacity to finance the new model changes and technological improvements demanded by the US laws on fuel consumption and emission control.

These new laws are reckoned to cost the car industry 10 billion in research, development, and re-tooling. Chrysler need at least \$7.5

billion over the next five years to stay in the volume car league. At the same time, they are entering a very crowded sector of the market with their new sub-compact cars.

Chrysler were also the first company to subject to the US Environmental Protection Agency's allegations of design flaws in their motor cars — with the result that they have had three recalls of cars for repair, covering one million cars.

The move to smaller cars in the USA will have a great effect on the European car industry. There will be greater competition in the US market from US-based firms against European exports to the USA, and US car firms will try to increase exports to Europe. At least there will be rationalis-

ation of production between US firms based in Europe and US firms back home, with multi-national sourcing of components.

This may also include Japanese firms: the US firms have more and more links in Japan, GM with Isuzu, Ford with Honda, and Chrysler with Mitsubishi.

Sig. Tufarelli's demand for pan-Europeanisation is clearly necessary if the European car industry is to survive. So far only Ford have managed it, with their dual base in West Germany and in the UK. A number of other attempts have been made, but mainly they take the form of rationalisation in the use of parts. Some examples are:

■ IVECO — Fiat trucks linked with Magirus (West

Germany) and Unic (France).

■ IVECO and Mercedes (West Germany) — common automatic gearboxes for heavy trucks.

■ Douvrain (France) — a common engine plant, making units for Renault (France), Peugeot (France), and Volvo (Sweden).

■ Club of Four truck — Saviem (Renault group, France), Daf (Holland), Volvo (Sweden), and Magirus (West Germany) collaborate to make parts for a vehicle which each assembles separately.

■ Mercedes (West Germany) and SDP (Austria) — SDP assemble Mercedes-designed four-wheel drive vehicles.

■ Ford Granada (West Germany) uses Peugeot (France) diesel engines.

■ Ford Transcontinental truck uses Berliet (France) cabs.

■ Volkswagen (West Germany) and MAN (West Germany) — common medium range of commercial vehicles.

■ Mercedes (West Germany) and MAN (West Ger-

many) — common commercial vehicle engines and axles.

Many of these agreements are within national boundaries. Something more dramatic and far-reaching must be on the cards. M. Bernard Hanon, head of Renault's car division, has called for a rationalised structure for the whole European motor industry, and he has been talking energetically to Leyland directors.

Recently Colin Hill, the chief economist in Leyland's international division, was quoted as saying, "Without some form of EEC initiative, I don't see an indigenous European motor industry surviving into the 21st century".

He calls for European political intervention to save the European car industry. He is talking not just about the possible disappearance of lame ducks like Leyland and Alfa Romeo, but about the giants like Fiat and Volkswagen!

That is the future which capitalism offers carworkers for the years ahead.

ON 24th February SYLVIE JOFFIN, aged 22, was driven from the court in Rouen back to prison, convicted by a jury of two women and seven men of starving her two small children to death. She went to prison alone, and the witnesses and other actors in the story remained free. It was not they who had been on trial...

The children's father, who had seduced Sylvie when she was sixteen, had lived with her five years and given her two children, and to whom she had been slavishly devoted though he beat her and refused to marry her. He got himself a job in Germany and she sold all the furniture so the family could join him. Then the letter came — It was all over, and no forwarding address. Why? 'I didn't fancy her any more'. Had he sent her any money? 'The children, that was her affair'.

The family that surrounded Sylvie in the small town of Dieppe: mother, brother and sisters, the children's paternal grandmother — all unable or unwilling to take her in.

The neighbours, who testified their utter ignorance of it all to the police and who did not even appear in court.

Sylvie Joffin had lived in two tiny attic rooms for 2½ years, separated from other tenants by paper thin partition walls through which every word could be heard. They gossiped about her, noted her long absence last March, but denied any awareness that the children had been left behind, locked in, starving to death.

In our society of total isolation and alienation of people from each other, such willful deafness is after all normal. French law seeks to pretend otherwise. It is a crime not to help a person in danger. It is a crime carrying a maximum of three years' imprisonment to fail to notify the authorities of actions or neglect liable to cause injury to a child. But the law is a mere pious hope, scarcely ever enforced, and ignored in this case.

## Rules

The Family Allowances bureaucracy was not in court. As an abandoned mother with two small children Sylvie should have been entitled to the Single Parent Allocation, a means tested allowance bringing her total monthly income to about £160. It is clear she was receiving nothing like that. Indeed for that last month when the children died she had been given only about £16, stoppages having been made for subs given on early occasions.

Debts were piling up,

Susan James reports on how the French courts dealt with the death of two children.

# BUT THERE WAS ONLY ONE AT THE TRIAL...

cheques were bouncing, the electricity had been cut off.

Why didn't she get more? Perhaps she hadn't known she could apply, or how to do it; perhaps her application had got lost in the labyrinths of the bureaucracy; perhaps she had been refused or disqualified for any one of the possible hundreds of reasons the bureaucracy is armed with.

The question wasn't answered — the bureaucrats and their rules were not on trial; they were not called upon to answer for themselves.

## Files

The social worker did speak. The department was understaffed, the post for this area was vacant, she was only employed on a temporary basis for emergencies, she had no authority and denied any responsibility. Yes, there was a file on the family, they knew of their financial straits, they knew Sylvie had asked for the children to be taken into care soon after she got the letter from Germany. But the procedures take time, the file had been passing from hand to hand... the months passed.

So Sylvie was quite alone. A young woman, with no experience of any existence other than that of total dependence.

After the letter came, she took to leaving the children at night and going out to dance halls, bars, nightclubs, picking up a series of men. To make money by prostitution in a town of high unemployment? To create the illusion of escape from the trap in which she was caught — the cold, dark rooms without furniture, with crying children and the bailiffs knocking at the door? Perhaps to find another man who could fill the gap and take on the responsibility she was in no way prepared for, even if he, too, beat her?

After three months she went out thus one evening, locking

the door. She didn't come back but stayed with friends in a neighbouring street, and fifteen days later, when she unlocked the door, the children — aged 2 and 4 — were dead.

She had been trained for dependence, and then left to carry an intolerable burden alone. And when she cracked, she alone was made to carry the penalty.

The jury voted a sentence of twelve years in prison — heavy, but if it were not for the extenuating circumstances it might have been more. In France the death penalty is still applied, and many abolitionists would make an exception for the killing of children. Public opinion in Dieppe and Rouen, and letters to the press, show little sympathy for Sylvie Joffin, and even a feeling that the sentence was too mild. But many also feel that others too should have been held responsible.

Could such a case occur in England?

The circumstances arise often enough: our egotist males, our stingy and twisting bureaucrats, our smiling social workers who listen but don't act, having nothing to learn from their French opposite numbers. The reaction of the mother is in fact more likely here — in France some 20 children are killed by their parents each year, in England the figure is nearer 300.

## Property

In England, though, it would be hard to imagine a sentence of twelve years in such a case. Lighter sentences reflect in part a greater understanding of the plight of women, in part a view that sees children as the parents' property and respects such property rights. And in England, such a case would rarely come to court at all: in most cases while prison is provided by our rulers for disciplining deviant men, it is the mental hospital with its drugs and electric shocks which is provided for women.

But to understand is not to excuse (though we may favour different penalties for the inexcusable). If people are no more than responses to conditioning and stresses, then there is little hope for humanity. The working class movement and the women's movement do not excuse the blackleg even if he has a large and hungry family; the rapist from a violent slum background, or the unemployed youth who joins a racist gang or the British army, are held responsible for their actions. It would be a relic of male chauvinism to see Sylvie Joffin differently because she is a woman; to see her as a mere victim responding with blind and helpless emotion, as obviously deranged rather than an adult responsible for a crime.

Yet what, as socialists, we are fighting for is a society where the pressures leading to such crimes would not exist, where women would be seen and see themselves as independent and responsible human beings and be provided with the means and the education to act accordingly.

## LETTERS

Comrades,

On reading the report in issue 93, entitled 'Scotland — a new start for Irish solidarity', by Jenny Fraser, we felt compelled to write and rectify certain misconceptions the sister has about the day and to correct the impression your readers will have gained about the way Ireland was discussed.

Your report has to be criticised on two counts — what you left out and what you included, both of which we think are significant. Your report gives the impression that the day consisted of an opening speech by the IRSP, a statement by the Provisionals and a debate between Workers' Action and Militant on whether or not the Provisionals should be supported. No mention is made of the contribution by Women and Ireland, the group that organised the day, the other left groups involved, of the workshops etc.

The 1st May Bookshop, a collective of non-aligned Marxists, organised the day conference on Ireland. They wanted to introduce new perspectives on how to work around Ireland in Britain and so their aim was that the conference be made up of as wide a cross section as possible of groups currently involved in Irish work. In this context the Women and Ireland group were invited to open the conference along with the IRSP. The omission of our presence at the conference by Workers' Action we think is indicative of WA's total disregard for women as an autonomous political force. It is also indicative of WA's failure to understand that, in the current situation, alternative strategies for Irish work are necessary. The automatic siting of the struggle in the British Labour movement is not sufficient.

After the opening statements the conference broke up into workshops (on women, imperialism, political status etc) In the afternoon there was a brief statement by a spokesperson for the Provisional Sinn Fein followed by a discussion on the use of violence in the Irish struggle. There then took place what was described as a debate between WA and Militant on their positions

# There was more to this conference than a far left wrangle

on the Irish struggle. This turned out to be a vehicle for all the left groups present to assert their position on Ireland and claims to revolutionary purity. Thus we heard from Militant, WA, IMG, SWP, RCG. At the time we intervened to point out the following: that only Trotskyist-left groups were represented, that the argument had been carried out in a most sectarian fashion, that all the groups totally ignored the importance of women for any revolutionary struggle. This was obvious from the fact that no mention was made of women working in the Relatives Action Committees, of women working in the military campaigns, of the specific oppression of women under imperialism, and of women struggling for political status in Armagh jail. (Was this discussed on page two of WA 93. *Men in Concrete Tombs.*)

The 1st May were attempting to create a situation in which the traditional ways of working on Ireland could be examined and new strategies possibly developed. Although, in this context, to hear the positions of the various left groups on Ireland was useful, we felt that during the afternoon things degenerated so that this important aim (of trying to establish new strategies) to raise British consciousness, appeared to be overshadowed.

We hope that the follow up meeting was able to be more constructive and send greetings of solidarity and hope for a successful anti-imperialist campaign in Scotland.

In Sisterhood,  
Brid Keenan  
Mary Hickman  
(for the Women and Ireland Group)

# Penguin — the method was bad, whatever the motives

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS are necessarily condensed in a paper the size of Workers' Action. In my report on the Penguin dispute (WA 93) I ignored the motives of the participants and concentrated on the developing logic of the dispute.

Last week Dave Davies, SWP member and chairman of the ASTMS Penguin group, accused me of misrepresenting his conduct. I readily grant that he acted as he thought best — but he nevertheless behaved in an unprincipled and inconsistent manner, thereby contributing to defeat.

In leading his negotiating team into informal talks with management — excluding the NUJ, and on the basis of no improved offer — he violated the decisions of a mass meeting. He participated in these talks knowing they were damaging the interests of his members as well as the NUJ. He will admit this.

So why did he do it? He refused to halt the talks and refer the issue back to the members because [according to his letter] 'if a group meeting had been called, the talks would have gone on with the blessing of the membership, effectively destroying opposition

to the talks at a stage when salvage was possible'.

In other words, he tried to manoeuvre — still behind the backs of his members — against a course which he firmly believed they wanted to follow!

Only the right wing gain from such dealings — and so it was. Davies blunted opposition by apparently endorsing the talks, and in the process he became a prisoner of the right wing. This was shown only too well at the group meeting last week which finally accepted the company's offer, productivity deal and all. At that meeting Davies did not even speak against acceptance — his reason this time being that 'committee discipline' forbade it. Over 40% of ASTMS members still voted against the offer and for industrial action. They did so out of common sense — and also because they knew the NUJ were (and are) still fighting. Unfortunately Davies was by this time in no position to place himself at their head and confront the right wing.

For a member of an avowedly revolutionary organisation this outcome should provide food for reflection.

JAMES RYAN

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# VOTE FOR WRIGHT, BUT BEWARE!

THE CURRENT A.U.E.W. elections will be an important indication of the mood among trade unionists after three years of Labour government wage curbs.

In the run-off for President, the left's candidate to succeed Hugh Scanlon is Bob Wright, at present an Assistant General Secretary with responsibility for the union's political education programmes.

For some years Wright was tipped as Scanlon's almost certain successor. Yet Wright's rival in the present election — Terry Duffy — defeated him in 1975 for an executive council seat. And in the first round of the election, Wright polled 356 votes fewer than Duffy's 83,959.

However, several left wing candidates, accounting for over

20,000 votes between them in the first round, are backing Wright in the second round.

Especially important is the backing from Leyland toolroom leader Roy Fraser. Fraser's base of support, in the Midlands, is one of the biggest concentrations of AUEW membership, and is also Duffy's home ground.

Bernard Levin of the 'Times'

urges AUEW members to support Duffy (because he is 'democratic'), Woodworm Wyatt of the Sunday Mirror likewise (because Duffy is the 'common sense' candidate), and the extreme right wing employer-backed organisation TRUMID has embarrassed Duffy by adding its recommendation.

Wright's policy is for an immediate return to free collective bargaining. He counts himself as being on the left of the Labour Party (of which he has been a member for 34 years), and opposes incomes policy. Duffy, on the other hand, supports the policies that have so substantially reduced the spending power of the working class.

One of the most important issues in the election is amalgamation. Wright is in favour of completing the process of amalgamation with the technical and supervisory union TASS, particularly now that TASS has shown willingness to adapt its electoral system (election for life and widespread appointment of officials) to the AUEW's system — probably the most democratic of any union in Britain.

Duffy, however, who hotly opposed total amalgamation with TASS on the pretext of their less democratic organisation, wants to amalgamate with the EETPU — probably the least democratic of the country's big unions. He is more interested in the fact that TASS is dominated by officials who are members of the Communist Party, and the EETPU still operates a ban on Communists holding office.

Last week this champion of the gentlemen 'democrats' of the millionaire press announced that he was against periodic elections in any case. Instead he recommends life-long election and more posts filled by appointment!

Unfortunately Bob Wright is about the least inspiring candidate the left could possibly have. Described usually as a 'militant', his policy is unlikely to be much to the left of Scanlon's (remember, he too was described as a 'militant' once).

Nevertheless, Wright's defeat would be a defeat for the whole left and for all trade unionists who want to fight the government's pay policies.

## London teachers say: step up action

BY THE end of the second week since the breakdown of negotiations over the teachers' pay claim, 208 out of 558 branches of the National Union of Teachers have come out in support of the National Executive's recommendation to withdraw from voluntary duties.

The second largest teachers' union, the NAS/UWT, has instructed its members to operate the same sanctions starting from Monday 13th, and more NUT branches are expected to join in.

On Monday there is a further meeting of the negotiating body, the Burnham Committee. Technically, this meeting will deal with parts of the teachers' claim which the management has yet to reply to, including an increase of the London allowance of £99, and a demand for a clear job description.

However, the main talks have already broken down. Management refused to budge after offering 9% pay rise — the 10% limit, minus 1% supposed to cover anomalies.

If neither side backs down on Monday, then compulsory arbitration binding on both parties will operate as laid down in the Teachers Remuneration Act. This arbitration operates through a panel of union, management, and central government nominees, and takes several months.

The members' response to the Executive call has been mixed. In many of the branches and schools which have voted for the sanctions, there is considerable

feeling that more effective action is needed, and that the National Executive should instruct and not recommend the action. At present members can refuse to join the action, even if their school and branch have voted for it.

The NAS/UWT has instructed their members, although they have made Saturday football and other similar activities exempt because many physical education teachers are in the NAS/UWT!

Both union leaderships seem to be more interested in scoring points against each other rather than take up a real fight against the employers.

In Lambeth, the local association meeting on Monday 6th March passed a motion calling on members to support the action, and calling on the executive to step it up to a ban on covering for absentees, a ban on teaching classes above the union class-size norm, and a national campaign of strike action to win the 12½% claim in full.

Branch secretary John Esterson expressed members' anger well when he said, "We have often been accused in the past of splitting the union. Now the National Executive are responsible for disuniting the union by these recommendations".

The following evening, the NUT's Inner London divisional council (ILTA) met to discuss the sanctions. The left narrowly failed to amend the main motion along the lines of the Lambeth resolution. But the council voted unanimously to call on the Exec-

utive to ban cover for absences over three days and to call a one-day national strike.

Those who argue that even a full 12½% is not enough are by no means in a majority at present, but even the most docile union member feels that teachers are entitled to 10% like everyone else. This feeling has been bolstered by the resignation of Sir Ashley Bramall from the management panel. Bramall said that he sympathised with the teachers' 'moderate claim'.

Union militants must campaign to get the action stepped up, in order to win at least the 12½%. They should also make the point that 12½% is not enough, and that a flat-rate claim of at least £1000 should be re-submitted, with demands for inflation-proofing. The London allowance, which has stood at £401 for three years, should be at least £600 to catch up with three years' inflation.

CHEUNG SIU MING

IN BRENT, teachers have demanded that the NUT Executive should support any school NUT group which decides to refuse to teach classes over 30, or to cover absences.

Brent teachers have also proposed that the NUT press for packed lunches to be made available to children at schools where teachers' refusal to do mid-day supervision has led to school meals being cut off.

Some members of the conference got cold feet when it came to making a stand on Labour Party democracy and Labour MPs voting in Parliament along the lines of conference decisions. Arguing against an amendment "to campaign for the abolition of the free vote" (which allows MPs to vote on abortion rights according to their individual conscience'), Newham Borough Co-op Party stated it was not necessary to fight now for this.

A motion for the Labour Party to instruct MPs to vote for abortion rights was defeated at the 1977 Party Conference, and according to Party rules the issue cannot be re-raised for three years. If Aneurin Bevan failed to get that rule changed — some argued — then how could LARC hope to?

But the amendment was passed. If the free vote issue is to reach the conference agenda in 1980, it is necessary to start raising the question now.

The conference also agreed to press for LP Conference policy on abortion to be a main plank of the next General election manifesto.

The structure of LARC is now altered so that the National Planning Meetings are abolished, and there is now

provision for an emergency conference to be called by the Executive Committee or 10% of LARC members.

LARC is holding a meeting at the LPYS Conference in Llandudno on Sunday 26th March.

All labour movement bodies and individual LP members can affiliate to LARC for £1 c/o 73 Albion Road, London N16

MARIAN MOUND



Jobs campaign gets more support

For the past three months, Edinburgh Youth Campaign Against Unemployment has been producing a fortnightly dole queue newsheet 'Dole Mole', with a circulation of 1500.

The campaign was set up by Edinburgh Central LPYS, but on Tuesday 7th a meeting was held to expand it. Nine different trade union branches, Edinburgh Central CLP and LPYS, a local students union and Edinburgh University Labour Club were represented.

After some debate, the meeting adopted a draft constitution and the following statement of policy-

Edinburgh YCAU aims to build a strong united campaign against unemployment. It seeks to unite unemployed workers in action with employed workers and the organised labour movement for the following demands:

1. Ban on overtime with no loss of pay.
2. 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
3. In case of threatened redundancies, worksharing with no loss of pay.
4. Voluntary retirement at 60 with no loss of pension or benefit entitlements.
5. The right of the unemployed to join unions.

Edinburgh YCAU campaigns vigorously for these demands to be adopted by both the labour movement and the Government. We believe, however that the full implementation of these demands depends on the action of employed workers fighting for them in their workplaces.

Working-class women are the first to suffer particularly severely from the effects of capitalist crisis. Edinburgh YCAU therefore lays particular emphasis on the demand for a woman's right to work.

We also recognise the genuine poverty and hardship caused by the present totally inadequate unemployment benefit and social security provisions. We therefore demand:

1. A national minimum income for all, without means testing and linked to rise automatically with the cost of living, to be determined by committees of workers, housewives and the unemployed. Until such time as these committees are established, entitlement should rise by £1 for every 1% cost of living rise.
2. An end to discrimination against women, particularly the cohabitation rule.

This policy statement and the draft constitution will be put as resolutions to a meeting being held on Tuesday 18th April in the Edinburgh Trades Council. Notice of this meeting, including an appeal to organisations to affiliate to the campaign, has been sent to over 50 trade union branches as well as community organisations and political organisations of the labour movement.

Callum McCrae

## LARC plans more action

70 people attended the second national conference of the Labour Abortion Rights Conference (LARC) on Saturday March 11th.

When it was set up last year LARC was mainly concerned with the fight against the Benyon Bill and getting abortion on the agenda of Labour Party Conference. Benyon's Bill has now been defeated, and the 1977 Labour Party Conference passed a resolution calling for "legislation which would ensure women's right of choice on abortion in law" and "for the realisation of freely available abortion on request on the National Health Service in all areas of the United Kingdom irrespective of where the patient lives. Day care facilities should be extended."

Conference carried the resolution with more than a two-thirds majority on a card vote, which entitles the policy for possible inclusion in the Labour Party's programme.

Bernard Braine's ten-min-

ute Abortion Bill has no chance whatsoever of becoming law, and so there is no legislation before Parliament that poses a real threat to the 1967 Abortion Act. LARC was therefore concerned this year with building up the existing campaign inside the Labour Party and trade unions and agreed to "collaborate with the National Abortion Campaign in their planned conference for trade unionists in the autumn", and to build "active local campaigns on area/district health boundaries for better abortion facilities including day care clinics".

The Socialist Medical Association also submitted a resolution, which became LARC policy, calling for "an adequately funded comprehensive health service free at time of need in order to allow women a real right of choice if and when to have children, and resolves to campaign against cuts in NHS spending."

# WORKERS IN

# ACTION

## Speke conference set for April 9th

LIVERPOOL Trades Council's conference on the proposed closure of the Speke no.2 plant of British Leyland has been postponed to April 9th. The delay should make a broader representation at the conference possible; the problem is whether the Leyland bosses will allow us this leeway.

As yet no closing date has been given for the plant, and the TR7 is still being produced. No attempt has been made to move machinery. The management have refused to dis-

cuss the question of closure with the stewards, and said they would only talk about redundancy terms. In reply, the stewards have refused to talk about redundancies.

On the management side, they have still made no definite statement about the rumoured lavish redundancy bribes; on the stewards' side, no date has yet been fixed for the mass meeting to discuss opposition to the closure.

The bosses' delay can be turned to our advantage. If it

is used for an energetic campaign for occupation of the Speke plant and solidarity across the Leyland combine. But time could start running very short at any moment.

Credentials for the April 9th conference can be obtained by labour movement delegates from the Trades Council, Victoria St, Liverpool. Send 25p.

■ ■ ■

One group of workers has shown that it is not cowed by threats of closure and disaster. 100 lorry drivers working for William Harper on moving Dolomite bodies from the Speke no.1 plant to Canley, are striking for a guaranteed amount of weekly overtime.

On Friday, their action led to management laying off 400 workers at the Speke no.1 plant, and 1,100 at Canley.

The management are likely to use the dispute not only to step up the campaign against Merseyside militancy —

Scouse disease — but also to increase pressure on Canley to blame the Speke workers for their problems. Reported comments from some Canley stewards show that this is a real danger.

Dividing plant from plant, getting workers to blame other workers, is an obvious play for management to use to push through its rationalisation and redundancy plans. Unity will be essential. There ought to be combine-wide support for the Harpers drivers' strike.

■ ■ ■

Another 'victory' for the Longbridge Works Committee's policy of cooperation with the Edwardes plan. The strike of 800 workers in the sub-assembly shop in the West Works, against 'de-manning', collapse on Wednesday 8th after Works Committee opposition had prevented it spreading to other parts of Longbridge.

The 'de-manning' programme is now complete — for the moment — and speed-up is under way. Relying on Works Committee cooperation, the management are stripping away all remnants of 'mutuality' and trying to assert their authority on the shop floor. Our task is to show them that the rank and file has a will of its own, apart from the Works Committee!

Lol Duffy

## 500 at Bristol ANL meeting

On Tuesday 28th February over 500 people attended a meeting which launched a Bristol Branch of the Anti Nazi League. The meeting organised by Ashley Branch Labour Party, saw the Labour Party anti-National Front Broadcast and heard Joe Ashton MP speaking on the need for an anti-NF campaign.

The background to the meeting was a local government by-election in November. The NF ran a candidate and held a meeting in Sefton Park School, in the middle of an area where many black people live.

Parents, teachers and residents were angry and tried to get the meeting banned, but the Council refused to do anything. So 800 people turned up

to picket the meeting. Although the pickets were disciplined and peaceful, 6 people were arrested and heavily fined by the courts. The coordinating committee that had organised the picket on the initiative of the local LP stayed together to defend them, and organised the meeting on 28th February.

The committee, containing members of many different organisations, urged support for a Bristol branch of the Anti-Nazi League. The meeting accepted this willingly, seeing the need for a mass anti Fascist and anti racist campaign to defeat the NF.

The only serious objections came from the Socialist Challenge supporters who wanted to make it an anti racist as well as NF campaign; and one member of the CP who wanted to support the Campaign for Racial Harmony.

This Campaign for Racial Harmony was initiated by the CP through the local Trades Council. It is a gathering of delegates from all sorts of bodies political, religious, trade unions, community groups etc, but so far it has done nothing and is not open to individual membership.

The large attendance, and the setting-up of an on-going organisation were an important step forward. The problem remains that no thought has yet been given to the structure of the ANL. People were urged to join and many did so, but what was not clear is who runs it or how it will be run.

To defeat the NF will require an open and democratic organisation — it needs to be flexible enough to accommodate different tactics and different points of view, while organising united action where this is a basis of agreement. As yet both nationally and locally this is not true of the ANL. C. Whytehead

### BIRDS EYE

## SACK WEBB, NOT THE WORKERS!

Birds Eye chairman Kenneth Webb has issued sacking notices to all 1200 production and maintenance workers at the company's factory in Kirkby, Merseyside.

Yet Birds Eye say they are not closing the factory, and Webb has said that they may be taking on new workers

to replace those sacked. None of the staff at Kirkby have been sacked.

This is a threat of union-busting on a large scale. The sackings arise from a strike by 110 maintenance workers, which began on November 9th, over pay. Birds Eye says that it considers the production workers are also on strike because they refused to work with supervisors taking over the maintenance jobs and were then sacked.

Because Birds Eye considers the sacked workers to have been on strike, it says it will give no redundancy pay.

Unemployment in Kirkby is 15 to 20%. But the union response to the sackings so far has been feeble. The striking maintenance workers, members of the AUEW, have voted to end the strike on the basis of a small pay offer and an 18-point productivity plan. The T&GWU has said it will accept 456 redundancies announced earlier in the strike in return for negotiations about withdrawing the 1200 sacking notices.

It seems like the person who really needs to be sacked at Birds Eye is Kenneth Webb.

## Civil service unions accept 10p.c.

Without any prompting the Labour Government has conceded the full 10% pay rise to civil service trade unions. Of the two civil service unions with militant claims, CPSA (which had claimed 14 to 24%), gave way without protest, and the SCPS are still whimpering about arbitration.

The offer gives 9.5% 'new money' on top of consolidating phase 1 and phase 2 increases into basic rates. The remaining 0.5% covers the cost of consolidation and will allow rectification of some minor anomalies.

In practice this will create further divisions within the CPSA, and SCPS unions: at the bottom of the CA scale the lowest paid will only get £2.51 per week before tax; at the top of the CO scale the highest paid in this bracket will get £5.48 per week before tax.

This divisive move was eagerly accepted by the CPSA leadership with only 4 NEC members for rejection: 1 Militant supporter, 2 CP members and 1 SWP member. However even this small opposition was broken up when the Militant supporter opposed a motion to carry on the fight for the official claim moved by McGrath of SWP.

Rank and file militants and socialists in the branches need to organise immediately to reject this offer and go for the official claim of 14%-24%. Those on the National Executive who voted for this offer must be called to account, particularly those on the left who had been elected on the basis of their claims to be militant fighters and socialists.

The coming NEC and Presidential elections in May will be on way of doing this.

## THE MASS PICKET NO ONE HEARD ABOUT

THERE WAS a mass picket at Grunwicks on Tuesday 14th March, and another two weeks before. But almost no-one heard about them!

The pickets were called by the APEX regional council, with no apparent motive except to pretend that APEX was still doing something for the strikers. There was practically no publicity. On 14th March about 60 people turned up, mostly as a result of the strike committee notifying local left-wing activists.

APEX has the strength and the resources to call real mass pickets. But what it is doing now is just a cynical mockery.

## T&G witch-hunt SUPPORT THIS CONFERENCE!

AN OPEN conference to organise resistance to the Cowley witch-hunt has been planned for 8th April.

Nine leading militants at Cowley face charges of 'campaigning against elected and unelected officials of the union' (T&GWU), and now three are also accused of disrupting Trades Council proceedings.

The T&GWU regional officials are due to deliver their verdict soon. Oxford district officials have called for Frank Corti and Tom White to be banned from union office for life, and Alan Thornett to be expelled from the union.

The call for the 8th April conference has been signed by a large number of leading T&GWU militants. A defeat for the Cowley militants will be a defeat for the democratic rights of every active trade unionist. Workers' Action calls for full support to the conference.

Copies of the declaration can be got from P.Cullen, 23 Overmead Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford. The conference will be from 1pm on 8th April, at Cowley Community Centre, Oxford.

## 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.

WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH. Noon to 2pm, at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square: Picket in solidarity with the American miners, sponsored by *Socialist Challenge* and *Workers' Action*.

SATURDAY-MONDAY 25-27 MARCH. Labour Party Young Socialists conference, at Llandudno.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY 7-9 APRIL. National Women's Liberation Conference. Ladywood School, Birmingham. Registration £3 from Birmingham Women's Centre, 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham 12 (021-449 2931).

SATURDAY 8 APRIL. Conference to plan defence of the victimised T&GWU militants at Cowley. 10m. Cowley Community Centre,

Oxford.

SUNDAY 9 APRIL. Liverpool Trades Council Conference on the Speke closure. 11am, Everyman Theatre, Hope St. Credentials for labour movement delegates 25p from the Trades Council, Victoria St, Liverpool.

SATURDAY 22 APRIL. National Council for Civil Liberties conference for trade unionists on pregnancy and the law. Details from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1 (278 4575).

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL National Abortion Campaign National Conference. *Saturday*: day school on positive legislation. *Sunday*: resolutions on NAC's aims and structure. Details: NAC, 01 485 4303

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL Socialist Teachers' Alliance Open Conference on the Politics of Education. At Starcross School, Risinghill St, London N1. Registration fee £2 (students/unemployed £1), from 25 Highgate West Hill, London N6. Make cheques payable to 'Politics of Education Conference'.

## More shipyard jobs at risk

IN THE WAKE of the black-mails and job-slashing at Swan Hunter, Tyneside, the shipbuilding unions are still not moving into action on the jobs issue.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions held a conference on Wednesday 8th, in Newcastle. Officials made general speeches against job-cutting — but announced that the Confed executive would not oppose voluntary redundancies! Delegates who wanted to challenge this policy were told that the conference was 'for information only', and no votes could be taken.

Meanwhile the cutbacks are under way. Cammell Lairds on Merseyside has announced 160 redundancies among the outfitting trades. As yet there has been no union response to the redundancies, notified on Friday 10th.

Work-sharing under workers' control, with no loss of pay, on an industry-wide basis, is the way to save jobs on the shipyards.

LOL DUFFY