

# workers' ACTION

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## Labour government agrees to Spillers closures

# THE

# CONSPIRATORS

"THEY now accept this is in the interests of everybody, and that this is the right answer".

That was Spillers managing director Donald Heiley reporting on his secret talks with the Government which smoothed the way for Spillers to announce they were ditching their entire bread business and sacking 7,986 workers as from 22nd April. The Monopolies Commission had agreed to make no objection to Spillers selling off 13 of their 36 bread bakeries to the two other bread

giants, Rank Hovis McDougall and Associated British Foods.

Bakers' Union leaders have so far come out with nothing more than sob stories about 'what good workers we have been', appeals to Spillers to think again, and calls for the government to legislate for better profits in the bread business. In some areas regional Bakers' Union officials have already organised the moving of small numbers of Spillers workers to RHM or ABF bakeries,

sapping any possible fight-back in advance.

**Both the Labour Government and the Bakers' Union clearly feel they are doing the best possible in a bad situation.**

Yet the Bakers' Union could have been organising its membership to occupy the bakeries threatened with closure and to strike in all the other bakeries. The Labour Government could have alerted the Spillers workers as soon as the Spillers bosses started talking to them — five days before the closure announcement — and declared it would nationalise the whole bread and

flour-milling business, without compensation, to guarantee the workers' jobs.

It is because the Government and the union leadership chose not to act against the bread monopolies that the Government ended up conspiring with Spillers on these job cuts and the union leadership accepting them as an accomplished fact.

Spillers complain that their bread business had lost £28 million over six years. Bread sales have regularly been dropping by 2% a year, leaving the bakeries with excess capacity. Since the supermarkets ensure the bread business is keenly competitive, the baking monopolies can't compensate by pushing their prices artificially high.

But all the while, Spillers, RHM, and ABF are making handsome profits on milling the flour from which the bread is baked!

Spillers congratulate themselves on the fact they have saved 5,000 jobs by selling off 13 bakeries to RHM and ABF. They make it appear a great act of generosity! But it's the Spillers bosses who will be gaining £15 million from the sale, while the 5,000 workers get no more than an informal promise that their bakeries

will stay open (not necessarily with their present workforces) for at least another year.

And all bakery workers will suffer from speed-up enforced to make good the loss in production from the Spillers closures.

That's the way this system works — the claims of profit always come first, and the workers are expected to make the best of a bad deal.

## SOLUTION

The Labour Government and the union leadership accept it as inevitable. After all, they each have their comfortable slot within the system, which they would rather not disturb. But the bakery workers can't accept that their interests should inevitably come last.

And they need not. They have the strength and the power to fight for their own solution — a nationalised bread and flour-milling industry, under workers' control, and with working-hours (rather than jobs) cut when demand for bread drops. And they can force the union leaderships and Government to go along with it.

## BUILDING A FIGHTING SOCIALIST YOUTH MOVEMENT

Workers' Action day school for LPYS members

Saturday 15th April, from 11am, at St Francis Hall, Bristol Road, Birmingham University. All LPYS members welcome.

## Nazi bombers strike again

THE 'HEIL Hitler' brigade continued this week their rampage of attempted destruction and terror against the left.

On Sunday night April 9th, an attacker climbed the wall at the back of the "Socialist Challenge" premises in Upper Street, Islington, and lobbed a burning chemical-wrapped brick through a store-room window.

Back issues of some magazines were destroyed, but

further damage was prevented by the quick action of workers in the next-door Turkish café, who smelled smoke and called the fire brigade.

Police have confirmed that the fire was caused deliberately. Phone calls to national newspapers shortly after the attack claimed that the so-called Column 88 — a specialised Nazi terror unit that does the dirty work for legal outfits — was responsible.

## A budget of servility

IN HIS Budget Denis Healey announced some small tax cuts, some small rises in pensions and child benefits, and tiny increases in health and education spending.

And he said that these were the best possible measures to reduce unemployment. They would increase consumer demand, thus make production more profitable, and thus persuade the bosses to take on more workers.

Leave aside the fact that the overall record of this Labour Government is still one of increased taxes for working people and chopping social services. Leave aside the fact that we still pay about £7,000 million yearly to keep the police and the army which are used to keep Northern

Ireland under military occupation and break strikes.

Leave all that aside... and what a miserable example of servility this Budget is. It is based on the principle that any improvement for workers and the unemployed must always depend on an improvement in 'the economy' — which means, profits.

There is a simple government measure which could cut unemployment: declare a legal maximum working week of 35 hours. Couple that with an adequate national minimum wage, to cut away overtime, and proper re-training schemes under trade union control, and all the unemployed could have decent jobs.

The Government isn't even considering it: be-

cause it would cut very drastically into profits. And within the capitalist framework, which the Labour leadership never questions, a drastic cut in profits means economic disaster.

That makes sense for Healey and Callaghan. They have decided to make a career of running capitalism. But it doesn't make sense for the unemployed and for the working class.

With new redundancies announced every week — Leyland Speke, Lucas, Spillers... — and no-one daring to predict when present Government policies will ever start reducing unemployment seriously, we have to start a real fight for a shorter working week, both in individual plants and as a general rule.

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# A jobs fight starts on Merseyside

LUCAS, Leyland, Lairds, Western Ship Repairers, Birds Eye, Courtaulds, Plesseys, GEC — the roll-call of redundancies announced on Merseyside in the past few months appears endless.

The 520 redundancies announced last week at the Spillers bakery in Walton are the most recent addition to the infamous list.

Long an area where unemployment has been much higher than the national average, Merseyside is clearly paying the price for its reputation of industrial militancy as the bosses, big and small, deliver blows to the working class.

Liverpool Trades Council organised a conference last Sunday, 9th April, to plan the fightback. The Trades Council is dominated by the Communist Party, but its resolution significantly snuffed the reactionary demand (favoured by the CP) for import controls, and the nonsense that unemployment on Merseyside is largely due to Britain's membership of the Common Market.

On the contrary, its demands: no redundancies, nationalisation under workers' control, an end to all wage restraint, a systematic ban on overtime working, the introduction of a 35 hour week, and restoration of all cuts in social expenditure, were the basic fighting policies we need.

Also at the conference, left Labour MPs Eric Heffer and Eddie Loyden declared that workers could not rely on them or their Tribune colleagues to solve the unemployment problem. These statements, and the resolution, reflected the pressure from the left on the CP and the Labour lefts to provide a concrete strategy to fight the ever-increasing dole queues.

At last a lead has been provided. Until now a mood of fatalism, demoralisation, and 'take the money and run' has been common among workers facing redundancies on Merseyside, and this can be put down directly to the lack of leadership from the official labour movement.

The key to the struggle still lies with the willingness of the workers facing closures to occupy their factories; but this conference has given a major boost to the possibility of that sort of resistance.

The danger from the conference was that paper resolution would be passed and then forgotten. No date was provided by the conference organisers for the proposed one-day general stoppage of all industry and services throughout the area.

Fortunately the majority of the 400 delegates present took steps to remedy this situation. Conference first of all forced the Trades Council leadership to name May 9th as the date for the one-day stoppage. Secondly, the conference passed a resolution calling for the Trades Council to organise support for the Merseyside "Right to Work" march to London, against opposition from the CP and the Militant tendency.

The most important resolution to be passed, however, was from ASTMS

Community Branch. It called on the Trades Council "to set up a council of action, composed of trade unions, political parties, tenants' associations, community groups, unemployed workers, etc., to formulate policies and coordinate the struggle against the economic genocide of the Merseyside area".

The Workers' Action supporters at the conference saw a definite date for the one-day stoppage and the setting up of an action committee against unemployment as two of the major decisions it was necessary for the conference to adopt. The fact that these decisions were reached shows that there is a feeling amongst militant workers for such policies.

However, we still have to go a long way, particularly on the question of establishing a meaningful council of action. The danger is that the Communist Party will come up with legalistic reasons for opposing the council of action in practice, and that the Militant tendency, which is the dominant force in the District Labour Party, will do the same, with the excuse that councils of action are 'outside the labour movement'.

From now on it will be necessary to push the established leadership all along the line, and fight them if necessary, to force them to carry out the decisions of the conference. Workers' Action supporters on Merseyside will be taking up that fight.

## A snag for the Edwardes job grinder

LEYLAND workers voted last week to reject the company's proposed incentive scheme. The two-to-one vote is a major blow to management's plans for further de-manning and speed-up.

It shows the rank and file's opposition to further attacks on their conditions and organisation to be considerably stronger than either management or the union bureaucracy expected.

The union side of the national joint negotiating committee and the senior stewards had recommended rejection, but more in the spirit of washing their hands of the matter than of a campaign against the scheme. Now they will want to reopen negotiations.

The union negotiators' proposals for an incentive scheme differ in two ways from the bosses' proposals. They delete the clause to give the company more or less unlimited rights to impose speed-up, and they want to base bonus payments on production rather than production per man-hour, as in the bosses' scheme.

Their proposed scheme would start paying out at 85% of target levels, while present production averages about 70%. The union negotiators call this "extremely realistic".

But there is more and more support on the shop floor for throwing out incentive schemes altogether and instead going for a big rise in basic pay this year.

Meanwhile the top union representatives have announced that they are going back into the 'participation' committees which they suspended after the announcement of the Spoke no.2 closure.

According to the Morning Star, the leading Leyland trade unionists are now satisfied that they will be properly consulted in future. Until the next closure...?

JIM DENHAM

# 150 rally against witch hunt

LAST SATURDAY, 8th, about 150 Transport and General Workers' Union members — many of them delegates — rallied to oppose Region 5's witch hunt against Bob Fryer, Alan Thornett, and seven other leading militants in the Leyland assembly plant at Cowley.

The conference, in Oxford, passed a resolution "to go back into the branches and committees represented here and obtain the affiliation of those bodies to this campaign; to extend this campaign within the

TGWU and obtain the maximum affiliations to this campaign; and to reconvene the conference, on the basis of affiliated branches and committees, in the event of any disciplinary action being taken against any of the Cowley 9. This conference will decide what further action should be taken in defence of those disciplined".

Speakers from the Cowley plant gave vivid accounts of the gangsterism and arrogance they have had to put up with from the

right-wing T&G officers in the Oxford district. In contrast, the case against the nine was shown up for the absurd trivia it is.

Publishing internal union information and correspondence (which means such things as making known to the membership the size of the 5/293 branch secretary's allowance from the union), campaigning against union officials, walking out of district committee meetings early, disrupting district committee meetings (which means shuffling your feet), and dis-

rupting the Trades Council — those are some of the cooked-up charges.

The accusation of 'campaigning against officers of the union' has been justified on the grounds that Alan Thornett spoke against the Social Contract at the last TGWU conference. As one of the speakers commented, if fighting for decent living standards for the people you represent is a chargeable offence, I plead guilty!

J.D.

## The loyalty test state

"A NIGHTMARE has begun from which there is no escape. The suspects are assumed to be guilty of being enemies of the constitution unless they can prove their innocence".

That's how the Russell Tribunal reported on the operation of the Verfassungsschutz police in West Germany, after its inquiry into the operation of the Berufsverbote, the ban on leftists in public employment.

Everyone who signs a petition, goes to a public meeting, or attends a demonstration is monitored. The Verfassungsschutz also invites and follows up accusations from neighbours and fellow workers.

They don't define what they mean by 'loyalty to the constitution'; but if you fall foul of the Verfassungsschutz, then you are excluded from being a teacher, or a train driver, or a hospital porter, or any other sort of public employee — and your name is on their files from then on.

Meanwhile, a recent case shows how the Verfassungsschutz also

operates in the unions.

Manfred Schwanbeck, active in the public sector workers union, OTV, for several years, became a full-time union official on the 1st December, 1977. Before he left his job with the town administration in Kiel he was told he could get his job back at any time.

On the 7th February, 1978 Schwanbeck was called in to the OTV regional official for North West Germany, Hans Schwalbach and told that he had been watched by the Verfassungsschutz police before he was made a full-time official. These investigations had been negative, but they had been continued after he took up his job, and had now "led to success".

It was proven, Schwalbach said, that Schwanbeck belonged to the Spartacusbund, a revolutionary organisation which comes under the Unvereinbarkeitsbeschlusse (union rules excluding leftists). To prove this Schwalbach showed several internal docu-

ments which Schwanbeck had written. On the 6th February, 1978 the Verfassungsschutz had searched Schwanbeck's flat.

Schwanbeck was fired on the 9th February, 1978. In the meantime he has moved, but someone answers his old telephone number and announced himself as "Herr Schwanbeck". On 13th February, 1978 the Verfassungsschutz held a press conference at which they showed the press one of the documents which was previously in the possession of Schwalbach.

When Schwanbeck tried to get his old job back he was told he could not have it, and it is known that here again the Verfassungsschutz intervened.

Meantime Schwalbach announced investigation into the political affiliations of other union members would continue and moves are already underway to prevent many local officials organising educational seminars.

Pete Firmin



## Police self defence falls on deaf ears

### Students say: No Platform for Fascists

AGAINST opposition from the dominant Broad Left-Tory alliance in the union, the National Union of Students went back to a policy of "no platform for fascists or racials" at its conference last week.

An amendment from some colleges where the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) has a majority passed by 273,000 to 234,000 on a card vote. The proposers condemned the Lewisham demonstration last August as "ultra-left violence", and went along with the Executive's stress on the "need for the unity of all anti-racialists" — but the passing of the amendment was a major victory for the left.

The amendment insisted that "no platform" should be enforced through "broad mass mobilisations" and not through "acts of individual violence"; but socialists would not object to this insistence, as long as it is not understood in a do-nothing spirit.

Apart from that vote, and the election of Allison Downie (Socialist Students' Alliance) as Vice-President, Welfare, the Broad Left kept their control. But the Broad Left coalition is coming under increasing strain, with much of the NOLS contingent upset and angry about the rightward drift and the cynical manoeuvring of the Executive and the Communist Party with the Federation of Conservative Students.

On the question of student unions spending funds for other than strictly student purposes — like donations to workers' strike appeals — the last NUS conference, last December, passed a resolution opposing such "ultra vires" payments. Then, the Executive spoke of pressing for changes in the law. At this conference they opposed a move to instruct the Executive to campaign for the law to be changed.

That was a sign of the Broad Left's moving ever closer to the Tories: a policy which is meeting increasing opposition from students.

JEFF SLEE

## LABOUR CLUB TURFS OUT NAZIS

IF YOU thought fascist infiltration into the labour movement was pretty rare, think again over a pint or two in the peace and quiet of your local Labour Club. But watch out for the drunks in the corner. They may be more sinister than they seem.

It was well known that there were a lot of fascists around in

ON SUNDAY 9th April, Brent Indian Association called a public meeting to discuss attacks on Asians in the Kingsbury area of the borough.

The meeting, of about 80 people, heard reports from eleven people of attacks and harassment of Asians — ranging from breaking windows, pushing down walls, attacks with sticks and stones, and pushing people off buses, to harassment of Asian women going to English evening classes.

In every case the police had failed to act when incidents had been reported to them. The usual police response — and some reported calling the police up to eight times — was, "If you can't identify them, we can't do anything". A white woman reported she had phoned the police after seeing an incident, and had been told,

"we haven't got time..."

Ms Amin, who told the meeting about attacks on women going to evening classes — their hair had been pulled and their blouses ripped — said that two white girls involved, lived next door to a policeman, but nothing had been done.

The meeting was then treated to Chief Inspector Brighton, head of police for Wembley district, after the meeting had voted massively to hear what he had to say for himself.

He began by saying he had been astounded to read in the local paper about a large number of violent attacks. Very few had been reported to the police, he claimed.

He went on to reel off a whole list of arrests the police had made for drunk and disorderly behaviour of people coming from the local Bandwagon

disco, and told the audience that police manpower was low. He only had "a cupboard full of men" at his disposal, and they weren't able to do much.

Several floor speakers pointed out that the attacks in fact took place mainly in the day time, and were certainly not related to the Bandwagon disco. The "cupboard-full" of police had managed to grow to several thousand to attack the Asian strikers at Grunwicks, and the police spend more time and money protecting the National Front than preventing racist attacks.

OO

The police are themselves responsible for the harassment of young blacks in other parts of the Borough. It is no use looking to the police for a solution: they are part of the

problem.

Many of the candidates for the local elections turned up. The Conservative candidate was nearly jeered out of the meeting for suggesting that "aggression" (i.e. self-defence) provokes racist feeling, and what is needed is "law and order".

The local Labour candidates, Tim McMahon and Martin Coleman, spoke in support of the idea that the Asian community needed to defend itself against racist attacks, pointing out also that the local Labour Party is opposed to allowing the NF the right to meet and is against immigration controls.

The feeling of the meeting was that no confidence could be placed in the police, and that the next step was to set up a self-defence group in the area.

PETE FIRMIN

## Anti-fascist conference called for June

THE anti-fascist paper CARF, together with the London Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Coordinating Committee, has put out a call for a national anti-fascist conference on 3rd-4th June.

*The report of the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, with its recommendations for introducing pass laws and for permanently splitting up families where the children are 12 years or over, is merely the latest move by the ruling class to make racism respectable.*

*Since the beginning of this year we have seen:*

■ *A fascist who was preaching his gospel of hate told by Judge McKinnon, 'I wish you well'.*

■ *Hysterical rantings by Thatcher and the Tories in a desperate attempt to grasp racist votes*

■ *Bans on demonstrations by workers' organisations so that the police could defend the NF.*

*And these are only the latest developments in an offensive by our rulers which has been intensifying over the last few years.*

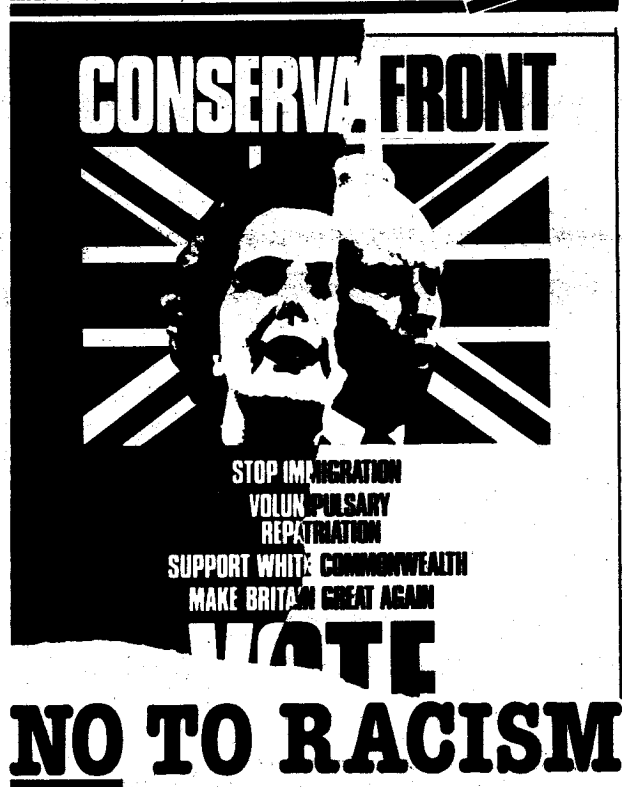
*However, there has also been an increase in the fight back against racism and fascism over this period. The anti-fascist paper CARF has grown, since its launching last May, from a small local paper to a professionally produced bi-monthly with a circulation of 12,000.*

*This success reflects the growth in the anti-fascist struggle generally — most localities have anti-fascist groups, and organisation in workplaces and colleges is increasing rapidly. An anti-racist meeting of teachers in London recently surprised its organisers by attracting almost 3000 teachers. Demonstrations against the National Front, sometimes called at only a few days' notice, bring onto the streets hundreds or even thousands of people, determined to show their hatred of the fascists.*

*Because of these facts, and*

# CARF

PAPER OF THE ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE



because of the disparate nature of the many anti-fascist organisations, CARF, together with the London Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Coordinating Committee, is organising a two-day conference for June 3-4, the aim of which will be:

□ to bring together the various anti-racist, anti-fascist bodies;

□ to strengthen the anti-racist movement by unifying and coordinating the various elements which comprise that movement;

□ to formulate the basis on which a national anti-racist, anti-fascist committee, representing the diverse elements

comprising the movement, may be set up.

There will also be an anti-racist theatre, a social, workshop discussion groups, a creche, and [we hope!] accommodation for those outside of London.

The conference will be open to local committees, to shop-stewards' committees, to Trades Councils, to immigrant organisations, to ethnic minority organisations, and to community groups.

For more details of the conference, please write to: CARF Conference, Box 53, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

The labour movement must be on its guard against this kind of threat. The following week ward Labour Parties in Arnold set a good example. They held a vigorous street leafletting and protest against the Front, showing that racism and the fascists who thrive on it aren't welcome in the labour movement or the clubs associated with it. They should be booted out wherever they raise their heads: on the streets, at work, or where they drink.

## LAMBETH: RELY ON OUR OWN STRENGTH

OVER 300 turned up to a meeting called jointly by the Anti-Nazi League and the All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement [ALARM] at Lambeth Town Hall last Wednesday, 5th.

The meeting was called to highlight the campaign against the NF in the coming Lambeth Central by-election, where polling takes place on April 20th.

Platform speakers were Peter Hain (ANL), Simon White (ALARM), Frank Ositutu (UPW) and Paul Holborrow (ANL). Floor speakers included the election candidates from Flame/SWP, Socialist Unity, and Labour.

Hain's speech emphasised that repatriation is a central plank of the NF's "Nazi programme", and he denounced Sid Bidwell's signing of the Select Committee report on immigration as "shameful". But he blurred over the role of British nationalism in building up the racist feeling from which the NF recruits by describing the NF as "not patriots, but Nazis".

Simon White (ALARM) pointed out that the NF feeds on the high level of racism in British society which is a legacy of Britain's colonial past, and therefore an all-round fight against racism is necessary. He stressed ALARM's opposition to the racism of immigration controls. ALARM, he said, does not call for state bans against the NF: such bans just "make it safe for the NF to march". "We rely on our own strength to stop them".

Frank Ositutu described the activities of the NF in the unions, and welcomed the NUR's declaration that membership of the NF is incompatible with membership of the union. By referring to Spain and Italy, he showed that fascism is not simply an anti-semitic and anti-black creed originating in Nazi Germany, but an anti-trade union and anti-socialist movement.

Apart from the Labour candidate John Tilley, who was evasive on the immigration issue, most platform speakers clearly attacked the Select Committee report.

But no-one from the ANL gave a clear answer when asked after the meeting about Sid Bidwell's sponsorship of the ANL. Responses ranged from SWP member Kim Gordon's remark that "yes, we'll even have Winston Churchill if he's alive", to Hain saying that the matter will be taken up in the ANL's directorate.

However, the size and mood of the meeting was a good indication that the NF will get a hot reception in the election campaign.

CHEUNG SIU MING

# ITALY'S LEFT RALLIES TO THE SIDE OF ORDER

**AFTER HOLDING BACK every working class initiative against attacks on living standards, the Italian Communist Party has now thrown its energies into creating a great mass movement "for a democratic restoration of order".**

It has organised demonstrations jointly with the right-wing Christian Democracy, and placed itself firmly on the side of the capitalist state against the 'Red Brigades', who recently kidnapped Aldo Moro, a leader of Italy's Christian Democratic (Conservative) Party.

And the far left has gone a long way along the same path. This is how Anna Libera, in the French revolutionary daily *Rouge* reported the far left response to the kidnapping: "The extreme left, unanimous in its condemnation of the Red Brigades, insist that the latter are working on behalf of the Italian or foreign secret services."

Lotta Continua points to the precision of their actions, their communique, their weapons and their apparent impunity in support of this theory. It is always, as the journalist Giorgio Bocca recently remarked, a case of 'if the Red Brigades didn't exist, the bourgeoisie would have to invent them.'

To be more accurate, it is the far left's reaction to the results of the kidnapping, to the hysteria being whipped up jointly by the bourgeoisie and by the Communist Party. When they raise the question of the Red Brigades' possible police links without the slightest evidence, it is a sign of hysteria on the far left in response to the popular hysteria being orchestrated from the right.

The far left's position is clearly summed up in this statement issued by Democrazia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy); the electoral alliance of several groupings to the far left of the Communist Party, of which the largest is 'Il Manifesto' and the smallest GCR, the Italian section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

"Democrazia Proletaria strongly condemns the kidnapping of Aldo Moro and the assassination of the members of his escort. The objective of this terrorist act — the most serious in a long series of episodes often of doubtful origin that have been claimed by or attributed to the Red Brigades — is to create a state of profound tension and disorientation.

"The concrete political result is to accelerate the restoration of an authoritarian regime, to favour the introduction of new repressive measures attacking civil liberties, and to consolidate the power of the Christian Democracy which, by referring to this attack

on one of its members, can present itself as a victim of the very terrorism which it, in fact, has itself helped to develop through its conception of the state and society and by its protection of the subversive activities of foreign and domestic secret services and fascists...

"That is why we must seriously examine the theory of ties with the international centres of provocation and with the secret services of important foreign powers in whose interests it is to create chaos in our country ..."

Of course, if there were clear evidence for such suspicions — and those cited by Lotta Continua are laughable — it would be important to unmask the role of the state or foreign secret services or fascists. In the present situation, this speculation is more likely to play into the hands of the bourgeois parties and the Communist Party for whom it is normal to present all "extremists" as the same: foreign-inspired conspirators.

Marxists condemn the Moro kidnapping too — but from the point of view of terrorism being a diversion from, and a dead-end substitute for, working-class mass action against Moro and his kind, not from the point of view of the social stability of Italy!

It is not at all impossible that the Red Brigades are infiltrated by police. But there is no hard evidence that they are anything but a tragically misguided group of courageous fighters against the capitalist state. And it is certain that groups like the Red Brigade — infiltrated by police or not — exist and operate because they are backed up by thousands of young, radical sympathisers, frustrated and angry about the CP's 'historic compromise' and the far left's blunders and waverings.

Socialist can no more line up with the bourgeois state against the Red Brigades than class-conscious strikers could line up with the bosses against some impatient young sympathisers who, angered by the reformist leadership of the strike, undertook a desperate and stupid action like kidnapping one of the owners of the factory.

The irony is that the same far-left groups who now try to write off the Red Brigades as fascists or police agents were, just a few years ago, uncritical sympathisers of all sorts of "armed struggle" in countries far away from Italy. Both then and now, they have been equally unable to draw the distinctions between guerilla warfare, terrorism, wild lashing-out, and plain banditry.

## The Euro-dissidents

**INSIDE THE French Communist Party, the twists and turns of the Party's line in the course of its jousting with the Socialist Party during the election campaign have caused grave discontent, at least among the Party's intellectuals.**

On 6th April, a letter was published in the Paris daily *Le Monde*, signed by six of the CP's leading intellectuals, including Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar. They had previously tried to get the letter published in the CP's daily, *L'Humanité*, and had been refused.

Why, asks the letter, did the CP not avoid "that succession of volte-faces which throw doubt on its strategy and the correctness of its methods of political work"?

The letter demands "that... a discussion forum should be immediately opened in the party press" and "that the next party congress should really be an extraordinary congress... It should be really sovereign, that is, work out for itself, after discussion, the line to be applied by the whole party, instead of contenting itself with rubber-stamping a resolution set out in advance".

THE GREEK Communist Party (Interior) too is suffering from internal dissent after an election defeat.

The CP (Interior), which follows a 'Eurocommunist' line, is the smaller of the two Greek CPs. In the November 1977 general election, it took part in a mini-'Popular Front' alliance which was heavily defeated, while the Moscow-line CP (Exterior), standing indepen-

ently, increased its share from 9% to 12% of the vote.

According to the 8th April issue of the French revolutionary daily *Rouge*, a left wing opposition tendency developed in the CP (Interior)'s 2000-strong youth organisation after the elections. This tendency has now been expelled, taking with it nearly 70% of the youth membership in Athens.

SANTIAGO CARRILLO's "Euro-communist" line in the Spanish CP is also under strain.

The CP congress in Catalonia — the strongest of the CP's regional organisations — has just rejected the Central Committee's decision that the party should stop calling itself Leninist.

The Catalan congress first voted narrowly to accept the dropping of the reference to 'Leninism'. Then, the next day of the congress, there was a dramatic reversal. The vote was taken again, with the members of the regional executive voting according to their individual opinions, rather than en bloc; and the dropping of 'Leninism' was equally narrowly rejected.

The pro-Carrillo regional leaders have offered their resignations, but the regional central committee asked them to continue. The all-Spanish congress of the CP opens on April 19th.

As the CPs move away from the old certainties and monolithism of Stalinism, open dissent inevitably appears both on their left and right wings. This trend is probably more developed in Catalonia than anywhere else; there are at least four political currents visible in the regional party.

A RECENT issue of *Tribune* [24th February] focused on the question of unemployment.

The concern expressed by union leaders and advertised in the pages of the paper was reflected in the comments by the recently-retired Jack Jones: "The number one priority for this country now is the abolition of the 'dole queue'!" It was fitting, then, that *Tribune* should give over two full pages to it, but the questions thrown up challenged the very core of their Alternative Economic Strategy.

The dilemmas and confusions of the Tribunites can rarely have been so clearly revealed in the pages of the paper as on this occasion. The major article (although not presented as such) was in fact a straightforward factual account and dismissal of many of the major features of the Alternative Strategy, written by Barrie Sherman, a research officer with ASTMS.

Sherman showed clearly that the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' was an alternative for the bourgeoisie, not for the working class — and an unworkable capitalist alternative, at that, mainly because it is narrowly nationalist, failing to come to grips with a crisis of international scope.

He identified "two distinct and separate strands" to the problems of unemployment: "the short-term lack of demand... and the longer-term structural and economic changes".

## Logic

The traditional Tribunitite answer to the former, following in the Keynesian tradition, has been to advocate a boost in the demand for goods as a central priority, mainly by achieving an increase in public expenditure. Sherman, however, points out with devastating ease that this could only be achieved (aside from increasing the external debt, which would be out of the question) by increasing taxation on capital. But "if corporate taxes are higher here than elsewhere, it is foolish to believe that multinational corporations (and indeed primarily British-based companies!) will not transfer their resources". The logic is inescapable, as long as profit is kept as the main regulator of the economy — and both Sherman and *Tribune* assume that it is.

In any case, he writes, an increase in demand at the present time (with low productivity in Britain) would both drag in imports (so harming the balance of payments) and make inflation worse. He points out, as indeed would *Tribune*, that these effects could be counteracted by concentrating on supply as well as demand (in *Tribune*'s terms, expanding the powers of the NEB, introducing planning agreements, and so on). But "herein lies the rub. Policies based on investment in those industries which will give the greater return... (is) almost exclusively capital-intensive... An optimal investment strategy would thus create more unemployment".

## Cost

The Tribunitite response to this is the 35 hour week. Good. But even that, within a capitalist framework, is limited. As Sherman says, "unless all industrialised countries do this together and there is an increase in productivity, British industry would be at an international cost disadvantage".

As regards the complementary proposal to take major companies into state ownership, he writes that there are two problems: "The first is the political difficulties involved and the second is the logistical problem of nationalising a multinational company whose products and sales are integrated in global terms". More important, even if these difficulties were overcome, such state capitalist enterprises, with or without worker participation, would not necessarily help to reduce the unemployment total — indeed

# Caric

Richard Paine le



The 'Alternative Economic Strategy' put forward in their different ways by the TUC, *Tribune*, and the Communist Party is more often referred to than explained. Its guiding principle, however, is reflation, that is, restoring prosperity to the economy by increasing consumer demand. To ensure that this prosperity leads to new industrial investment in Britain, it calls for increased state control over industry and over imports.

Its major planks are:

- Increased public spending.
- More nationalisations
- Compulsory planning agreements between the Government and private firms
- Import controls
- Price controls.

the experience of workers in the nationalised industries over the years points to exactly the opposite effect.

Both Sherman and *Tribune* use the same frame of reference for their respective analyses — the categories of bourgeois political economy, the standpoint of capitalist rationality. What is important here is that Sherman, even in using this same frame of reference — and guided by a political outlook evidently quite similar to *Tribune*'s — is able to explode in the pages of *Tribune* itself the very myths that the Alternative Economic Strategy upholds.

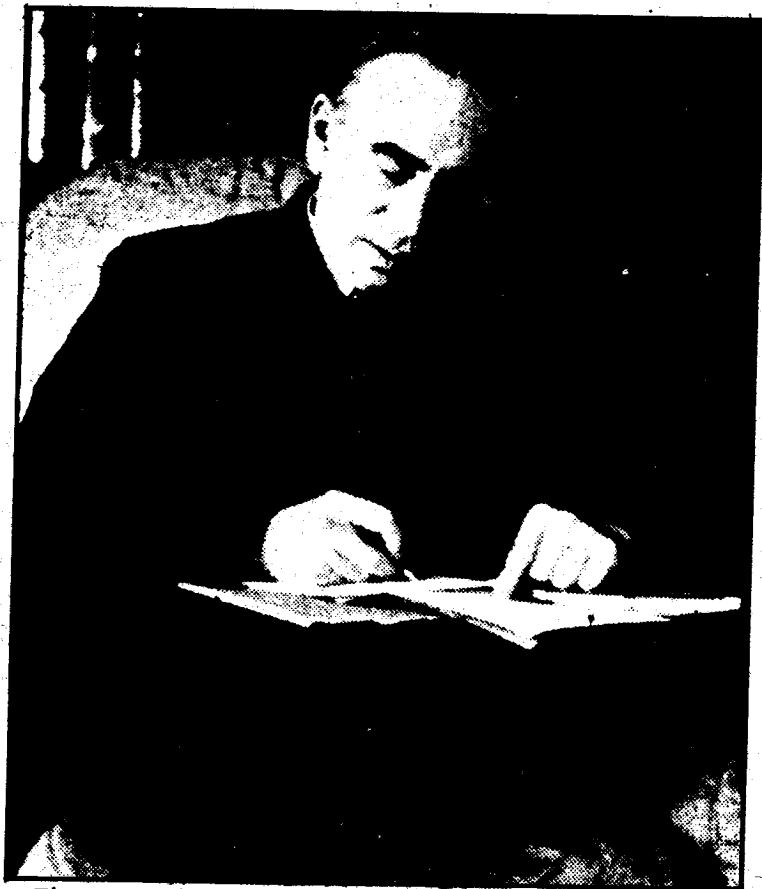
With all its limitations and confusion, his analysis has nevertheless shown us — and *Tribune*, if they care to see — precisely why the Alternative Strategy is not capable of solving the crisis of capitalism, why in fact it is not even a realistic strategy now for a bourgeois government, let alone for the working class.

For a Marxist analysis there is no mystery in the fact that the crisis of the 1930s was not solved by Keynesian economic policies but by the impact of the



# Can Keynes be again?

looks at a recent analysis of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy'



The economist J M Keynes reckoned that the crises of capitalism could be overcome by raising state spending to boost demand.

unites in reply that revolutionaries advocate no immediate response to redundancies. On the contrary: but our demand for work-sharing with no loss of pay, unlike import controls, can only be achieved through workers' action and can on no occasion be against the interests of workers abroad.

If the Alternative Economic Strategy stood or fell with its theoretical qualities, then we need no longer concern ourselves with it. However, the TUC bureaucracy and the Labour Left leaders continue to parrot its phrases to the labour movement as a whole.

The Militant tendency too sees nothing inherently wrong with the Alternative Strategy. For them it is merely that it isn't radical enough — as the recent Labour Party Young Socialists document *The Socialist Way Forward* points out, the difference lies simply in the number of monopolies a left Labour government should nationalise, and the speed of doing it. It is a quantitative not qualitative difference, one of degree but not of approach.

If the 'Alternative Strategy' were introduced by the government at the present time, it would, as Sherman shows in his own terms, lead to higher inflation, a deteriorating balance of payments, the further export of capital [and withdrawal of companies altogether if controls on movement of capital were introduced] — in general, a worsening of the capitalist crisis. Tribune falls entirely to understand this basic point.

It is precisely because the Alternative Strategy consists simply of a hoped-for Left government offering advice and threats to the capitalist class that, especially in a period of crisis, such a strategy cannot meet the immediate needs of the working class. And if the Alternative Strategy were adopted — a Left government trying to introduce piecemeal policy reforms in abstraction from the struggles of workers — then the working class would be left completely unprepared in both organisational and ideological terms to counteract the inevitable and probably devastating counter-attack launched by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

The example of Chile shows the dangers and the Tribunes have still to come up with any adequate reply to it.

Because both Tribune and Sherman operate according to assumptions (true or otherwise) drawn from capitalist rationality, neither can conceive of any independent struggle against capital by the working class.

For Tribune this takes the form of attempts to tinker with capitalism. For Sherman, who sympathises with Tribune's outlook but can see the fallac-

iousness of their economic arguments in their own bourgeois terms, there appears to be no way out of the capitalist crisis other than at the expense of the working class.

He notes that "the concept of compromise, superficially attractive though it is, cannot cope with a system which is reaching towards a polar position" — but all he can offer is the rather vague hope that technological change will lead to a debate in society at large.

Given a largely passive workers' movement, as it is at present despite inward signs of stirring, it is true that the crisis is being solved at workers' expense. And it is precisely this relative passivity of the working class which the Tribune approach reinforces rather than dispels.

It should not be a surprise therefore that Tribune rarely focuses on the direct action and the struggles of the workers' movement — their reliance on parliament in general dominates.

For the most part, then, the Alternative Economic Strategy is empty wishes. The Tribunes make speeches about the desirability of better social services and more control over the profiteers, but do nothing to organise the struggle at rank and file level.

## Audit

Tribune and the Labour Left leaders associated with it have the (usually passive) support of thousands of shop stewards. An active campaign by them for the 35 hour week — focused on action in the factories, but also including pressure on the Government which did not fade away every time an important vote came up — would have more effect against unemployment than all their arguments about 'reflation' and all their 'social audits' to 'prove' that unemployment is 'uneconomic'.

And the call for more control over the monopolies, the multinationals, and the profiteers could be made a reality too — if it were based on a struggle for workers' control, with the abolition of business secrecy, and with workers' committees linking up nationally (and, if possible, internationally) to impose workers' interests and workers' plans against the plans of the capitalists.

That struggle would mean a revolutionary fight against the capitalist state — not speeches to persuade the state to carry out a different and more 'Keynesian' policy. Yet it is the only practical way of organising against unemployment now. As Sherman shows, "compromise cannot cope with a system which is moving towards a polar position".

ist crisis in order to lay the basis for another (short) boom.

It is Healey and the Labour Government who (semi-consciously) recognise these realities of capitalism, as does Barrie Sherman; and it is Richard Clements, the editor of Tribune, who, in his summing-up in the same issue, totally ignores the major points in Sherman's contribution, and stubbornly buries his head in the sand with a predictable rehash of the Alternative Strategy!

## Pave

Unable to fathom the inner nature of capitalism, Tribune instead imagines the possibility of a crisis-free capitalism paving the way to a socialist planned economy.

The main barriers they see are the sheer stupidity of the capitalists who refuse to invest in Britain (they even deny the cause — low profit rates) and the malevolence of those whom the capitalists have captivated in civil service and government. 'If only we had the right policies', they wail, and everything would be all right.

Sherman's article also shows us why Tribune's narrow nationalism (import controls, controls on the export of capital) is absolute nonsense except on the terms of certain backward sections of capitalist industry. He illustrates quite clearly (though perhaps not intentionally) the international basis of capitalism, which necessitates by its very nature an international response on the part of workers.

Protection of jobs in Britain by import controls can only, at 'best', lead to redundancies being shifted abroad. It is the same sort of thing as the recent proposal by trade union officials that Leyland should close its plant in Senneffe (Belgium) instead of Speke no.2. And what could be more absurd than the prospect of a Tribune government in Britain shifting redundancies to West Germany and France, with a Social Democratic government in Bonn and a left government in Paris doing exactly the same to British workers!

Repeat this fiasco on a world scale and it is pretty obvious who gains.

It is often alleged by Trib-

Second World Imperialist War. It is no accident that the post-war boom came to an end despite the pursuit of Keynesian policies by the majority of bourgeois government in Western Europe in the post-war years.

Those policies may have had the effect of prolonging the boom, but they only did so artificially and at the expense of a much deeper and longer initial recession when it inevitably came.

Keynesian policies, such as Tribune wish to reintroduce, merely tinker with the effects of capitalism, they fail entirely to understand that these are merely the effects of contradictions inherent in the very nature of the capital relation itself, inherent in the relationship between the antagonistic classes of capitalism. Capitalism had over the post-war years been denied its necessary 'cleansing' mechanism of crisis and as a result the 'works' became clogged up.

Government policies at the present time are directed, albeit not particularly consciously or unambiguously, at smoothing the passage of the capital-

PAUL ADAMS reviews  
Wal Hannington's recently  
republished account of  
"Unemployed Struggles,  
1919-1936".

THE DEFEAT of the General Strike and the subsequent inevitable defeat of the miners meant the most intense suffering in the mining areas. The pit owners used their victory to increase hours and throw thousands out of work. Between April and September 1927 300,000 miners were axed from the workforce.

In September 1927 Hannington and A.J.Cook, the militant general secretary of the Miners' Federation, addressed a great demonstration of Rhondda miners and their families, calling for a march to London. As for official support... not even the Executive of Cook's own union would support the march.

The TUC said nothing at first, just hoping the venture would fail. But when the London and Bristol Trades Councils offered their support, TUC General Secretary Walter Citrine publicly dissociated the official trade union movement.

A.M.Wall, secretary of the London Trades Council, ignored his mandate and announced, to the jubilation of the press, that the march was a stunt "fostered by" the communists for the express purpose of augmenting their membership.

Within 24 hours of Wall's statement, four miners' wives doing house-to-house collections were arrested and fined. Citrine and Wall might have done it themselves...

## Law

Now Citrine circularised the trades councils on the route of the march, instructing them not to render the marchers any assistance. This action was used by the Prime Minister for his refusal to meet a delegation of the marchers when they reached London.

Eventually, the Minister of Labour, Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, agreed to meet a delegation so long as they were accompanied by MPs. "One of the deputation inquired whether the Minister thought that a man, wife and four children could live on 16 shillings a week, such as many miners' families were expected to do?"

In challenging tones he said to the Minister "Could you exist on such a pittance?" But Sir Arthur only fidgeted in his chair as he evaded the question. When the deputation demanded that all persons who had been struck off the exchange registers should be placed back on benefit, the minister said, "You are asking me to break the law."

"We don't care one jot about your law!" said the marchers. "We are concerned about saving human lives, and if the law has to be broken in order to do that, then the law should be broken!"

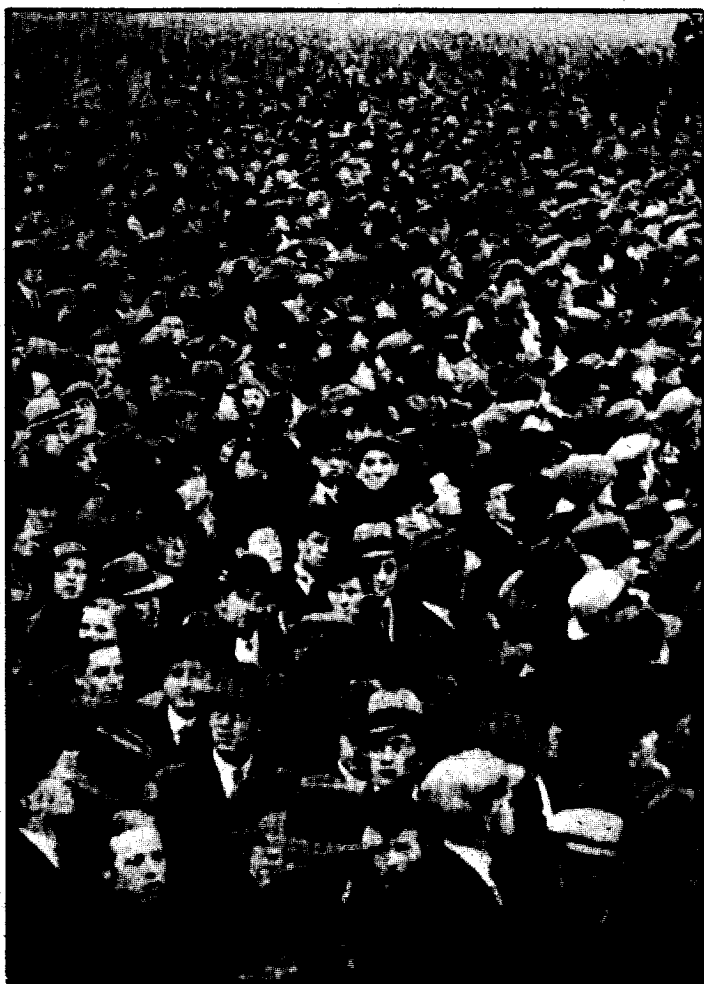
The aftermath of the General Strike saw many attacks on the working class but few so vicious as the report of the Blanesburgh Committee — which included three trade unionists, one of them, Margaret Bondfield, being a member of the TUC General Council. The report ensured that she was remembered by a generation of workers as "Eight-bob-a-week Maggie". It recommended cuts in unemployed benefit rates of 8s. for men of 18-21 and 7s. for women of that age; for girls of 16-18 and men over 21 the cut was 1s. a week, and for boys of 16-18, 1/6d.

The Second National Hunger March faced the terrible ordeal of bitter winter weather, opposition from the official labour movement and brutality from the police and civil authorities.

It set out from Scotland late

# THE ANGER MARCHES

## PART 2



in January 1929, determined to break the ruling from central government that the authorities on the way should treat the marchers to 'casual conditions' only.

This march had as a particular objective the fight against the "not genuinely seeking work" ruling, which had struck thousands off the books of exchanges and subjected tens of thousands to useless wandering only so that they could meet the expected questions at the interrogations of the Public Assistance Committees

## Flint

With the election that May of a Labour government things were not made any easier for the unemployed — no wonder, with Margaret Bondfield now the Minister of Labour!

A Third National Hunger March set out on 30th March and for the first time included a contingent of women. Other contingents came from Scotland, Durham, Northumberland, Plymouth, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Notts, Derby, South Wales, Staffordshire, Midlands and Kent.

While the marchers were on the road the "not genuinely seeking work" clause was abolished and the adult rate of benefit raised from 7s. to 9s.

But Ramsey MacDonald was no more inclined to meet the marchers' deputation than was Bonar Law before him. Several raids organised by the unemployed on ministry buildings showed the new government was every bit as flint-hearted as the last one. Before the government split and MacDonald and his supporters formed a National Government with the support of the Tories and Liberals, it managed

to squeeze into its legislative programme another anti-working class "economy" measure which disallowed tens of thousands from getting benefit.

The fall of the Labour government unleashed a dramatic rise in mass struggles. On September 8th a big march of London unemployed was timed to coincide with the opening of Parliament. Two days later, thousands of Welsh miners lobbied the TUC congress meeting at Bristol. And on September 15th, in response to a cutting of the wages of "the lowest men on the lower deck", mutiny broke out in the Fleet at Invergordon.

A week later a series of marches rocked Dundee and Glasgow, culminating in a march in Glasgow of 150,000 stewarded by a body-guard armed with heavy sticks. Huge protests rang through the streets of Manchester, Bolton, Cardiff, Blackburn, Nottingham and London in the next few days. Londoners saw teachers and civil servants marching on Parliament.

Women marchers by the roadside, 1934.



Here was a genuine mass movement of millions expressing its will. Yet when on October 27th 1931 new elections were called, the "democratic" process licensed the return of another National Government. It was this government that within weeks introduced the notorious means test.

For a year the means test was the main focus of the struggle of the unemployed. At the end of that period, in September 1932, three big struggles erupted with barricade fighting and many clashes with the police and, in Belfast, with the army.

## Relief

"On 13th September 10,000 Birkenhead unemployed demonstrated to the Public Assistance Committee with the following simple demands: Relief to all able-bodied unemployed and an increase of 3s. per week; immediate supply of boots and clothes and one hundred-weight of coal during the winter; and the starting of work schemes at trade union rates..."

"As the unemployed began to march away, the police interfered with the procession, a conflict took place, and a number of arrests were made. Two days later the unemployed again demonstrated against the Public Assistance Committee to secure improvements in their relief scales..."

"Suddenly large numbers of police were ordered to draw their batons and they began to club to the ground demonstrators and pedestrians, including men, women and children, the aged and infirm."

"This roused the feeling of the whole of Birkenhead, and that night a tremendous demonstration assembled at the park gates as a protest against the police action. After short speeches they formed up and marched round the town, returning to the park gates, and when the demonstrators were just about to disperse to their homes the police, without any apparent reason, made a baton charge."

"Unemployed and employed workers stood their ground, and one policeman was thrown through a plate-glass window. The crowd took up the offensive and the police eventually were compelled to run; but they rallied again and a pitched battle ensued. Workers tore up railings to defend themselves, and the fighting went on until eleven at night, thirty seven policemen being carried to hospital."

The Birkenhead working class paid dearly for their boldness. The next nights saw repeated police raids on working class families.

Windows were shattered, families terrorised, workers and unemployed beaten up. The leader of the unemployed, Joe Rawlings, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and Leo McGree, the Liverpool unemployed leader, got a similar sentence for his part in the struggle.

Throughout this period the ferment against the government was growing and the NUWM was organising a mammoth petition that another National Hunger March would present to Parliament. As this march set out, news was coming in of fighting between unemployed and police in West Ham, in Croydon, North Shields and in Belfast.

It was clear that the open road would be no haven from police attack. By six in the morning of the day the marchers were due to rally in London, it was reported that police had attacked every contingent and that there had been pitched battles in many of the districts where the marchers were being quartered.

## Red Gold

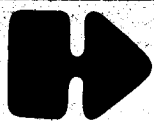
When the marchers gathered in central London the police attacked again. And before the petition could be presented to Parliament the police had confiscated it and arrested several leaders of the march.

One of them, Sid Elias, who had just returned from the Soviet Union and was therefore accused of being paid by "red gold", was told by the judge: "The maximum sentence I can pass upon you is in my judgment far, far too short. I sentence you to two years imprisonment."

So ended the bitterest period of unemployed struggles.

In the New Year of 1934 another National Hunger March set off — this time, in Hannington's estimation, rallying wider sections of the working class movement than any previous march. Three days before the marchers were to enter London, the police arrested five in the Tyneside contingent for "deserting their wives" though each marcher was able to prove he was there with his wife's support.





Seven West Fife marchers were even arrested on the same charge after they had returned home!

The reception of the marchers was to be preceded by a conference in London, but before it could open the veteran Tom Mann, and Harry Pollitt — the mover of the main resolution — were arrested. The Prime Minister, now comfortably adapted to the role of open representative of the ruling class, refused to meet a delegation of the marchers.

"Has anybody" asked the renegade Ramsey MacDonald, "who cares to come to London whether on foot or in a first class carriage, the constitutional right to demand to see me, to take up my time, whether I like it or not?"

## No

But again the unemployed would not take no for an answer. On March 1st, 300 succeeded in getting into the outer lobby at Westminster and 24 into the public gallery. Then suddenly a cry rang from the public gallery: "Meet the Hunger Marchers", "We refuse to starve in silence!", "Down with the National Government!", When news reached the lobby that fighting had broken out in the gallery, the 300 marchers there started to sing the "Internationale" at the top of their voices.

The April 1934 Budget "restored" the cuts that had been made. But the victory — which the Labour Party claimed for its own inaudible and invisible campaign — was not to last long. The 1934 Unemployed Assistance Board (UAB) Act made profound changes in the whole system of unemployed insurance.

What roused most anger were the provisions in Part 2 of the Act: even before the revised scales were known, many were outraged at the Act's provision of compulsory training. Even the Home Secretary Sir John Gilmour described the training camps as "concentration camps".

## Heroic

When the new scales were announced there were immediate protests. There were reductions in benefit for all over the age of fourteen; single adult males living with their families lost 7s., subsequent members of the family lost 9s.; while a single female worker living with her family also lost 7s. In addition, there were wholesale disallowances of benefit.

Finally after strike threats by the Cambrian Combine miners of the Rhondda and nationwide marches and protests, including the sacking of the offices of the Public Assistance Committees in many towns, this Act was repealed. Now the campaign was for the immediate restoration of the old scales — and again, finally, the government gave way.

That chronicle of the heroic struggles of the unemployed is told by Hannington in a way which will not fail to inspire the working class reader. Unsurprisingly though unfortunately, the book steers clear of the political issues that raged within the Communist Party throughout this period and which put some constraints on the tactics of the communists within the NUWM. The book, however, is a 300-page inspiration and arsenal to aid today's struggles of the unemployed.

## 600 crew sacked after ferry sit-in

Crewmembers on the Townsend Thoresen Cross Channel ferry from Felixstowe to Holland have gone on an unofficial strike and occupied the ferry in Holland.

National Union of Seamen members of the Felixstowe Pool Committee decided on the action after the shipowners representatives refused to meet their demands on back pay due under a new agreement about crew members retained on board in case work arose, and reinstatement of a crew member who was sacked for a drug offence which took place whilst he was on leave.

The occupation of the Felixstowe-Holland ferry led to the Stranraer-Larne ferry crew striking in solidarity.

Townsend Thoresen had the Dutch police sent in to clear the ship of strikers and promptly announced after the occupation had ended that 600 crew members were sacked.

Townsend Thoresen are now insisting that the strikers must apply for reinstatement individually. This means that there is a good possibility of the leaders being victimised.

The Pool Committee which took the action was brought back to life by militants in Felixstowe as means of organising the NUS members there, because there is no representative branch of the Union in this area. It has achieved major successes in negotiations with shipowners on issues of job security — decasualisation of ferries — and conditions.

Although the NUS failed to support the strike action they must now insist that Townsend Thoresen reinstate all sacked crew members with no victimisations.

If Townsend Thoresen attempt to victimise individuals the NUS should take industrial action against them and if necessary spread the action until reinstatement for all crew members is achieved

Geoff Williams

## FASCISTS IN THE UNIONS

### Back up NUR's anti-fascist rule

THE National Union of Railwaymen's Executive decision to exclude fascists has been echoed in motions from branches in the GMWU and ASTIMS for those unions' annual conferences, calling for expulsion of known fascists.

Meanwhile, the NUR decision has also brought protests from the Tories and from Woodrow Wyatt. They say it is undemocratic. The absurd twist to this protest is that these right-wingers defend the NF's right to remain within the unions as declared wreckers, while at the same time they support the bans, proscriptions, and witch hunts that go on in unions such as APEX, the EETPU, CPSA, and T&GWU against leftists and communists!

The Right wants democracy for those who want to split and smash the unions, and bans against those who want to build up the

unions as militant, fighting organisations. What the labour movement needs is exactly the opposite; and, instead of relying on general rules against 'disrupters', a campaign is needed within the NUR to root out racism, to show what the NF are really like, and to ensure that the Executive ruling has the backing of the members.

Branches in other unions, too, should take up the example of the NUR, and submit motions to their annual conferences supporting the NUR Executive in its action, condemning the fascist bomb attacks on union and Communist Party offices, and tying their own unions down to a policy of bans on fascists.

The campaign can be taken further where unions such as the CPSA have a declared policy against division on grounds of race or creed. Racists within the unions should be removed from

## THE UNIONS



office. And Labour Parties too should get involved in this process of cleansing the labour movement of racism, an inheritance from the days of Empire and living off colonial booty.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

## Race Report MPs IT'S WORSE IF THEY'RE LEFT

Dear comrades,

The recent report from the Select Committee on Immigration and Race Relations can only be described, as indeed it has been by immigrant organisations, as 'a gift for racials'. No wonder it was welcomed so gleefully by the *Daily Mail* as providing 'dramatic vindication' for the view of Margaret Thatcher and Enoch Powell, for it gives the stamp of approval of the Labour Party to the openly racist immigrant-bashing of the Tories and the National Front.

All the MPs who signed it clearly accept right down the line the explicitly racist arguments that black and particularly Asian immigrants are the

cause or one of the causes of the joblessness and worsening social conditions created under capitalism with the aid of this Labour Government.

The five Labour MPs who willingly put their names to this racist document can only be described as a cancer in the Labour Party and the labour movement generally. Their contempt, as indeed the contempt of the government itself, for the decision of the 1976 Labour Party conference to end all immigration controls, is obvious.

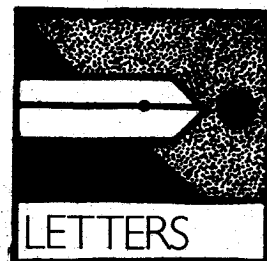
Particularly obscene is the fact that two members of the *Tribune* group of MPs — Syd Bidwell and William Wilson — should have signed the Report. The former's case is especially perverse, coming as he does from Southall (an area of high immigrant population) and being a prominent sponsor of the Anti-Nazi League.

There can be only one course of action against traitors such as these five in our midst. Our Young Socialists branch has unanimously resolved to write to *Labour Weekly*, *Tribune*, *Left*, *Militant*, *Workers' Action*, *Chartist*, and the *Morning Star*, asking for support from readers for the following actions to be taken against the Report and the five MPs concerned.

■ The labour movement should begin to organise right now to pledge MPs to vote against any legislation brought up on the basis of this Report in Parliament, by this or any future government.

■ In doing so we should demand support for the following four points:

- An end to all immigration controls;
- Labour movement support for black self-defence (also passed at the 1976 conference);
- No platform for fascists;



□ A purge of all fascists and open racists from all positions in the labour movement.

We must apply this final point without compunction against the five MPs concerned. People may reply that Bidwell and Co. are not open racists. No doubt Bidwell considers himself an anti-racist. But what he and the other signatories have actually done in practice is to give left-wing credentials to Powellite politics. The fact that Bidwell is a sponsor of the ANL only makes it worse.

Their CLPs, and in particular Southall CLP, must act now to remove them as Labour candidates in the forthcoming election. All forces must be mobilised against them in order to achieve this. Other CLPs must send resolutions to the NEC on the issue. We call upon the trade unions which sponsor them in Parliament to withdraw their sponsorship at the first opportunity.

■ More specifically we call upon the *Tribune* group of MPs to expel both Bidwell and Wilson from membership forthwith.

■ Furthermore we call upon all those sponsoring the Anti-Nazi League, including the Labour Party Young Socialists and a considerable number of Labour MPs, to campaign within that body for the immediate dropping of Bidwell as a sponsor.

It is clear to us that only prompt and effective action by the labour movement, and Labour Party members in particular, against these open racists can prevent their cancer from spreading further. We must act now!

Yours in comradeship,  
Edinburgh Central Labour Party  
Young Socialists.

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# WORKERS IN ACTION

**MERRITTS Sunblest [ABF] bakery workers in Cardiff have called for a fight back against the Spillers redundancies.**

Meeting last weekend, their branch called for a meeting of the bakers' Union South Wales joint shop stewards' committee. At the committee meeting, stewards from Merritts and from the neighbouring Memory Lane Spillers cake plant will push for support for occupations in the plants due for closure and strikes elsewhere.

In fact the Spillers closures also mean an attack on the work conditions of all bakery workers. The bosses aim to keep up overall bread production levels. At Merritts, Cardiff, 20 workers have been switched from Wonderloaf [Spillers], with the cooperation of the local union officials — but those few extra workers have to make up for the loss of production of two plants in South Wales previously employing 800 bakers!

## The fightback can start here

say S.Wales bread workers

There will be no extra money for this increased production: indeed, since shifts will be shortened to put in a third shift, pay will go down.

The initiative in resistance once again falls to the rank and file. But that should not deter us. Last year's strike over holidays started at local level and then spread before the national leadership were forced to act.

**GEOFF WILLIAMS**  
Bakers' Union, Merritts, Cardiff

**AFTER THE** initial feeling that "we've escaped the chop", some of the workers at Spillers Memory Lane cakes plant in Cardiff are beginning to smell a rat.

The letters management gave us on Friday 7th stated that because our side of the industry was viable, our jobs were safe.

What didn't ring true was that all 'morning goods' production — that is, rolls, tea cakes, baps, etc. — is being scrapped at the same time as bread. Half of our output is these goods; a large proportion of this is in the Homepride name, which will cease to exist on the 22nd.

The rest is contract work, mainly to Marks and Spencers and Butlins, which will continue — but in the medium term there is no way these contracts can be kept in com-

petition with the two remaining big bakeries.

Are Spillers just trying to keep us quiet now, and then chop us later? Because the cakes section is highly profitable at the moment, it is one of the few places where Spillers workers can operate from strength, and where the usual channels of industrial action are still effective.

Strikes, either lightning stoppages in mid-production, or complete shutdowns, can hit Spillers attempts to sell off factories and plant and keep its own profit-makers rolling on.

**We must give practical support to all sacked workers now, for if there is no fight back now, then what chance will we have?**

**ROB MCGONIGLE**  
Bakers' Union, Spillers Memory Lane, Cardiff.

**GAS STRIKE OVER 14 SACKED PAY CLERKS**

A strike by gas workers in Edinburgh has escalated rapidly over the last week.

The issue at the centre of the dispute is on the surface trivial. Some 2 years ago 14 pay clerks applied for regrading to cover an increased work load.

Their claim passed through the Whitley Council negotiating machinery, twice, only to be flatly rejected by management on both occasions. When they gave notice of strike action, British Gas offered to take the matter to arbitration!

After a two year wait, the 14 workers, with over 100 years' service among them, took official strike action. British Gas handed the battle over to Scottish Gas, and after 14 weeks on strike the management sacked the "Granton 14" on 10 March. Clearly they want to break the strong branch NALGO organisation.

On 24th March the 1500 white collar workers in the NALGO branch, together with several AUEW TASS members, struck in support of the reinstatement of the 14 dismissed. Then, on the morning of Friday 7th April, 35 meter readers, members of MATSA (white collar section of the GMWU) who had been refusing to handle schedules drawn up by higher management in the place of NALGO members were suspended.

The same afternoon, 300 gas fitters, also GMWU members, who had been blacking work normally done by NALGO members, walked out, demanding the lifting of the suspension notices.

A strike support committee has been established by a number of militants from other unions, and is producing a bulletin and organising workplace collections. However, there is — as we go to press — inadequate liaison between the NALGO and GMWU strikers, with the urgent need for a joint strike committee. There has been a tendency also to rely too much on the official NALGO machinery.

NALGO's national emergency committee considered balloting its members throughout the rest of Scottish Gas but appears, with the support of SWP members on the strike committee, to be concentrating its efforts on the National Gas Operations branch, whose members control the flow of gas throughout Britain. Whilst it is true that strike action by the latter, quite likely after the EC meeting on Tuesday 11th, would bring the dispute quickly to a head, there is also the need to build up coordination between gas workers in Scotland for future tests of strength.

At the moment the NALGO strikers are receiving 55% strike pay, but donations and messages of support are still needed. Send to the strike committee, c/o Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh (031 556 3006)

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, 25 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

**SATURDAY 15 APRIL.** Anti-Racist rally and festival on Duckett's Common, London, from 1.15pm.

**SATURDAY 15 APRIL.** Workers' Action Day School for members of the Labour Party Young Socialists. From 11am at St Francis Hall, Birmingham University, Bristol Rd.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY 15-16 APRIL** Institute of Workers' Control conference on Full Employment, at Sheffield University.

**TUESDAY 18 APRIL.** Cardiff Workers' Action meeting: 'Fight Bakery Closures'. Bakers' Union members to speak. 7.30pm, 90 St Mary St, Cardiff.

**FRIDAY 21 APRIL.** 'WSL split — Spartacist League formed'. Spartacist League public meeting. Speakers — Joe Quigley, Central Committee Spartacist League, ex-member WSL National Committee; Alastair Green, Central Committee Spartacist League, ex-member Socialist Press editorial board. 7.30pm at Caxton Settlement House, 129 St Johns Way, London N19 (Archway tube).

**SATURDAY 29 APRIL.** March Against Racism: meet at Balham tube station 12 noon, rally in Brockwell Park. Sponsored by All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement and other organisations.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL** National Abortion Campaign National Conference. Details: NAC, 01-485 4303.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL** Socialist Teachers Alliance Open Conference on the Politics of Education. In London: details, 25 Highgate West Hill, London N6.

**SUNDAY 30 APRIL.** Carnival against the Nazis. Organised by the Anti-Nazi League. Assemble 11am, Trafalgar Square: march to Victoria Park.

**FRIDAY 5 MAY.** 'What Programme for Socialist Revolution?' Debate between Spartacist League/Britain and the International Communist League. 7pm at Essex Road Library, London N1. Adm. 20p.

**CORRECTION:** In a leaflet distributed by Workers' Action supporters at the Liverpool Trades Council conference on April 9th, announcing a WA meeting that evening, Jim Denham [a speaker at that meeting] was billed as a shop steward at Longbridge. The billing was incorrect: Jim Denham is not a steward. Merseyside WA supporters have asked us to print this correction

CARF: No. 4 now out, price 15p; also, four page special (bulk orders, 1p a copy). Orders to ARAFCC, Box 35, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** The new address of Workers' Action is Box 1960, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

## PICKETS AT GRUNWICK AGAIN

Last Tuesday (4th April) the Grunwick strike committee issued a call for the resumption of picketing. As from Monday April 17th, they are asking trade unions to send delegations to the factory every morning until the dispute ends.

As the strike bulletin says, the strike is still on, for union recognition and the reinstatement of those sacked for joining unions (APEX and TGWU).

Strikers also hoped to put pressure on the APEX leadership at the coming union conference at the end of April to take up the initiative in calling on the TUC to take action on essential services at the factory. Roy Grantham and the APEX leadership are bound to come in for a rough ride at Conference over the way they have failed to win the strike.

At the same time the strikers are making fresh appeals, both for the Strike Fund and also to help pay the £1400 fines imposed by the UPW on members of the London District Council of the UPW for their support for the Cricklewood postmen's blacking of Grunwick's mail.

The strikers are also attempting to get maximum turnout for the national conference. P.F.

"What happened and the lessons for the trade union movement, plus a report on the up-to-date situation" At Wembley Conference Centre, Empire Way, Wembley, on Sunday 14th May, 11am to 5pm.

Trade Union and Labour Party branches can send two delegates, and the delegate fee is £1 per delegate.

For conference credentials and donations to the strike fund, write to Grunwick Strike Committee, Trades and Labour Hall, 375 High Road, Willesden, London NW10. Donations to Appeal Fund for the UPW members to Mr Peter Thompson, Financial Secretary, London District Council, Union of Post Office Workers, Second Floor, 14-18 Old St, London EC1.

## ABF Bank Holiday pay fiddle scorched

**BAKERY WORKERS** in Merritts, Cardiff, have won a confrontation with management over payment for Easter Bank Holiday working.

Last year's strike won bakery workers the right to decide whether or not to work on Bank Holidays. But in Cardiff management wanted to scrap the pay structure which equalised shiftworkers' wages.

Their reason was that the computers supposedly couldn't handle the payments for Bank Holidays; but it would have meant that operatives on one plant would lose their equalisation payment, and four men would be made redundant.

A union meeting decided to insist that the existing structure be

maintained, and gave management 24 hours to reply.

When the workers turned up for work, they were told that management had reached no decision.

The shift did not clock on, and they told management that an overtime ban would be put on for the rest of the Easter week if their demands were not met.

The shift coming off left the line, with a few hundred pounds worth of bread in the ovens.

Within 35 minutes of this action management gave in and decided to carry on with the existing agreement. The ongoing shift then voted to return to work.

G.W.

## Survival of noisiest at women's conference

**3000 WOMEN** met last weekend in Birmingham for the national women's liberation conference.

Because of the structure (workshops all Saturday and Sunday morning, and a short plenary on Sunday afternoon), and the content of the workshop discussions, it was yet another frustrating experience, and little concrete or constructive came out of it.

The themes of the workshop discussions were: how do we oppress each other, how can we campaign against the oppression of women, and how do we come together.

It was obvious at the plenary that the workshops should have been discussing the main proposals to the conference (which we didn't receive until just before the plenary) — a motion for a seventh Women's Liberation Movement demand on rape and violence against women, and a proposal to make the sixth demand (a woman's right to define her own sexuality) the main demand of the movement.

The discussions were heated and undemocratic. The radical feminists (the main proposers of these motions), who oppose 'male' methods of organisation and debate, demonstrated their methods of debate by disruption — continually heckling and harassing women whom they disagreed with.

A motion expressing opposition to rape was passed, though no mention was made as to how the movement could campaign around it. But a radical feminist amendment characterising rape as a product of male

political domination of women was heavily defeated.

Shortage of time led conference to take a decision to discuss the non-contentious issues, such as reaffirmation of the movement's position against racism and fascism, and on Ireland, before discussing the nature of the six demands.

The radical feminists strongly opposed this, and expressed their hostility by shouting down black women and other women who tried to speak. So much for sisterly discussion.

Many women were disgusted by this behaviour, which highlights the difficulties of working in a movement which refuses to discuss political differences openly for fear of splitting the movement. The lack of a structure in which political debate can take place openly and in a democratic and sisterly way leads to a situation where the noisiest and most aggressive women dominate.

The radical feminists, who are trying to impose on the movement their analysis of seeing men as the enemy, are polarising the movement between those who support them and those who accept a class analysis.

In this situation, the Socialist Feminist groups and conferences have an important role in trying to develop a strategy and to win the women who disagree with the radical feminists over to a socialist position, thus laying the groundwork for building a mass working class based women's movement.

ROSMAKIN