POLICE MOVE IN ON PICKETS

POLICE HAVE NOW ARRESTED TWO HOSPITAL ANCILLARY PICKETERS AT WIGSTON HOSPITAL, LEICESTER. ANOTHER 50 LAST WEEK SEVEN PICKETS WERE ARRESTED AFTER A POLICE ASSAULT OUTSIDE FINE TUBES, PLYMOUTH.

This is part of a battle against the right of picketing, which has proved so effective in recent strikes.

Last year's mass pickets smashed Tory government plans to freeze wages and the National Industrial Relations Court. Miners and dockers used their muscle power to turn picket lines into impassable barriers against scabs and other Judases. In Birmingham there was a city-wide strike, as thousands reinforced miners picketing Saltley Coke Depot. They overwhelmed the scab-hunting police, closed the depot, and immediately afterwards the Government caved in.

Now the Government, in turn, is using mass squads of specially trained police to physically beat down pickets. Police strong-arm squads have assaulted a few dockers. They have smashed their way through picketing electricians at St Thomas Hospital, London, using maximum force. In every dispute now the police harry and attempt to intimidate pickets. In Manchester they have made a point of picking for not to molest scabs.

ANTI-PICKET SQUADS

These are dress rehearsals. If the miners strike again, they will be met by these special police anti-picket squads.

The anti-picket squad is the centre-piece in a full-scale drive against picketing. The Government rightly sees picketing as the weapon which helps to mobilise some of the reserve strength of the working class in what would otherwise be sectional struggles, to be isolated by the centralised power of the bosses and beaten down.

There is a sustained press campaign. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, has issued statements "insisting that the number of pickets be limited to two. "Conspiracy" charges have been brought against 24 building workers in connection with last year's strike.

But the State can bring conspiracy charges whenever it thinks it can get away with it. Whether it can actually cumb mass picketing depends on its ability to physically beat down pickets. That's where the police squad come in.

STEP UP STRUGGLE

This is the Tory counter-attack... see p.3

Black community bookshop after Fascist firebomb attack
see report p.5

AND UNION LEADERS SCAB ON THEM

FULL STORY P12

class issue

As Pete Carter, builders' leader from Birmingham, pointed out, the trial is a show trial, a political trial, an effort by the Tories to back up the fascists by getting "public opinion" on the side of the ruling class against our Trade Union practice of picketing. The issue is a class issue and we must respond as a class.

See back page
SO HEATH AND BARNETT BETWEEN THEM HAVE DEFEATED THE GASWORKERS.

The union leaders did not draw the gasworkers' militancy into a coordinated offensive — instead, they let it work itself out, as they did decades earlier in the uncoordinated, unimproved offer by the Government (the "improvement" being a tiny concession on pension contributions) and told the members "it's the best they could do". Thus demoralized, the strikers felt far effort wasn't worth it.

That story is the story Heath would like to see repeated with the whole working class. But he knows it won't be that simple.

The hospital workers are still fighting. Their chief weakness is that they cannot hurt the bosses economically. It is vital that better placed actions with wider ramifications are fought off — such as the miners' - and are followed with action alongside the hospital workers.

Even though some of our wages have gone as far behind the price of living as with their economic struggle, we lost last year only when they reached out with flying pickets and drew in other strikers to their struggle. The Tories understand the importance of that — they have already begun to abuse the hospitals and the health services in an attempt to regain ground lost.

THE UNION LEADERS

The union leaders are not prepared to wage this sort of united fight. They play all kinds of delaying games with ballots and negotiations to make the workers in struggle play musical chairs with each other instead of combining in one big top-of-the-week against the freeze. Some, like Comic, are even using agitation for a general strike as a "left" card to push the miners still further until the general rail struggles come and gone, and while the health workers bravely soldier on against a host of provocations and hysterical witchhunts.

To the Tories it is vital to impose the miserable low pay of the hospital workers, then it would already be organising mass solidarity action. But what do we have in fact? Trade councils are going to organize demonstrations. Usually, of course, and to be supported. But if the Tories confined themselves to organizing demonstrations and hoping that the hospital workers would be convinced to reduce their claim — then the hospital workers would long ago have gained their full demand.

LIVING STANDARDS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Heath knows, and the TUC knows, that more than money is at stake. Successful government has been trying to shake the unions but also to the state; to turn the Unions into numbered and batters so that the bosses can look back. They want to have the Unions regulated and ordered by law — their law, that they have made up for the purpose. The labour movement must choose whether to actively defend that law — to go along with police actions against pickets and general strike that would go beyond their control.

These people would rather have us wait until a Labour Government is elected to solve our problems. That is, they want us to accept the "deal" now — and hope that, somehow, Labour will change character and continue the strike. This is the Government's trick. Thus demoralized, the strikers felt far effort wasn't worth it.

We have faith that the Government will not win.

KICK THE TORIES OUT

Yes, of course, we fight to get the Tories out. But it is a fact that union-bashing and wage-freezing are not just Labour policies. They are the policies necessary for any government that accepts the demands of the capitalists. It is a fact that Labour said in 1956: "The 1956-70 Labour Government. Any new Labour Government will have to go to the Tories have done; more likely there'll be an insidious process of slight amendments here and there to make it all stick more permanently."

To say that getting the Tories out is the main aim, the first step, is not right. The only aim is to drive the Tories out. The two aims are in conflict. With the Tories out we have a chance of building an alternative system of office, of making the strikers and their allies of workers and strikers.

The ruling class will far rather see a change of government than any serious concession on the Industrial Relations Act.

GENERAL STRIKE

Solidarity actions against the Freeze, self-defence and counter-attack against actions seeking to prevent the strike, and the need for a powerful blow to clear out the Industrial Relations Act — all fuse together in the campaign for a general strike. Not a token, but a real general strike that gets the ruling class to the point where they will be forced to call the election.

What the TUC has called is not even a token general strike. It's all an option do-your-pleasure affair. They hope it will let off steam.

But it could lead to a general strike. The militants, such as those who came out for the Pentonville Five, such is the only answer. The problem is that they do not have the permanent nation-wide structure and sufficient organization to carry out the TUC does — to wield authority with the millions who will follow a TUC call.

The urgent need is for the militants and fighters in every industry to link up and build such a structure to act as an alternative, mass-and-file leadership within the unions. Not only in preparation for an all-out general strike situation, but also to meet the now daily need for co-ordinated action against the Act, against the Freeze, and in defence of victimized pickets and militants.

Meanwhile, we cannot let the TUC off the hook. They still have a powerful voice in talking millions of workers, and we must insist that they use it properly.

PRICES UP AT A STROKE

FOOD PRICES ARE ESTIMATED to be going up at a rate of 25% per year. In one year, according to official figures, beef has gone up from £1.50 to £1.60 per lb, cod from 31.5p to 37p, and eggs from 29p to 25p per dozen. So much for "cutting prices at a stroke", so much for the "freeze". But most people scarcely need to be told. The gestures is to do what to about it.

The TUC and their Labour echo say "fight inflation". What means? Keep down wages, and make sure they are controlling prices. But government controls prices under a private profit system can be kept in inflation in temporary and extraordinary war conditions. There are thousands of loopholes and tricks in every government price control; and, indeed, if the government were to control prices, they would destroy all the profits which keeps the capitalist economy going. No capitalist government, even if it were to control prices, would want to have effective controls, even if it could. The only government that would be a workers' government, in a planned economy.

In fact, the "fight against inflation" is a showroom for a free market fight against wages and for profits. Our chief come-back against rising prices is to combat the "fight against inflation" with a fight for higher wages. And that is what thousands of workers are doing, right now. But what about the millions who are struggling against prices rise — everyone else, but aren't involved in the trade union struggle? What about housewives who don't go out to work? They can support their husbands, sons, neighbors, in pushing for higher wages — certainly, but what else? ORGANISE

It would be foolish to think that housewives and others substitue for the action of trade unions, organised at the point of production, in changing working people's lives. But housewives can organize, and can achieve something. At the recent conference of the housewives' union, the private law, put forward the simplest idea against rising prices: shop workers should refuse to charge any price increases! This workers' control of prices, unlike government control, can be effective. Some supermarket mailcarriers try to go bust — fine! Let the supermarkets be nationalised and let the bosses' State foot the bill for keeping food prices down. Until such time as the working class can take over the entire economy and run it rationally.

But there is little hope that the government will actually do anything, and individual shopworkers (mostly unorganised anyway) will fear victimising a general movement if they defy management. The fact is, housewives could show that the manager can be beaten.

A supermarket manager has only limited resources of authority. He is facing up with large numbers of angry, determined, and well-organised housewives putting at a price increase, he might well let the increase lapse. (He couldn't sell it in his shop in the first place?) Easy. A few fictional "broken windows" or "unsold consignments" would settle the books.

COST OF LIVING

Many housewives have in fact acted — mainly through the picket line. Some supermarkets with high price rises. But sometimes this doesn't achieve much. Shoppers crossing the picket line naturally want to know where cheaper prices can be found — and the supermarket housewives readily become just a "consumer advice bureau", ineffective militancy gives a free hand to the bosses and can even lead in a reactionary direction — if they inflate prices to protect against inflation, and thus comes the conclusion that the only way to pose inflation is to capitalise wage increases. Where housewives are not yet strongly organised enough to force removal of price increases, they help can scarcely help to improve their own organisation and boost workers' wage increases by exploiting the role of profits in pushing up prices. A careful survey of prices of prices of prices that goods would give a working-class "cost of living index", far more realistic than the official government figures. If retail prices are compared with wholesalers and manufacturers' prices, and the overheads are analysed — all these figures are comparable. But prices of goods that are sold by ordinary working people, it can be seen, just a part of the the is to control prices is to control the price of goods. These are the two main visible. Increase of that sort would be valuable propaganda ammunition to aid the housewives, the workers, the employers, other workers in their pay struggles — which are right now the front line of the fight for the working class to deal with rising prices.

MARTIN THOMAS
LONDON BOMBINGS

Unanswered questions

by STAN LOMAX

IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN who planted the bomb which exploded in London, injuring many and perfectly killing one man (from heart failure). Officially, the Government (both Provisional and Official sections) unacknowledgingly and categorically denies responsibility for the bomb. That neither section of the Republican movement has accepted responsibility for the bomb must lead us to reserve judgment.

It is, however, quite certain that Republican politicians from Northern Ireland, acting independently, were responsible. It is more certain that bears responsibility for the widespread injuries that resulted from the explosion. Not those who planted the bombs — but the Brexiteers, those who knew that the police knew of the bombs before. Adequate warning was in no case given by whoever planted the bombs for the areas to be cleared.

FRAME-UP

In the last year, the police were shown up in a London court as attempting to frame up some Ulstermen on gun charges. Noel Johnston was given 30 years jail on the evidence of an informer. The number of incidents of corruption and of violence involving the police in recent times — such as the murder of David Oluwale — has been massive. It is possible that the authorities made a deliberate decision not to clear the streets in order to whip up as much support as possible for the proposed strike. It is possible that the police state repression against the Northern Ireland Catholics.

LONDON BOMBINGS

are a second, shocking, unthinkable, and "out of character" for the police and military in Britain should you call that there is a great deal of evidence that the British Army in Northern Ireland has created its own murder gangs which go around attacking Catholics and Republicans (see last issue of WP).

They should also look around at what has been going on recently in Britain itself. More and more the login class is increasingly becoming the need of the use of massive force to quell the working class. The armed Special Patrol Groups are one example. Special flying squads to smash picket organiser have been organised all over the country. 24 police workers have been prosecuted.

The power of the police being of more interest. More and leftists being victimised on such various issues — "communist" or "terror" to disparage, but carrying heavy penalties. The armed forces are being used in an official capacity to suppress the Northern Ireland Catholic. The British Army expanded to meet a general signal. The British Army, it will be noticed, on military theorists who speculate on the use against the British working class. The British government supports their act. Perpetrated against a "colonial" peoples are gaining respect and sympathy. What we least, what the evidence adds up to is that the ruling class is preparing to enormously strengthen the state and to create a special strike-breaking police force in a kind of response to the bomb.

72 HOURS INCONCUMUNICADO

The first casualty after the smoke had cleared from the bombings was in fact traditional British politics. The government had decided and taken off the Belfast plane were "inconcununicado", in best police state tradition, with no word as to the possibility of a senior police officer. The bombings were either of the June or the Irish or British secret service. The Republicans had no explanation.

It is certainly possible that the London bombings were indeed the work of "outsiders" from Northern Ireland. If so, this paper does not consider it is the business of British militants to condemn them. True, any excesses of feeling provoked by the bombings will be used and manipulated by the government to assist its agenda. However, there was too much at stake in Northern Ireland for its policies to be affected by a small number of bombs. But it is not the business of the Republicans of Northern Ireland to consider any section of them who take action against the represives policies of the British government. It is to seek ways of making life easy for militants in Britain. It is our business to agitate for the removal of the British military occupation from Northern Ireland.

OFFICIAL TERROR

Innocent people were injured by the bombs. That's true, and we regret it. But in Northern Ireland, even innocent people are picked off at random by British soldiers in plain clothes touring round Belfast and Derry. The British Army systematically terrorises the Catholics, wrecking their homes, the night of the night, arresting people and holding them without trial — 600 people still interned for a year as the world's press except the British believe — the British Army deliberately shot down 13 unarmed men as a 'reaction' to the Catholic people of Derry.

Last August the British Army smashed through the barricades which the Catholics had erected to protect their communities. 24 from them were killed and 240 injured. This result has been a massive increase in the number of sectarian assassinations. It is estimated that 200 people of the Catholic people of Derry, that of the people kept down, terrorised, and repress-

ed by the Orange and British state for more than 50 years.

It is this which provoked the bomb in London. It is against this imperialist, which has turned Northern Ireland into a slaughterhouse, that those who planted bombs in London — if they were indeed Republican activists — were protesting.

The day of the bombings the British administration organised a parade in Northern Ireland with a foregone majority for Unionism, because the state was designed in the first place with a population in alliance between Catholics and Protestants that would ensure such a conclusion.

HYPOCRISY

It would be bloodthirsty stupidity to argue that because of what the British army does and what it stands for, Ireland is a just fine that innocent people are blown up in London. But no-one who does not come out for the cause of a million, against that army's presence and activities has any right to be horrified or to disapprove.

To be outraged at the bombings in London and fail to protest at the army's actions in Northern Ireland is either incomprehensible hypocrisy or a new action of the army's caused by an act of war in London exactly the same way that the British fought war over which Britain prevails in Northern Ireland. It is implicitly to support the British army. The Londoner is vastly more important than a bullet in the back of the head for a second's stand against English Catholic — fired either by a British soldier or by a loyalist Orange, same's been given his chance by the way the army smashed the Catholics' self-defence.

We are neither racists nor are we hypocrites. The Northern Ireland Republican have every right to fight back. We, the British working class, have neither the power nor the right — and we haven't the inclination — to tell them not to take this same's for the British army out of their country.

The British working class does have the power to organise to help them get the British army withdrawn from Ireland. It has the power to get the Army out of Ireland. The bomb explosions were used to step up the attacks on the people of Northern Ireland. It is not the responsibility of the Irish republicans (even if they claimed the bombings) to defend our right to defend the British army out of their country.

Long ago Karl Marx wrote that a revolution can never be carried to a conclusion. It cannot be. That reactionary British in Ireland, is a complete and total defeat. If the British working class go along with military terror in Ireland, they will find it very hard to stop some of its aspects spilling over into Britain itself.

PICKETS

Every working class intensification of the struggle against the bosses calls forth a stepping up by the bosses in their inhuman right up to the point where the working class breaks the power of the bosses once and for all.

The idea that even a strengthened police force could win in a confrontation with the working class is still laughable — if the strength of the working class is used. But only if it is mobilised and used. Otherwise specially trained gangs of thugs in blue uniform and helmets can be a formidable force against small groups of workers.

The answer is to step up the struggle on our side. Last year the mass pickets were an 'optical'. Now, ruling class tactics are massive mass mobilisations necessary for victory. They make alliances of workers in struggle, and organised support action, essential. The building of joint action committees to organise such solidarity can mean the difference between victory or defeat.

In France and Italy strikers have for long had to face police bullying and intimidation. They have responded by organising for self-defence. In America these have very often led to become civil wars (see p.9)

Workers could win only by matching force with force, defiance with violence, the 'strong arm of the law' with the stronger arm of the working class. Heath and his despicable Tory gang have taught us in the last two years a sham the 'reactionary Irish' — and of what now don't give a damn about Tory law. Even less now does 'the law' deserve respect or 'obedience' when it is being 'reinterpreted' as a scabs' charter in a Government attempt to break the strength of the working class. They want to reduce us to an atomised, broken-spirited rabble, from which only an increasing consciousness of our common working class interest. The new pickets are licensed to attack striking workers as the tools of this scabs' charter. The policeman who attacks or arrests a picket is the biggest scab of the lot. This means that the mass pickets has always been treated by the police as an attempt at movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can only organise to organise against our movement. Since he is organ-ised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, only we can take our movement.
CHILE

Allende stays but crisis deepens

Contrary to popular expectations, the recent elections in Chile resulted in considerable advances for the ruling UP (Popular Unity) coalition of President Allende.

The right-wing Opposition parties, the Christian Democrats and the National Party, were expected to gain votes from the base of the Chilean economy. For the Chilean ruling class have used their economic power, left almost unchallenged by the Allende government, to safeguard the economy, with food prices rising by 209% last year and maintenant of meat being introduced.

In fact, the right-wing National Party did increase its share of the vote, but the greatest increase went to the Socialist Party.

NEW CRIMES

FOR OLD

While the racist "Pakki-bashing" continues unabated, the sensation of violence almost comes to a halt. The press has not been willing to publicize the various atrocities committed by the police. This week alone, the police killed three people, two of whom were members of the Popular Front and one of whom was a school teacher.

HOMICIDE SQUAD

Pushed to give some account of the murders of his police force, South Africa's Minister of Police, Mr. Lourens Muller, said that only 15 out of 207 policemen convicted of crimes of violence had been discharged from the force. Of those convicted had none of conviction been quashed – one for five counts of common assault. In four years, 804 police have been convicted of crimes of violence – including homicide. Of these only one in ten were discharged.

In 1966 three Africans died of starvation in a police van. Parliamentary protests were accused of being unimportant and no-one was even given a trial. Since introduction of detention without trial, at least 16 police officers have died in "security" custody. Five of these deaths have not even been recorded officially.

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although those who were left had to fight for it. The Socialists Party, inside the UP coalition, the Socialist Party has pursued a more left-wing course than the Communist Party, and has put collaboration with the Christian Democrats above all else.

The election result shows a growing polarization in Chile, underlined by the recent spate of lynch law and factory occupations, carried out by the workers and peasants, and together with: "Legally" carrying out measures, this polarization promises to upset Chile's "parliamentary road to socialism ."

BRIEF

WRONG OUTRAGE

Contrast the treatment of two bombing attacks.

The Old Bailey bombing was either a perfectly justified act of retaliation in the course of a war, or else a provocation, as seems possible from the highly dubious behaviour of the police.

It was met with howls of protest, pages and pages of blow-up pictures, blatantly racist anti-Irish cartoons, and approving publicity for anti-Irish lynching mob acts.

The police did their best to give a name to those 'responsible', though no one had in fact claimed the action as theirs – and the Provisonal IRA, who were supposed to have done it, always acknowledge their solutions.

Shortly after, five buildings in South London were attacked with petrol bombs. The Black Victor has been the but of racist attacks on local Friday Club politicians, and the bombings were obviously a work of fascists, possibly supporters of the National Front.

'No treatment? Hardly a mention in the press. No outrage. No talk of guilt. No anti-Monday Club cartoons. No incitement to go and burn things down. No total outlaw of the National Front. At 2:30 police were quick to state they had the "above" to do it. At 4:30 police were quick to state they had the "above" to do it. At 4:30 police were quick to state they had the "above" to do it.'
SOFT SELL FOR MORE ARMY BRUTALITY

THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT Border poll — 57% voting for the Union and 43% against — have been claimed as a victory by the Unionists. Their obvious delight with the result was shared by the British Government, which saw this as the beginning of the end of the Northern Ireland problem. The British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, has been building up the Forbonishing White paper as the great solution to the problem of Northern Ireland and that is, the problem the British government is having with the Irish, not the 'problem' the Irish are having with the British. Shy and shyly lip are, the order of the day with Tory politicians and civil servants, while everyone waits for the ritual unveiling. It would not be giving away too many state secrets to say at this stage that the main elements, both for the Irish and the British, will be:—

1) A Council of Ireland — a talking shop for the northern and southern bourgeoisies. Given Ireland's position within the Common Market, Irish capitalists are going to find out that in order to survive alongside the bigger fish they will have to unite.

A similar Council was provided for in the Government of Ireland Act 1920 — the 'consolidation of N. Ireland up until 1945'. That Council never met. Both the Green and the Orange middle classes found it more advantageous at that time to go on their own way.

2) A Bill of Rights — the main political demand of the TUC and the Labour and Communist Parties. The fact is that the demand for a Bill of Rights is no longer the demand it was in the early Civil Rights days can be seen from the fact that all the Unionists now support such a Bill. A Bill of Rights will protect the more militant elements in the Labour Party and mean absolutely nothing in Ireland, given the fourth main ingredient of the White Paper —

Security to remain under Westminister. To the average resident of Belfast, this means continued army occupation, raids, raids, searches, internment, and, from time to time, incidents such as the killing of a 12 year old boy in Newry a few weeks ago by a drunken soldier.

AUSTEN MORGAN
15 March 73

Racist bomb outrage in London

FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, the Black Panther Movement in Brixton has been working to mobilise the community around its basic needs. It was from this work that the Unit Centre was established in 1971. Brixton, was born, a cultural and political centre serving the black and working-class community in Brixton. The Unit Centre was a place where people lived, it was a political bookshop, there was one in South London, a discussion centre, a place where young black people came to work at their poetry and music.

An immediate response from the community. Every day, people, both black and white, would come to offer their resistance, discussion ideas, relate suffering at the hands of the council, the policing, and the employers.

That is why the Unit Centre, even its very name, was seen as a threat by the Tories and Fascists in South London, and by their mouthpiece the South London Press.

That is why two Monday Club GLC candidates, Nicholas Beazley and John Pichard, publicly agitated to get Unit Centre destroyed. That is why the South London Press has waged a continuous campaign against the Black Panther Movement and all Black organisations fighting oppression in the community.

FIVE BOMBINGS

In the early hours of the morning of Thursday March 12th, the Unit Centre was destroyed by a fascist fire bomb. Farrah Dickson, the member of the Black Panther Movement, was asleep in the house when the bomb was thrown, or it barely escaped death.

Nev was not the only firebombing that night.

Altogether five premises belonging to blacks or black people were damaged and seven people were injured.

These attacks are part of a campaign of terror being waged against black people in South London. It is not so long since the Coach and Horses, a Brixton pub with a black landlord, George Barry, was burned down. There was also a grocery store in Streatham, and the Brixton Home Store, a popular local shop, both firebombed. Ladle's Barber Shop in Brixton Street was attacked again. It has not been long enough for the memory of the 1971 riot to be forgotten for the right to go about in Streatham. It must now be the task of black and white militants to start a determined campaign to destroy the firebombers and everything they stand for, and fight in every way possible to ensure that they never return.

The destruction of the Unit Centre has been a monstrous financial blow to the Black Panther Movement. Fire destroyed that building that could develop the spirit and commitment which brought the Unit Centre into existence, and will build it again. A fund is open and support is essential to replace the money lost. A fund will be sent to 28 Shakespeare Rd, London SE 21.

Marion Kavanagh.

French Elections

WE WILL NOT WAIT FOR '76

THE RESULTS OF THE FRENCH elections showed a vote for the Communist leader Mitterand in 1967. But many militant workers are disillusioned with the CP's passivity, they will not "wait for '76" (the presidential elections), they will press ahead now with industrial struggle to achieve aims promised by the Left Union, such as the 40 hour week and the 1000 Franc minimum wage.

The Communist Party had tailored itself to the middle class and the employers who respect them. When President Pompidou made threats of resigning or refusing to recognise a Left government if the CP—Socialist Party—Left Radical alliance won the elections, they pleaded with him that he should see himself as "the president of all the French people". But the CP's spokesmen didn't say off — the "reformed" centre rallied solidly to the majority on the second round of the elections.

"...The Union of the Left has now all benefited the Socialist Party", wrote the revolutionary paper ligue on 9 March. The SP was the only party to register an increase in its electoral strength, and its leader, Mitterand, is now well placed for the '76 elections. Such was the result of the hard work of thousands of CP members! 250,000 voters expressed their mistrust of the election of the Union of the Left by voting for the revolutionary candidates of Lucette Olivier or of the Ligue Communiste (French section of the 1st International). This represented 2.1% of the total votes in the 292 constituencies where revolutionary candidates were standing — a big increase on the 1.1% vote for Alain Krivine in the 1969 presidential elections. Many of the civil service workers who came from workers normally voting for the CP.

Another left group, the OCT, put up 20 candidates, many of them in competition with the L or RC candidates. But the OCT stressed as "the prime task", the "practically possible goal" — "to struggle for a SF—CP government without any betrayal of a party of the bourgeoisie".(Informations Ouvrieres, 21 February).

Meanwhile the OCT loudly denounced the revolutionaries as "crypto-stalinists". But the workers understood that in reality it was the OCT which was clawing before the CP bureaucrats and the bourgeois class, OCT ended up with 5000 votes (0.8% of the total in their 29 constituencies).

MARTIN THOMAS

See pp.6-7 - "Facing the Fact and Working the Fact" - by M. Thomas.
FASCISM, before the war, crushed and pulverised the labour and trade union movement in Italy and Germany. It was a club wielded by the bosses as a last resort to beat down the working class, recruiting its forces from the lower middle class, the demobilised unemployed, and sections of black African workers. TODAY, open Fascism is a growing force. It is a more effective weapon of the bosses, a potential threat to the labour movement.

The manure bed in which this deadly weed has found nourishment has been the rotten, festering mass of national and anti-black racist prejudice which has in a few short years forced its way to the forefront of British public life. Many workers share, to a degree or another, racist prejudice. Such attitudes pose a deadly threat to the labour movement — of disunity, and of the development of fascism.

Boycotts, Engine. The more recent colonial wars of Britain against "native" peoples struggling only for the right to control their own countries were fought by conscript armies, made up mostly of young workers. These wars have created a poisonous feedback of racism into the working class. The British trade unionists that support the rulers in Malaysia have done nothing to suppress the riots in Malay.

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bosses" Engine. The more recent colonial wars of Britain against "native" peoples struggling only for the right to control their own countries were fought by conscript armies, made up mostly of young workers. These wars have created a poisonous feedback of racism into the working class. The British trade unionists that support the rulers in Malaysia have done nothing to suppress the riots in Malay.
IT'S NO USE ARGUING WITH A hard-core racist. Worse words are of no use. There are millions of people who need to focus their hate on another group of people.

Let's look, though, at some of the common, reasonable-seeming arguments of many white workers. The bosses' newspapers use these ideas and arguments — about the social services, the 'overcrowded factories', the 'foreigner in mind' to divide the working class against itself, to drive in the ruling class wedge of racialism.

They are arguments that must be answered every day.

How must militants answer them?

WHY IMMIGRATION AT ALL? WHY NOT EVERYONE TO HIS OWN COUNTRY?

Well, "everyone to his own country" has hardly been part of the British policy in India. In Rhodesia, for example, the British immigrants, unlike the harrassed and exploited immigrant from the poorer countries to the richer countries, is an essential part of British capitalism. Integral to British racism is the existence of "free labour" — workers moving from the countryside and small towns into the big city employment centres.

As capitalism became a world-wide system, so did "free labour", and today there is hardly a capitalist country in the world which does not have an immigrant population.

But the big increase in post-war immigration came as the deliberate shift away from a small-scale of government policy. There was a labour shortage in many basic industries after the war and this became acute in the early fifties. The government mounted lavish recruitment campaigns in Africa, India, Pakistan and West Indies.

Indeed, such people as Duncan Sandys, who now call for repatria- tion, toured Uganda and Kenya appealing to the African Asians that they should take British passports and come to Britain. Potential immigrants were promised a fuller life in the British "overseas" and many took up the offer.

HASN'T IMMIGRATION CAUSED UNEMPLOYMENT?

In 1956 the average monthly unemployment was 260,000. By 1970 the average had risen to 653,000, and as we well know by the end of 1971 it was running near the million mark.

What had happened to immigration during that period? The answer is that taking into account all immigration and emigration, 415,000 more people had left the country than had entered. How is it possible to say that immigration causes unemployment?

THAT MAY BE SO, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT THERE ARE 1 MILLION BLACK PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY AND NEAR

ENOUGH 1 MILLION UNEMPLOYED, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

But you and I will see, in the country, there are one million people with fingers and faceless, and that it's they who are causing unemployment.

In the 1930's there were 3 million unemployed, how do you explain that?

Unemployment is part and parcel of capitalism; with every slump in the economy, unemployment rockets. It is sheer lunacy to think that unemployment can be solved by a campaign against black people, since this would disrupt the working class unity which is essential to capitalism.

We must demand the right to work as a right for the whole working class, not as a special privilege for black workers who are, more often than not, the first to be made redundant.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICES?

WE'RE TOLD THAT BLACK PEOPLE ARE A STRAIN ON OUR SOCIAL SERVICES.

Why do you talk about 'our' social services? It's not ours — we don't control it do we?

But the working class as a whole pays for social security. And black workers pay for social security, because they often come to this country already trained, because they come when they are young and thus a higher percentage are employed (and there are, for a whole period, very few pensions).

Bearing in mind the higher proportion paying contributions and creating wealth potential, I look at the figures for what's spent:

Average for total pop. £62.4
Average for imm. pop. £67.7
(FIGURES, 1966, FROM COLOUR & IMMIGRATION IN THE UK, INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS, LONDON)

Thus black immigrants, proportionately, pay more and take less from social security than whites. If there were no immigrants, the social services would be worse.

These figures amount to a scandalous cheating of the immigrant population.

All workers are cheated by the state. Of the wealth which the working class creates (machines & goods and by the services of our type of... nothing) & is taken by the state, only a part comes back through social services. A whole worker is actually spent on purposes & directed against the working class, like the police and its parasites.

But these figures show without a doubt that black workers are especially cheated.

WE'RE ALSO TOLD THAT BLACK PEOPLE CAUSE THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

How many black building workers have you seen? Quite a few? And how many black property speculators are there? Probably not a lot.

Who caused the rise in prices? The building workers or the speculators and land owners? And how many of those black workers that you see

building modern houses are going to live in them? Not very many.

Most black people are forced to live in slums and the working class credit to housing for rising prices. Most trade unionists know full well how to answer that argument. They would vigorously reply that it is the government and the forces of capitalism who cause rising prices.

Isn't the answer to the racist, it is that black people cause unemployment and bad housing exactly the same?

WHAT THEN DO YOU SAY IS THE BEST WAY TO GET RID OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND BAD HOUSING?

So why do you ask? Most workers now instinctively that the answer is a struggle against the capitalist class and its system.

At the struggles of last year — the miners' strike, the dockers' strike over rents which is still going on, and against the Freeze and the Indus- trial Relations Act.

Every trade union worthy of the name knows that essential to the struggle is working class unity. Look at trade union bars. They nearly all have "UNIFY IN STRUGGLE" written on them. A great many belong to the true working class ideology that is necessary for winning a successful campaign.

The struggle against racism is part of this struggle for the unity of the class.

HOW CAN ONE FIGHT RACISM WHEN IT IS DEEP AND WIDE-SPREAD?

This is not easy. First, we must attack its roots by explaining. Britain's past and present role as an imperialist power.

There is also an immediate daily struggle here in Britain. Black people themselves have started to fight back and to fight for their rights. There are any lots of those people, prepared to be kicked around.

White militants must defend the right of black people to fight back and to organise separately, politically, culturally, in any other way they think fit, and explain in the facts what it is they fight back against.

We must also fight for working class unity — black and white. What we're fighting for is that we get the houses (and in many cases, trade union bureaucrats) attempts to divide workers by blatant discrimi- nation, the laws to "stop" discrimina- tion are a sick joke. We must use our own, individual, strength, just as we do against their other rotten divisive tactics.

There are a number of effective ways that black and white workers can unite. Just to give an example: strike by Leicestershire and Laritool Padres in London. A small firm employing Aslans. The strike worked here and there were reasons being that the police were along to a perfectly peaceful picket and arrived there to show the workers that the trade union movement wouldn't allow its black brothers to picket up.

It could have happened, it should have happened, but it didn't.

We must also build trade union anti-racist committees to defend the black community (physically where necessary) in their fight to eradicate racism.

But, all we have written in Workers' Fight, preclude for unity and anti-racist campaigns are mere good intentions unless they are in fact, actions. Campaigns in the hands of an organisation which sees the fight against racism as part of a general anti-capitalist struggle and can act as an agency for organising that struggle on all its levels.
ABORTION: WOMEN DEFY CHURCH AND RIGHT WING

Whenever there is a discussion on the Women's Liberation Movement, the same question always comes up — we are told that the movement doesn't relate to working class women, and, of course, one of the big abstractions can not mobilize them.

The problem is that a movement is in a question that relates to all women, especially working class women. For it is the working class woman who has to risk her life at the hands of the black street abortionist. (To get an abortion illegally, she must either be at death's door or already have several children).

Rich families can afford to have as many children as they wish, and they can afford not to have children. They already have abortion on demand. But for the working class woman it is an urgent question.

Abortion on demand is a step towards control over our own bodies. The right to have or not to have children, without the Government or the Church having done the law.

For centuries women have been silent, weighed down by prejudices. Women have been taught — as if it is their duty to be the servant of the family, to bear and bring up children. Girls are given dolls, they are taught to cook and sew, to prepare for their conjugal life and career, while boys prepare for a trade or a job. Girls are taught that sex is done, with a marriage contract and immoral without. By calling for abortion on demand, women are defying these prejudices.

REACTIONARY

That defiance creates a storm of opposition from the supporters of the patriarchal family as a pillar of present-day society. In Liverpool, the name of the movement to organize the largest demonstration seen for years, specifically on an anti-abortion platform. In lieu of war were made up of National Front fascists, police, the Mothers' Union, and people organized by the religious hierarchy.

Some of the most reactionary and dangerous elements of this society — and those who are deceived by the names of the early churchmen against this simple and just demand. The politicians and statesmen who place on women's concern for children to mobilize their forces in defence of the "unnatural" act of using contraceptives in the form in which it comes to protecting the children already born... children should, in the words of Handa, be "physically and spiritually" taken care of, children whose families cannot afford the bare necessities of life, meat, fruit, milk.

There was no shouting from these protectors of "morals" when the children in the welfare state were deprived of free milk. Nor do the women, a generation ago, when they were shown on TV how to cook meat and fish because we can't afford meat and fish any more.

SANCTUARY

Anti-abortionists often talk of the right to "life" of the "unborn child," the only thing in the pursuit of which it is safe to carry out an abortion is not a developed human form and cannot have consciousness in anything like the same way human beings do.

Protestants often claim that mystic religious and philosophical beliefs which lead them to believe that every embryo is an essence of a human being. They have, of course, a right to their beliefs, but that is not a right to refuse abortions for themselves. But we cannot give them the right to impose their beliefs as a law upon other people.

As a present-day society, we have a responsibility to decide what we believe and to enforce that belief as law upon themselves. It is not a right to impose our beliefs on others, or to keep them alive as "babies" for the sake of collective "sanctity".

Socialist

The only way respect for human life can be made available to all, is by fighting to create a society in which the basic conditions of decent life are available, and all, in terms of race and class and governments, is abolished, a socialist.

In such a society, children could be cared for collectively. We could ensure abortion was easy to have, with confidence that they would be brought up in good conditions, as well as the freedom not to have children.

Abortion on demand would be ensured and a dignified life, would not be in risk of dying from hunger or cold. This is the way to all. But before we could get their way, or keep them alive as "babies" for the sake of collective "sanctity.

Abortion on demand grants at least some respect, if not equality, for the lives of women. It frees us from one of the shackles that hold us to a double standard, a way towards enabling us to take our full part in the struggle for a society with freedom.

PATRICIA KELLY

Sunday 23 March — Manchester, Counter-demonstration against racism. Meet Upper Brook St 2 pm.

A BOOK YOU SHOULD READ

JOHN CUNNINGHAM REVIEWS

A Classic of the Hungry Thirties

WALTER GREENWOOD WAS ONE of the great writers of the working class. He knew which side of the bread was spread and wrote about the world as he knew it.

He was born in Salford in 1903 into an industrial family and lived in the mills and factories of industrial Manchester, the pawnshop, the "grabbers" (workhouses); and, looming over everything, the spectre of unemployment, the dole, and a final humiliation, the means test.

"Love on the Dole" is Greenwood's most famous book. It is the story of Harry and Sally Hardcastle, the son and daughter of a Salford miner, and is set in the thirties.

Harry is a restless, sharp, clever and signs on for an apprenticeship at the local engineering firm of Marlowes, pretending this is a full-time job in a pawnshop where he had worked part-time. The pawnshop is run by a woman.

Greenwood's description of the pawnshop is superbly vivid and real. He has a sense of the book's establishment was quite often, only work to cope with. He even describes the pawnbroker's heads above water, Articles were brought in — clothes, old books, beds, anything which could be exchanged for a few pounds. The next morning Harry would be unemployed, for a while, before the process was begun all over again.

The passions that fell to the women of the house: "In the staring, gaslight, the women, throwing back their shrouds from their dishevelled hair, revealed faces though which dissimilar in features, had a simil

"LOVE ON THE DOLE" and "THERE WAS A TIME" by Walter Greenwood, Penguin paperbacks, 10p and 22p respectively.

"THERE WAS A TIME" is basically Greenwood's autobiography of his years as a "Love on the Dole" describes visits to the pawnbroker to see his grandparents and his childhood at Salford.

Another early memory was of the First World War, of the collapse of the "Old Order" and their return. Greenwood's description of the changed world is still, basically, with us. Returning to the family, he finds that the last remaining pawnbroker is still the same, that the world of the pawnbroker's life is still.

Disgruntled by one bad job after another, three or four in one day, the dole, he tells how he attempts to make his living by writing, and how through his writing, he has been able to find his way through the chain that held him to a life of poverty.

But, despite all the changes that have taken place, the capitalist stage of the struggle is still, basically, with us. Returning to the family, he finds that the last remaining pawnbroker is still the same, that the world of the pawnbroker's life is still

"There was a time"...
"At first the pickets went out balled and barbed, but they came back with broken heads ... Then they equipped themselves with shillalahs for the next trips..."

In the press reports of 1972, a vast hue and cry was raised over the tactic of flying pickets, which proved so devastatingly successful against the Tories in the miners' and building workers' strikes. What was it that terrified the Tories? The flying picket, unlike ordinary picketing, is offensive, not defensive. By bringing more and more workers into struggle, it contains the seeds of the general strike.

We have to prepare for future battles by studying and absorbing the lessons of previous battles. In 1934 a series of strikes by the Teamsters in Minneapolis, USA, pioneered the flying picket tactic, and helped to pave the way for the mass unionization of workers in 135 basic industry in the late '30s — the biggest upsurge yet of the US working class.

Teamsters Rebellion, by F. Dobbs, in an account of what was perhaps the best organized series of strikes in history.

The Teamsters Local 574 had not won a strike in Minneapolis for 20 years. In fact, all the unions were weak, and none had won a strike in that city for over ten years. The employers were organized in the Citizens' Alliance, which had a full time staff, stool pluggers in the unions, and controlled city hall.

The first Teamster's strike began at a favourable time for Local 574, and won union recognition. It showed that the unions could win in Minneapolis. The strike leaders were elected, from among whom the Trotskyists of the Communist League were prominent, went forward from this victory to organize the other sections of the working class. About 300000 men were unemployed in the city. Local 574 fought for public relief for them, and the leaders of the unemployed were consulted about union picketing. Agreement was reached with the farmers about food supplies. A women's auxiliary was formed, which played an invaluable role in the strike. A strike headquarters was set up, with offices, a mechanical repair department for picket vehicles, a field hospital, and facilities for feeding 4000 to 5000 people daily. They also printed their own daily paper.

The Teamsters were well organized, J. P. Cannon, a leader of the Communist League, wrote: "As soon as the pickets went out balled and barbed, but they came back with broken heads and injuries of various kinds. They equipped themselves with shillalahs for the next trip. A shillalah, as any Irishman can tell you, is a blackthorn stick you lean on in case you suddenly go face. Of course, it is handy for other purposes, too."

POLICE OPEN FIRE

The forces of law and order also showed their true face, when a patrol truck escorted by 150 police was followed by a picket truck. The cops opened fire and shot to kill, as was later admitted to by the special investigating commission. Two workers were killed and 67 wounded.

The big business press praised the "bravery" of the police in shooting down defenseless workers who were fighting for the very existence of their families. But the workers, fighting for their organization, stood firm.

Finally, after standing up to the National Guard, Local 574 won a great victory. They ended the strike with 7500 pickets, 450 clerks, 16 repairmen, and 1000 men. The Communist League opposed it, in which the workers were equipped with a leadership as clearheaded and resolute as the bosses. It was especially important for us today to learn the lessons of the pioneering role of flying picketing and the bosses smashed.

SELF-DEFENCE

As workers join in their struggle, as the ruling class is HOT, more and more to repressive measures. They seek to transform unions into apparatuses of the State, to destroy all the rights of civil unrest in Britain and the role of the Army in that, rather than any military invasion from Eastern Europe. Paced with these developments, we must fight to defend the passivity and菁ness in the working class, and argue the need for attacks, to unite for their self-defence.
POLICE ARREST SEVEN AT FINE TUBES

ABOUT 500 TRADE UNIONISTS from all over the country joined the picket line at Fine Tubes, Plymouth, on Monday 19th. Delegations from as far afield as the Royal Group of docks and Harland & Wolff came with messages of support, hard cash, promises of blocking, and a standing ovation for the 32 men still heroically holding out after nearly three years. The management have brought in scabs and—as speaker after speaker stressed—for victory, Fine Tubes raw materials and finished goods must be blocked throughout the country. Partial blocking of tubes has been going on for some time, as Bristol Reliance, for instance, have been turning down orders for weeks. The consequence, they reported, was to stop steel supplies coming from the South, with 40 plans for the 32 men at Llwyn-on-Brecon, who have also joined the strike. Very little support has come from local trade unionists, and Fine Tube workers have been handling the delivery of goods, some drivers have been brought in from out of town, and very few outsiders have helped out on the long grind of the daily picket at the gate. This is especially tragic since firms are starting up in Plymouth precisely because of the lack of unions and the low wage rates in the area. You can be sure they have all got one eye on Fine Tubes.

Meanwhile solidarity action and cash has been coming in steadily from radio-and-trade unionist workers at a power station in Esher, and the 'A' Group at the AWU had helped the strikers. The leader left AWU members to struggle on without strike picket pay and with only nominal blacking notices to the branches.

September 1971: three policemen defended 'law and order' at the expense of a picketer.

here and now, we stood for the right for WORKERS' CONTROL with the understanding that it can be a serious reality only in a workers' state. We saw our way working any workers' party in pressing their own exploitation under capitalism.

We believe that the TRADE UNION MOVEMENT is a growing illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully. An end to capitalism and a world society has only begun. The iniquity of capitalism is its own drive to Ministers to propose it. The capitalist class is the only way they have to involve the workers to the management of their own industry. The management of the factories is the only way they have to involve the workers in the production and distribution of the means of production. To this end, first, they have put in place a system of management and control over the workers. But this system is only an illusion of control. It is the workers who have put in place a system of management and control over the workers. But this system is only an illusion of control.
CONFERENCE HEARS OF RENTS EVICTIONS

200 ATTENDED A NORTH-WEST TENANTS' conference called by Liverpool Trades Council on March 11th.

It was reported at Bootle that 200 rent strikers are being threatened with eviction, in Bootle, and tenants were being evicted in 4T. Park, Woolmer Hill. Police have brutally attacked demonstrators.

"How far will you go?" The starting point for any discussion had to be the general picture of decimating militancy in the rents struggle, and the fact that the struggle has generally remained separate from other major working class battles.

Where possible, the present rent strikes should be continued, with preparation for expanded action against further rent rises — regular bulletins, public meetings, picket lines, anti-eviction squads.

Where declare threats to lead to demoralisation, tactical retreat may be necessary. This tactical withdrawal should be announced publicly beforehand, with a program of regroupment to include building and strengthening links with the organised labour movement.

Priority

Tenants can invite hospital workers to speak on their platform, campaign on their estates in support of workers in struggles, and get delegates elected to the Joint Action Committees against the Freeze which are being set up in many areas.

Some of the speeches from the floor ran directly counter to this perspective. Many tenants have had difficulty in getting any recognition from the industrial labour movement, and some were inclined to a "sit it alone" policy.

But the fact is that the one time that tenants acting as tenants were a major victory was in Clydebank in 1915 — when their action was linked with industrial action. This is not to argue that tenants should wait for industrial action before pressing themselves on the public at every point in the fight, tenants should see it as a priority to make links with the organised labour movement. Of course, if tenants come to trade unionists presenting their struggle as just another good cause, trade unionists are likely to reply "we've got enough of our own problems!" It is vital to explain that rents are their problem, that a defeat for the tenants is a victory for the estate's offensive and a setback for the whole working class.

Two hundred and fifty steelworkers demonstarted outside the AUEW headquarters in Sheffield, as the 250 delegates of the TUC's steel unions which met on March 7th to hammer out a strategy against.

Ebbw Vale: SALAMI TACTIC

Two of Dai Davies' half-a-cake in better-than-noTHING policies, Ebbw Vale steelworkers staged a massive lobby and demonstration in London.

Unfortunately, they have been fooled into believing the government when it says it will think again, considering Ebbw Vale on its own merits. This is a losing game trick. Its only result will be to try to split off Ebbw Vale from any national militant action.

John Bloom

CLAY CROSS

Contrary to lies in the press and on television, Clay Cross Council is still NOT 100% MEMBERS OF "Fair Rents Act. Tenants there are paying the normal, pre-Act rent. Rent increases have been limited by the National Government. The Government is still being defied.

Bolton: UNITY AGAINST FREEZE

ON THURSDAY 22 MARCH a united front trade union committee against the Freeze was holding its first meeting in Bolton.

The decision to set up the committee was taken at a mass meeting, on 14 March. Speakers at the meeting were John Barber, general secretary of the Bolton Branch of the British Railways Transport Union, and Owen Thomas (AUEW and AEFU)

Howard Sweeney

Bristol: STUDENT SIT-IN WINS

Students on rent strike in Bristol — as part of a nationwide campaign on grants — faced a threat from the Vice-Chancellor who wanted all the students from applying for a place in a hall of residence next session.

After a mass meeting, 200 students occupied the University Administration Building. Direct action produced results — within two hours the Vice-Chancellor had completely withdrawn his threat.

Simon Temple

Bolton: SCAB ATTACKS PICKET

Last week, gas strikers in Bolton heard that some vehicle fitters were going into work at 7 am in order to cross the picket line before it was manned. Three union members went along early and caught a blackleg driver on the way to work. They stopped him and asked him not to pass.

Finally, after argument, the scab pulled out two tyre levers and advanced towards the pickets. An elderly gas worker was able to stop him in time and told him the blackleg fitter drove into work.

We can leave it to the Bolton gas workers to say how they are coping with such scabs when they return to work.

Roy Batchiffe

Teeside: UNION BASHING BY LAING

SIXTY-FOUR CONSTRUCTION workers at the Laing Pipelines Offshore site at Graysborough have been sacked for demanding their nationally agreed pay rate.

The men, AUEW (CEU) members, were told by subcontract scaffolders of Société de Construction Intérieure that they were "not fit for Graysborough" and that they would not accept the workforce.

When they walked out, Laing ended the contract with Société and sent messages to other scaffolding firms offering jobs — i.e., appealing for scabs.

The scabbers have been picketing the Graysborough site since they walked out, and 600 men — about half the workforce — were left off. The picketers are left unemployed for meetings — union discussions, and implicit union agreement with Laing's policy of recruiting scabs.

Although the attempt to get a new scaffolding crew has failed, the staff side have been doing some construction work, and the men still have a long battle in front of them.

The miners and building workers have shown how effective flying pickets can be — in fact the mining workers offered to train the miners' tactics — and occupations have come to the fore recently, too. Militant tactics — co-operatives with active solidarity — are needed to defend and extend trade union rights from militantly right-wing bosses.

Alan the ASBY

Liverpool: IRON BULLS MASS LOBBY

Electricians at the EBO site in Bootle have been on strike for 104 weeks, with no aid from the union. They are now holding a job lottery and demonstration at the headquarters of the electrical contracting Joint Industry Board, Sir John Greville Kent, on March 30th at 2 pm
Manchester hospital workers stage sit-in

The Builders’ Charity dinner held on March 10th was attended by 550 delegates. In many ways it was a success, though an abrupt end to the meeting was caused by a walkout from the National Conference. It reaffirmed the determination of militant building workers to continue the fight against the employers, the Tory government, and the unions. The conference voted unanimously to campaign for £100 for 38 hours immediately after June 7th. This is certainly a move in the right direction. It will put the pressure on the employers who will no doubt try to hold the building workers to the two-year deal which George Smith and his bureaucrats signed on their behalf at the end of the strike last year.

According to the Charter policy statement which was passed, the National Alke Charter is going to wage “total war on the lump” with regional demonstrations and official picketing of lump sites. As part of the campaign there will be an all-out national general strike on June 1st. Other measures include the blocking of lump firms and refusal to tender with any firm which operates the lump at the joint committee table. Certain these measures will go a long way to fighting the lump, but will not meet the need of the co-ordinated national policy, the type of action taken by Birmingham against the lump must be speeded up.

And there must be a fight now for the registration of all building workers and organisation on the basis of regional pools (as in the docks). The union country has every constituent fighting a policy which can smash the lump.

The conference didn’t confine itself to issues concerned only with the building industry. It pledged itself for the hospital workers who had supported the call by the nationalised workers for the setting up of a national committee of steel workers.

The conference lacked a thorough discussion of policy and many individual speakers raised important points such as the need to organise regional conferences along the lines of the Scottish regional conference, and the need to change section 12 of the Charter’s demands from calling for nationalisation of the building industry to call for nationalisation under workers control.

The stage is now set for a new round with the employers. They are using the lump as a fifth column in the building industry, as Birmingham militant Pete Carter remarked. The figure for men on the lump may soon reach half a million. Unless it is fought vigorously and continuously, it may set the building workers back 20 years in their fight.

LENO GLOVER

Workers charged for official picketing

Those who did respond to the call to come to Streatham included Liverpool dockers and Sheffield steelworkers, whose works were stopped on the day, building workers from hospitals, London, and the Midlands, and representatives from four Loughborough factories in North Wales.

Liverpool builders’ leaders Percy Metcalf and Alan Abrams called for the TUC to call a general strike on the day of the constitutive proceedings, 25 April, and for the lads to have full official backing. The idea is not only in the form of finance but also in the form of organising national support.

The use of criminal charges is calculated to split support. The TUC is using this to avoid supporting the defendants. The defendants in UCTT were offered official support by national official Eric Hughes, on 8th March — only to hear the following day that it was being withdrawn.

This was officially confirmed on 12th March. The excuse given? A lawyer had said the trial would cost too much. First time we’ve ever heard of a lawyer complaining about earning a lot!

SMITH’S LETTER

On 14th March UCTT general secretary George Smith wrote to UCTT branch secretary Barry Sanford:

CHARGES AGAINST BUILDING TRADE WORKERS

I have to acknowledge receipt of your communication dated the 24th February, in connection with the above, and would apologise for delay in replying thereto.

In this respect I would advise you that we have had legal advice on the lengthy and nature of the charges against the members involved in this particular situation and it would be doing the Building Union a great disservice, and indeed the Trade Union Movement a great disservice, to demonstrate or call a national stoppage in regard to those matters as the charges, range from civil offences to criminal acts and our concern in matters of this kind is to defend the rights of Trade Unions to carry out picketing during the course of an official dispute. We must take the view that the legal processes are such that the charges based on the Conspiracy Act will soon be disproved as playing no part in the charges that are made against the members concerned.

It is of utmost importance that we do nothing to defend workers prosecuted for official picketing! Some men are still thinking that the union may be making a deal with the police to drop the Conspiracy charge if the union drops support of the men on the lesser charges.

SUSPICION IS INCREASED BY POLICE TACTICS IN RELATION TO ONE OF THOSE ARRESTED, ON TWO CONSPIRACY CHARGES. THEY HAVE TOLD HIM THAT IF HE PLEASES GUILTY THEY WILL LET HIM OFF LIGHTLY; IF NOT, THEY WILL GET HIM ON A WHOLE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL CHARGES.

ALL OUT 25 APRIL

We must work to put pressure on all Trade Unionists to have official support — but we cannot afford to wait for them to act. It is necessary for the rank and file in all trade unions to act now, through normal channels, and mass meetings at places of work, to get trade unionists to come out or at least send delegations on 25 April and to organise collections. Unless this happens, a lot of workers will come out and organise support.

All donations to: Defence of Pickets, c/o Occupation, Burscough, Leyland, Lancashire.

See also the Chronicle of the Building Union, 28th November, 1972 for a full account of the situation.