

Workers' fight

5p

No.97 May 17th to 24th, 1975

**BOSSSES' MARKET
BOSSSES' BRITAIN
NO CHOICE
DON'T VOTE!**

Chrysler WAGES - NOT SHARES!

IN AN overwhelming show of solidarity and confidence, 4000 strikers from Chrysler's engine plant at Stoke near Coventry voted on Thursday May 25th to stay out for an interim award of £8 a week in furtherance of their claim for a £15 a week pay rise. Only 50 men at this massive meeting voted against — and all the press could show for their "wives campaign" against the strike was one lone woman standing isolated and ignored outside.

Chrysler's first reaction to the strike notice was to flourish plans for share distribution and workers' participation. And it lost no time in going to the Government seeking a further loan on top of the £35 million it is already borrowing from 'Finance for Industry'.

The British section of Chrysler lost £18 million last year, and its losses this year are continuing at the same rate. Now it is probable that the company was told by the 'Labour' government that it would get no more help unless it can prove itself tough enough to smash this strike.

Successive stewards' meeting, and the sheer size and unanimity of the mass meeting, show that the employers' determination is at least matched by that of the strikers. The resolution passed on May 15th reads "This strike will continue until the company make a firm interim offer". And convenor Bob Morriss has made no secret of his views, saying "This one could drag on for a long time".

Chrysler stewards have in the past demanded the nationalisation of Chrysler, and for many the workers' participation question is meaningless while the firm is run from Detroit. For these people only the nationalisation of Chrysler would make participation a real issue.

DRIVE FOR PROFIT

But whether Chrysler is nationalised or not (and there do not appear to be any moves in that direction anyway) workers' participation will mean the same: supporting an enterprise ruled by the drive for profit. Participation — and what has been offered so far is not much anyway — binds the workers to the capitalist, profiteering, competitive, exploitative interests of the firm, and should be rejected.

It is not surprising that the firm turns to the workers for their "participation" when it's on the rocks. The fact is that in good times it does not want to share the profits but in bad times it is quick to share the responsibilities and the worries.

Although the mass meeting supported a "mandate that the negotiating committee explore, in depth, with the management the question of worker participation" it demanded clearly that this issue and the issue of the interim award be sharply separated.

DON'T TAKE CHANCES!

Both the media and local MPs have been pressuring the workers to return by warning them of a complete shut-down of Chrysler. Bill Price, Labour MP for Rugby (which includes the area of Chrysler's Ryton body works) told his constituents: "I see dark days ahead. The Government has already nationalised British Leyland and it doesn't want to take on another car firm. Even if it did there is no certainty of employment. Two of the most severe run-downs in employment in the past 25 years have taken place in nationalised industry, i.e. rail and mines, and now we are faced with a similar problem in the steel industry."

All too true. But the message is not to lie down and take it. Workers need above all to be able to control the work process, and can only fight for that by keeping clear of schemes to suck the workforce into participation — including in the planning of redundancies.

The Chrysler men are banking on the firm not wanting to risk its huge order with Iran — and meanwhile the company is hoping that the stream of workers leaving Chrysler's for other works, mainly Leyland, will weaken the strike force.

We shouldn't leave things to such chances. Every worker should stand behind these men in their fight for a decent standard of living.

**PHEW! WE
GOT OUR
OWN BACK
ON THEM...**



THE blood stained hand of American imperialism grasped at Indochina again this week. Ships of the Seventh Fleet, 1100 marines and Phantom fighters poured into the Gulf of Thailand, sinking three vessels of the Cambodian navy and bombing the mainland.

The 1973 Congress decision ending US intervention in Cambodia was duly ignored. The protests from the previously compliant Thai government were

ignored, and their refusal to allow US combat troops to attack Cambodia from bases in Thailand brushed aside without regard for the "sovereignty" and "neutrality" of Thailand that America has claimed to protect.

With few exceptions Congressmen crowed their approval of Ford's attempt to "free" the US ship *Mayaguez* which had been captured by the Cambodian navy — inside territorial waters and carrying military equipment: not, as first claimed, just cargo.

700,000 people — one in ten of the population of Cambodia — were slaughtered during the US's war to impose and sustain the Lon Nol puppet dictatorship in Cambodia. In 1973 the USA, after signing an agreement to keep out of Cambodian affairs, dropped 5,000 pounds of bombs per day on the country.

No-one has explained why the *Mayaguez* was in the area at all, still less what right the US has to continue military intervention in South East Asia.

Instead, congratulations have poured in from around the world marvelling at the USA's great feat of courage in re-asserting, in however small a way, the international military pecking order. What they are celebrating is the fact that the arrogance of the US ruling class has in no way

The man who won the war

Strength
Gerald Ford says THE SUN, is "The man who won the war". Well, it's a free country, and anyone with as much money as Rupert Murdoch can indeed say that black is white. And even make a profit out of doing it. Perhaps we should go along with the fiction, if it helps the gentle-folk of Bexleyheath and Virginia Water and Cheam sleep sounder in their beds.

But if Gerald Ford did win the Indochina war, then a few other bits of history will have to be rewritten: thus the Spanish Armada defeated Drake, Charles the First trounced Cromwell, Napoleon was the victor at Waterloo, and Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler won the First and Second World wars.

National Labour Movement Delegate Conference on
The British Labour Movement and Ireland

Saturday 24th May
Collegiate Theatre,
Gordon St., London WC1

starts 10.00 am
ends 5.30 pm approx.

Delegation fee: 75p per delegate
Overseas fee: 100p (incl. return airfare to London W.K.)

Cambodia: abrupt and brutal remedy



THE REFLECTION in Laos of the revolutionary events in Indochina has been bizarre: it's not often that a guerilla army wins its war by taking over the post of Defence Minister for the other side! (see right.) But developments in Cambodia have been scarcely less strange.

The Cambodian Communist Party plays an important part in the Khmer Rouge, the force which has victoriously taken over Cambodia. Yet in Phnom Penh, the Soviet Embassy has been ransacked, and the Soviet ambassador, together with the diplomatic representative of East Germany, told to get out.

Communications have been cut off with all other countries, including, apparently, even with Peking, though some Ministers of the new government are there!

Evidently, the relations between the different elements inside the Khmer Rouge are yet to be resolved. But whatever the dissensions within the Khmer Rouge, it is clear that no steps are being taken to involve the mass of the people in any sort of democratic decision making.

Under conditions of an almost total blackout on news, the Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh in the three days between 17th and 20th April, as well as clearing out many other towns and villages. Altogether, well over two million people — more than one third of the total population — have been involved in forced population movements.

At least that many people were refugees already, as a result of the US-sponsored war. Over three quarters of the population of Phnom Penh had entered the city since the beginning of the war five years ago; 90% of the population were

unemployed. Food was desperately short in Phnom Penh, which had depended on the now ended US airlift of rice. And the planting of rice for next year was behind schedule. The city was rotting as fast as the Lon Nol regime: in the hospitals, patients could be found sharing beds with corpses that had been dead for several days.

There is no doubt that any regime wanting to restore economic functioning in Cambodia would have to return the great majority of the population of Phnom Penh to the countryside. In the similarly swollen city of Saigon, thousands of people are already moving out spontaneously, and the PRG is organising their return to the rice growing areas of the Mekong Delta.

According to the Paris daily *Le Monde* (May 10th) some arrangements had been made in the countryside of Cambodia to receive and feed the people moved out of Phnom Penh. Even so, it is scarcely possible to doubt that eviction by forced military-bureaucratic methods will result in the death of thousands of people and the complete political atomisation of the population.

But none of this can justify pro-imperialists who, in the absence of any massacre to use in their propaganda, have expressed their horror at the brutal way Phnom Penh was evacuated. The USA brought death, destruction, chaos and economic devastation to Cambodia in the five years' war it engineered. The remedy may be abrupt and brutal: but it was imperialism which made it necessary in the first place.

MARTIN THOMAS

LAO RIGHTISTS BOW TO THE INEVITABLE

THE LAST pro-American regime in Indochina collapsed this week, with the Pathet Lao taking over in Laos.

Since the ceasefire in 1973, Laos has had a coalition regime of a peculiar sort. In Vientiane, the capital, there was a government with a majority for the right wing and the 'neutralists'. The King continued to reign from his capital of Luang Prabang. And the Pathet Lao had a minority in the government.

But most of the country remained divided into areas of Pathet Lao control and areas controlled by the right wing (the former Royal Lao Government, or 'party of Vientiane'). In Vientiane itself, both the right wing and the Pathet Lao had armed forces, but they were kept separate, and the government could give orders only to the former Royal Lao forces.

With the victories of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the sporadic conflicts over control of this or that area in Laos became more numerous, and the Pathet Lao made more gains.

A series of military commanders, seeing which way the tide was flowing (and no doubt having heard of the 'domino theory...') threw in their lot with the Pathet Lao. In Vientiane a group of officer cadets rebelled against their officers and went over to the Pathet Lao. Finally, the increasing paralysis of the armed forces of the right wing was formalised by the resignation of the Defence Minister and three other right wingers.

The Pathet Lao now have a majority in the government and control, through the Defence Ministry, of the former Royal Lao armed forces; they are, therefore, the dominant power in the country. Many leaders of the old order, such as the Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma, have also thrown in their lot with the Pathet Lao, no doubt believing — and with some justification — that having done so they will be able to retain a good part of their privileges.

CROSLAND TUCKS IN AFTER THE PARTY'S OVER

ON FRIDAY 9th May, Environment Secretary Anthony Crosland arrived in Manchester to be greeted at the Town Hall by an angry demonstration of over 300 members of the local government workers' union NALGO.

They were demonstrating in support of their present wage claim and demonstrating against Crosland personally because of his attitude to the pay claim and his policy of slashing local government spending. Mr Rob Cleg, chairman of the Greater Manchester branch of NALGO, said that Crosland had been interfering in the pay negotiations, urging the employers to settle for the barest minimum.

At a luncheon meeting in the afternoon, Crosland announced future drastic rubs on local spending, in fact calling for a 'standstill' on further spending. At the beginning of his speech, he declared that — "For the time being at least, the party is over". Some party we've been having so far! Massive education cuts all round since 1973 — big rises in council rents — declining social services and a crippled National Health Service — fewer and shabbier homes being built by councils... what a feast, what a cause for dancing in the streets!

Gone up

These are a few of the facts: **HOUSING:** In 1968, 200,000 houses were built in the public sector, 426,000 altogether. In 1973, the figures were 114,000 public sector, 304,000 total. Meanwhile the number of homeless people in council temporary accommodation more than doubled between 1966 and 1973. Council rents have generally gone up at least £1.50 since October 1972.

Earlier this year the 1975/6 allocation for local authorities to rehabilitate and modernise housing stock was cut from the 1974/5 level of £400 million to £296 million.

HEALTH: The £111 million cut in health spending made in December 1973 has never been restored.

EDUCATION: From December 1973 the allocation to cover school running costs was cut 10%, though costs have increased enormously (e.g. paper prices up 100%). One index of the effect of successive cuts is the number of teachers leaving their schools: in the school year 1972/3 it was 18.6% of all teachers in England and Wales and 28.6% in Inner London —

excluding teachers leaving through retirement or death.

Yet now, Crosland and the Labour Government want to cut public spending even further. This will mean for millions of workers a rose standard of health, higher rents, poorer education for their children, less facilities for old people — nothing but another vicious attack on their standard of living.

The Labour Government, confronted by the most serious economic crisis since the thirties, are resorting to the traditional and savage answers used by the bosses. They want to put the burden of the crisis firmly on the backs of those who are not responsible for it — the working class. Their answer is to drive down wages, slash public spending, increase taxation — and in the process put a million workers on the dole, and cut the standard of living of all workers.

Hurricane

The cost of living rose by 20% between the beginning of this year and the end of April. This is an economic hurricane which will sweep before it many of the advances in conditions which workers have fought for and won since the second world war.

None of this government's policies can stop this approaching storm — instead they are busy demolishing the only shelters that workers have.

The real face of the Labour government and its attitude to workers appears in all its hypocrisy and cynicism at Crosland's luncheon in Manchester. For at the same time as announcing the cuts and saying that the most immediate effect would be a rise in council house rents, he was downing a meal of gourmet standard. The menu — Oxtail soup, sole Veronique, fillet steak, melon surprise, cheese and coffee — and to wash it all down (and perhaps to take away the sour taste produced by Crosland's speech) white wine, two varieties of red wine, and a special port! Nothing can be more disgusting than the spectacle of this Labour minister sitting back in his chair, smug and well fed, and pronouncing on the need for workers to tighten their belts. The only belts that need tightening should be round the necks of Crosland and those like him. The only cuts in public spending should be on this sort of spending, the perks and 'privileges' of politicians.

NEAL SMITH

Murder Inc. moves on from Vietnam

THE Vinnell Corporation of America is doing business with Saudi Arabia. But this company's business is dirtier than most in the imperialism game.

The Vinnell Corporation is listed as a construction company. It did \$200 million worth of business in Vietnam for the US military establishment. But this business had nothing to do with construction. A Pentagon official remembers that "When I dealt with them in Vietnam, they didn't even own a typewriter. All they were was a list of names on a piece of paper".

In fact, the Vinnell Corporation is just a cover for a mercenary army. "They performed for us what we conveniently termed 'clean-up'" the Pentagon official said. "What they 'cleaned up' or how they 'cleaned up' was pretty much up to them... they followed us out of Vietnam and did the dirty work we didn't want to do for ourselves. They had a free hand.

They could hit any Vietcong left hanging around the area. ... When we wanted to pull something quasi-legal, so far as military appropriations was concerned, we used them.

"Now with Vinnell going over to

BRITISH TERROR UNIT TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA

Newspapers and TV cameramen in Western Australia have been given strict orders not to take close-up photographs of a secret British Army force that arrived recently on a special training mission.

A British Government spokesman said that because of the nature of their work, the identity

of the soldiers could be "useful to the enemy" in times of war.

In general, 'the enemy' has very little interest in whether it is Private Bloggs or Corporal Winterbottom that they are taking aim at. But these particular soldiers are members of Britain's notorious undercover Special Air Services.

The British spokesman in

Western Australia said that in "times of hostility" the men could be doing dangerous intelligence work. But he hastened to add that the men would not be used in Northern Ireland: which is precisely the place where the SAS has been most visibly deployed in recent years (along with Oman, where they're helping to shore up a feudal dictatorship against rebel forces).

Their training in Australia in unarmed hand-to-hand combat was described as "routine for commandoes". But they have also been doing demolition work and close quarters armed battle training in the Perth area, pitting their skills against 3 Squadrons of the crack Australian Special Air Service regiment. And in a second stage, a complex operation was mounted to practise infiltration and reconnaissance over long distances by water, vehicle, air and on foot.

In the past, these British troops have trained with the SAS group in Malaysia in jungle warfare techniques — great practice for the "defence" of the Home Counties, no doubt...

Not that British imperialism makes a great secret of its potential as overseas aggressor. But they like to take precautions. The secrecy surrounding the SAS in Perth (where their presence was only announced after they'd been there three days, and where great care was taken that at social events for them, they would not be identified) is simply to help these undercover thugs pose as laundrymen in Belfast or milkmen in Glasgow, and get away with it.

Tony Bidgood



Saudi, that is nothing less than the US sending over our own mercenary army.

According to official statements, the 1000 men contracted through Vinnell will train Saudi Arabia's 26,000-man national guard. But the loquacious Pentagon man gave his opinion of that too. "I

don't care what the press releases say. Sure they'll train Faisal's palace guard, but if push comes to shove over there, they'll be in a position to lead his palace guard ... the people they'll be sending there are all ex-military men with specialities in the field of counter insurgency."

How farmworkers set the countryside alight in the 'Swing Riots'

TRAVELLING through the countryside of the south of England today, it's hard to imagine that this was the setting of 'the largest workers' uprising of the last century. Today, this area is not noted for its militancy, yet in the last century the farm labourers of the area were driven by low wages and near starvation into staging an enormous, spontaneous uprising against their bosses.

This rising occurred in 1830 and came to be known as the 'Swing Riots', and its repercussions echoed through the next four decades of the last century. Like many working class movements of the past, the history of this rising rarely gets a mention in official histories of the period, and has even been neglected by historians of the labour movement.

Enclosures

Hobsbawm and Rude's book *Captain Swing* (Penguin, £1.40) shows for the first time the enormous significance of the rising, and places it firmly amongst the most important events of the working class movement of the last century.

The setting for this great struggle was the revolution that had just occurred in the countryside. Even before the Industrial Revolution had ushered in the era of the vast expansion of industrial capitalism, the countryside had been utterly transformed by the creation of a rural working class, which owned no land and could only live by the selling of labour for wages. This process had been taking place gradually for several centuries, but was revolutionised by the Enclosure Acts passed by Parliament between 1750 and 1850. These Acts transferred common land from the communal ownership of villages to the large landowners.

One quarter of all land under cultivation was affected. Small farmers and peasants were forced off their land, and the English countryside assumed its characteristic patchwork appearance for the first time.

By the 1830s, rural England was divided into three opposing camps — the large landowners who owned about two thirds of the land; their tenant farmers who rented this land off them; and the agricultural labourers who numbered about 1½ million, and who owned no land.

This vast mass of landless workers had seen their conditions of living progressively deteriorate. Before the turn of the century, the majority of workers were hired as servants to work for a farmer for a whole year. This offered them at least some form of protection during years with bad winters, but with the boom in agriculture that set in during the early part of the century, most farmers began to hire workers by the week, or even by the day.

During a good spell, this meant that the worker had greater flexibility to go after better jobs, but it took away any protection against unemployment during a bad winter. For the farmers themselves, this method of hiring meant that they could save large sums of money by not having to hire workers for periods when the harvest was poor and there was little work.

As William Cobbett, a well known Radical of the period put it, "Why do not the farmers now feed and lodge their work-people as they did formerly? Because they cannot keep them upon so little as they give them in wages."

Coupled with this change

was the alteration in the system of relief for the poor. During the years of the 1790s, food rocketed, and the sufferings of the rural poor became intolerable. In 1795, Berkshire magistrates met at Speenhamland to introduce a new system of poor relief. They decided to subsidise wages out of the local rates if wages fell below a subsistence level.

Counties all over England adopted the Speenhamland system, and it soon became a notorious millstone around the neck of every agricultural worker. In effect, it produced a situation in which farmers paid the lowest possible wages, since they realised that these would be subsidised from the rates.

It tied the worker to his home village, since that was the only place in which he was entitled to relief and therefore to at least some pitifully small sort of security. And it gave rise to the lunatic situation that if one farmer laid off ten men, then his neighbour would do the same. They reasoned... "Well, if I'm going to have to pay for his men out of my rates, then he can do the same for my men". As the authors put it:

Lunacy

"The traditional social order degenerated into a universal pauperisation of demoralised men who could not fall below the relief scale whatever they did, who could not rise above it, who had not even the nominal guarantee of a living income since the scale could be reduced to as little as the village rich thought fit for a labourer.

Agricultural capitalism degenerated into a lunacy in which farmers were encouraged to pay as little as they could and use the mass of pauper labour as an excuse for not raising their productivity; whilst their most rational calculations would be how to get the maximum subsidy for their wage bill from the rest of the rate payers."

The wretched plight of the rural labourer was bad enough in good years of full employment, but the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 saw the country flooded with up to 250,000 'demobbed' soldiers,

DAMN IT, LET IT BURN

boom that agriculture had enjoyed during the war period ended and a general recession set in. This was to produce rising unemployment, particularly in the winters. The poor were forced to even greater reliance on the poor relief, which was progressively cut during this period as the farmers attempted to cut the costs of their rates.

The two years preceding 1830 had seen bad harvests, with the one of 1829 being particularly disastrous. The workers faced the year of 1830 fearing the worst, and realising that something had to be done to alleviate their plight before the next winter set in. Their answer was the movement known as the Swing riots — a rising of workers that affected twenty

machines, and so on. Often they warned of the consequences of not giving in to their demands by sending letters. These were often signed by a mythical character, Captain Swing, from whom the riots took their name. They wrote things like: "Revenge for thee is on the Wing from thy determined Captain Swing".

"This is to inform you what you have to undergo Gentlemen if providing you don't pull down your machines and raise the poor men's wages the married men give two and six pence a day the single two shillings or we will burn down your barns and you in them."

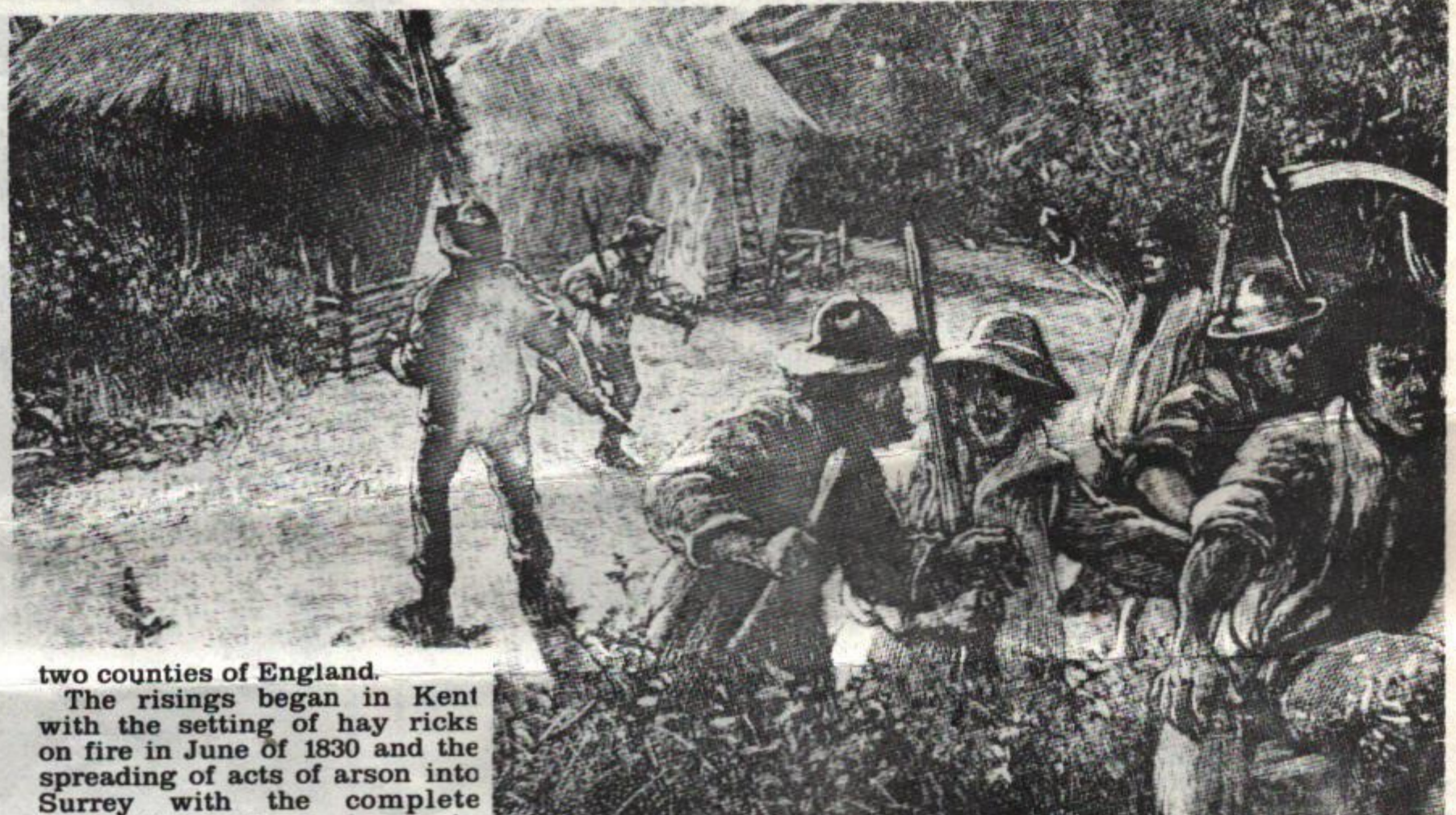
The movement spread with enormous rapidity into Surrey and Sussex and along the South Coast into Hampshire

This is to inform you what you have to undergo Gentlemen if providing you don't pull down your machines and raise the poor men's wages the married men give two and six pence a day the single two shillings or we will burn down your barns and you in them this is the last notice from W. A. W.

that time). However, an enormous wave of protest, led mainly by Radicals such as Cobbett, succeeded in getting many of the death sentences commuted to transportation to Australia. Of those tried:

- 19 were executed;
- 481 were transported;
- 644 were imprisoned;
- 7 were fined;
- 1 was shipped;
- 300 were acquitted or bound over.

In the south of England whole communities lost parents and husbands as a result of the savage number of transportations. The ruling class realised only too well the importance of the Swing movement, and responded



two counties of England.

The risings began in Kent with the setting of hay ricks on fire in June of 1830 and the spreading of acts of arson into Surrey with the complete destruction of a farm in August. Also in August, near Canterbury, the first threshing machine was destroyed. These machines were to become the particular target of rioters all through the Swing rising as they took away much of the labourers' winter work. Arson was already a familiar form of ritual protest, but the destruction of machines was something new.

However, it became more and more frequent in the course of the rising. At the early stage of the rising the only demands were those connected with those for more work and the destruction of the threshing machines.

Blaze

The number of incidents rapidly increased throughout the county, until scarcely a night passed without the workers burning down some barn or other. The activists of the movement received the support of the majority of the workers. A report from Orpington describes workers calmly watching a blazing barn, saying "Damn it, let it burn, I wish it was the house; we can warm ourselves now; we only want some potatoes; there is a nice fire to cook them by".

The fires continued raging into October, more machines were destroyed, and for the first time the labourers began to demand increased wages. The usual demand in Kent was for a minimum of 2s 3d in winter and 2s 6d in summer. Bands of activists roamed the countryside demanding money from the rich farmers, attacking the overseers of the Poor Houses, destroying

and Wiltshire. The same kinds of activities occurred: the firing of barns, the destruction of machines, the demanding of higher wages, and the sending of Swing letters. Riots often occurred with clashes with the local militia and with soldiers. A typical occurrence took place at Andover where the workers enforced a raising of wages, destroyed all the threshing machines, demolished iron foundries, extracted money from the local rich, and besieged a local jail releasing a prisoner. Eventually the movement was broken up by the arrival of a troop of Lancers who took away several prisoners.

This pattern was repeated all over the south of England, and by November the rising had spread into the Midlands through Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Huntingdonshire, into East Anglia and Lincolnshire. By the end of the year the momentum of the movement had died in all of the 22 counties affected, although incidents of arson and machine breaking occurred into 1831.

Power

During this time the farmers and their agents in Parliament had become greatly alarmed at the power displayed by the agricultural workers, and were particularly worried in case the movement went beyond the narrow economic limits of its demands. Troops and special constables were used in conjunction with the yeomen cavalry to suppress the rising, and by the end of the year 1900 prisoners had been taken. The government appointed a Special Commission to try the prisoners, which proceeded to hand out the severest sentences (which wasn't difficult when you consider that both arson and robbery were punishable by death at

accordingly. As Hobsbawm and Rude put it...

"From no other protest movement — from neither Luddites nor Chartists — was such a bitter price exacted".

Although the movement was disorganised and lacking in any clear direction, it did not mark the end of the militancy of the agricultural worker. Although the severe repression following the Swing riots effectively discouraged the workers from demonstrating publicly, the burning of ricks continued as an important form of protest.

Revenge

Indeed this sort of rural militancy lasted into the 1860s, as the rural labourer turned to terrorism to revenge himself for his terrible conditions. In East Sussex for example, was found the most militant area, where sheep killing and arson were common after 1830, and where armed militias of smugglers and poachers accompanied mass marches to protect the workers. However, such a movement could not really collectively advance the cause of the agricultural worker, and the basis for this was not achieved until the establishment of the Agricultural Workers' Union by Joseph Arch in the 1870s.

Despite its limitations, its mood of yearning for a more secure past without the presence of machines, the movement of the agricultural workers in the Swing period was a heroic struggle by one of the most down-trodden sections of society for social justice. It is their spirit of struggle, their determination not to suffer again, that we need to remember today. This book has done an invaluable job in describing in detail a struggle that should never be forgotten.

Syd Morant

£50 REWARD.

THE TRUSTEES of the CHARITIES in DEDHAM, having received information, that a most scandalous and disgusting Letter has been sent to the Rev. W. M. HURLOCK, Lecturer of that Parish, THREATENING him, and the Premises in his Occupation, with

DESTRUCTION,

DO HERBERT OFFER A REWARD OF

Fifty Pounds

TO ANY PERSON

who will give such information as shall ensure the CONVICTION of the WRITER of the above-mentioned Letter.

Dec. 13th, 1830.

'Keep the cream and throw the milk away'

ORITY, discipline and hierarchy, all so near to right wing heart, are found together in education as in perhaps no other sphere of social life. The series of 'Black Papers' on education, produced to rally opponents of comprehensive education, have thus provided a logical focus for reactionaries ever since they started coming out in 1969.

The fourth, published last month and coming at a time when the law-n-morality lobby has never been stronger and the National Front is growing fast, has shot straight to the Top Ten in the paperback best sellers list.

What exactly has this document, written by eight dons, two novelists, a journalist, a poet, four ex-heads and two serving (but anonymous) teachers, got to say?

Its main planks are a strengthening of parental and school authority, racism (such as sneers at 'Black Studies'), male chauvinism (one of the contributors can't even refer to teachers as other than "school-masters") and middle class snobbery (central to which is the patronising definition "clever working class child", whereas it's assumed all middle class children are clever).

The fourth Black Paper ranges in style from demagoguery to statistics to the final, fatuously juvenile contribution that took the combined talents of Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest to produce — an unfunny 'spoof' about ILEA that might have taken pride of place in a below average school magazine.

NAKED

But running through practically every contribution is the cry: down with comprehensive education!

The main motivation for this is of course a straightforward defence of naked class privilege. For all their talk of the "clever working class child" whose salvation lies in being spirited away to grammar school, their main concern is precisely to keep the grammar schools as middle class bastions. But underlying this crude class approach is a whole conception of education that has a strong appeal for the right wing.

This idea of education is that it consists in imparting knowledge chosen by the teachers — rather than showing children how to learn, how to solve problems, how to think and find things out for themselves.

It has meant a restricted and fossilised curriculum (one Black Paper writer is horrified by what he calls "a nasty hybrid of civics and sociology, and one of their biggest beefs is against attempts to depart from traditional subjects.)

According to this view, the pupil is "the ultimate consumer", a passive recipient of learning about which he has no say at all. Children are not people, each of them with a capacity for thought and creativity, but rather 'educating material'.

MOULDING

At the core of education under capitalism is the training and 'socialisation' of working class kids to accept the system and their place in it. This runs through the content as well as the method of education, and would be far harder to do if children had more scope to question and influence what they are taught.

Progressive teachers have fought for a method of education whose priority is the maximum development of every child. The Black Paper group simply want to put the majority out of the way and teach them some tricks and manners to suit them for work, while segregating away the "highly educable children" to keep alive the "traditions of excellence, integrity, altruism and sense of service".

But when it comes to working class kids, to kids in "deprived areas", not only don't they care about 'excellence', but about education at all. The assertion of point 7 of the 'Black Paper Basics' that "without selection

the clever working class child in a deprived area stands little chance of a real academic education" implies that 'sink' schools, which are incapable of offering an academic education, should exist — as long as a nod is made in the direction of 'egalitarianism' by removing the odd working class child to partake of "better things".

In fact one contributor, Kenneth Green, goes so far as to lament that "one of the greatest weaknesses of many 'comprehensives' is that they offer 'academic' fare to children not capable of handling it". Just how deprived can you get?

And while they indulge in simpering bourgeois talk about 'deprivation', let's not forget that deprivation for the majority is precisely what they are advocating in defending the whole system of creaming the best teachers,

break down class privilege are "politically motivated".

When it comes to workers' kids, the 'inspiring vistas of intellectual excellence' give way to a grimmer prospect: "...for the great mass of our (!) children the discipline, structure, system and purposeful direction of 'old fashioned' formality are preferable. Children of low intelligence (sic) ... have little power of the application so necessary in the acquisition of reading skills, while discovering and picking things up incidentally are quite beyond their capacity. [one wonders how they even learned to speak!] ... They require a firm lead and delight (!) in simple, repetitive tasks when these are presented to them authoritatively."

Just the preparation for an assembly line...

This fantasy dreamed up by Stuart Froome about what "the mass of our children" prefer is

aren't all the same: which you'd think would lead to the conclusion that classes should be smaller so that each child could get more time and attention for its individual, and different, personality. But no. This is the Black Paper, and in it all roads lead to ... the necessity for keeping the elitist grammar schools. (The trouble here is that there are too many arguments, and they're tripping over each other: Eysenck argues for different types of schools to cater for introverts and extraverts, while Froome wants them to cater for the more and the less 'intelligent', which is not the same thing at all.)

A totally predictable bed-fellow is the ubiquitous Rhodes Boyson, once Head of Highbury Grove (the all boys 'comprehensive' which was supposedly modelled on Eton) and now Tory MP for Brent



Black Paper wants to keep bastions of naked class privilege which haven't changed much since this picture summed it all up.

Below: under the pretensions, a sheer traditionalism well expressed in this cartoon

equipment, buildings and conditions into islands of "excellence" and leaving the majority with the crumbs.

Class antagonism positively bristles from the document, which accepts all the half-chewed 'obvious' conclusions of a quack like Eysenck without question: thus IQ is a real and valid measure of an inherited thing called intelligence, of which people born of civil servants and professors and research scientists have an abundance, and people born of labourers, factory workers, miners etc have a lot less. And, accepting

taken a stage further by H.J.Eysenck, whose racist ideas have caused riots in universities where he has tried to speak. (Little wonder that Point 9 of the 'Black Paper Basics' is that "Institutions which cannot maintain proper standards of open debate should be closed".) In an article on 'personality' he trundles out all his pseudo-scientific definitions (stable/unstable, extravert/introvert), telling us that these are the factors that determine whether one method of teaching or another 'works' with certain children: thus

North. He, too, is casting around for ways to keep private education, and he's come up with the 'voucher' system, whereby parents are issued with coupons which can be handed over to the school of their choice, which then redeems the coupon for cash from the state. In this way the state pays the piper, but doesn't call the tune, and



When I heard your school was carrying out no forward-looking experiments, I put it down as first choice.

all this, Kenneth Green cites Sir Cyril Burt ('pioneer' educational reactionary) who wrote that "in education, equal opportunity means equal opportunity to make the most of differences that are innate". This all helps to pass off educational segregation and selection as something "natural", part of the order of things, while all attempts to

"discovery methods work with extraverted children", and "introverted children are more easily motivated by praise, extraverted ones by blame" — and, it seems, "making examinations more stressful improves the performance of stable children" (if not their mental well-being...).

What it would all seem to boil down to is that children

Boyson sees the voucher system leading to a proliferation of private schools. The late 1970s, he says, "could be an ideal time to introduce the voucher system because the falling birthrate would mean that there would be redundant school buildings in which new independent schools could be opened by teachers, trusts, churches and other voluntary

Irena Holt reviews

Black Paper 1975

bodies..." At the same time, "unpopular" schools would decline and close. At a Press Conference it was admitted that this system (modelled on the competitive anarchy of capitalism with its insecurity and uncontrollable lurches from boom to slump) meant mass staff redundancies.

Boyson also states that "All children without brain damage should be reading at the age of 7. There should be national examinations to enforce this" (my emphasis). By the time they've taken Froome's intelligence test, Eysenck's personality test and Boyson's reading tests, presumably the "stable" kids (if there are any left) will be "performing" really well. Or should we call it going through the hoops?

The underlying male chauvinism and Victorian morality of the contributors (90% are men) show up all over the Black Paper, with statements like "...the relaxation of manners which went with the loosening of family bonds, and which weakened authority and hierarchy generally, also worked against effective schooling" (Jacques Barzun) and "...in the urge to teach about contraception, assumptions are made about the likely moral behaviour of children which may be self-filling" (Ronald Butt).

BURDENS

Such attitudes are not merely implicit. They lead to conclusions which the two editors, C.B.Cox and Rhodes Boyson, spell out in their 'Letter to MPs and Parents'. They oppose nursery schools outright, and want measures taken which will further institutionalise the nuclear family and place clearly defined burdens on the mother: "Nursery schools may be of great use in deprived city centres, but all the evidence from America points to the fact that children advance most quickly where attempts are made to strengthen the mother's direct involvement in the learning experiences of her offspring. The family is the primary unit of society and the cycle of deprivation will not be broken by removing children from it except in extreme cases. Income tax should be remodelled so that it advantages mothers with children below the age of five to stay at home and look after them instead of going to work."

We can certainly agree about the cycle of deprivation: that is not, as reformist liberals and many teachers think, broken by education in itself. It will only be broken by a total transformation of society.

RANK & FILE

But until such time, deprivation and oppression can best be alleviated by fighting the entire programme of ideas set out in the Black Paper, from their elite educational hot-houses for the privileged, down to the enslavement of women at home as isolated child minders. Certainly, this last proposal should come in for strong and coherent criticism from the Working Women's Charter. However, the bulk of the document needs a clear and detailed refutation from socialist teachers. It is unfortunate that the chances of this being done have been greatly diminished by the latest turn taken by the teachers' Rank and File grouping, which decided to restrict its scope to purely 'bread and butter' issues in education.

It would be a clear blow to the left if the Black Paper remains unanswered.

MOST WOMEN don't choose to have abortions. They'd rather not have them. But any woman that needs an abortion, needs to be able to take that choice.

Where most people discuss abortion as an interesting moral issue, for thousands of women every year the need for abortion looms as the biggest and most urgent practical need in their lives: one for which, indeed, they risk their very life.

Perhaps the need for this choice would not be so great if women were not so penalised for having babies. But as things are, to have a baby is to forego many other choices. It is to forego the freedom to pursue study or keep a good job, to earn a living, to have leisure and freedom of movement, and in many cases the ability to find a home. For women already burdened down with children they can't cope with, it is to forego the chance of giving them a square deal.

Take the case of Mary: she had five children under school age, lived in a damp two bedroomed slum in Manchester, and her youngest baby was in

hospital suffering from malnutrition. The next two were kept in a pram, as she couldn't cope if they crawled around. She was in poor health — and pregnant again. She tried to abort herself with hot baths and knitting needles and was in danger of killing herself in her desperation, until she was eventually helped to go through the daunting official procedure, and finally obtain an abortion at a very late stage.

Last resort

Mary's choice was already limited: no doubt given a free choice she wouldn't be in the situation she already was in.

ABORTION: WHAT ARE THE CHOICES?

BY ROS GAINS

She'd have a decent place to live, a nursery for her kids and probably not so many of them.

The Abortion Amendment Bill brought in by James White MP would deny Mary even this last resort choice. Yet its supporters claim that they are concerned for humanity and for human life. We can only say that their selective concern is highly suspect — just about as suspect as Gerald Ford's "Babylift", coming after years

of burning children with napalm and blowing them up.

The concern of the anti-abortion lobby (spearheaded by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) for the life of 'unborn babies' is not coupled with concern for babies, or people, or women. They say nothing about war and mass starvation. They are not horrified by the knowledge that their Bill if it becomes law will drive thousands of women to the terror of a backstreet abortion, dozens to die and hundreds to sustain permanent physical and mental damage.

Their concern for foetus is instead coupled with a moralising hostility to sex, and a Victorian double standard which would punish the woman for getting pregnant.

SPUC like to present their outlook as a solution which offers a different choice to abortion. But they have no answer to offer to any of the problems that beset women with babies, wanted or unwanted. They have no interest in community childcare, in nurseries (rather, they're against them for undermining motherhood and the family), in guarantees against job victimisation for mothers or for adequate pay during pregnancy. Instead of seeking to widen the choices for women — as does the women's liberation movement, at the same time as demanding the right to choose physically to have or not to have a baby — they seek to narrow the choices by making abortion virtually impossible. Their only 'solution' is more adoption: but it isn't for lack of this option that women prefer to have an early and easy abortion and then get on with their lives with no interruption.

Legal right

SPUC even have the nerve to offer "social help" and, would you believe it, "love" to women to whom they've made sure an abortion was denied, and about whose rights in society they don't give a hoot.

If they confined their efforts to improving adoption facilities in the hope that this would discourage abortion, that would be fine (at any rate for the white, new born and unhandicapped babies that their sort prefer). But on the pretext of defending the "rights" of the foetus, they seek to deny the rights of all women to control their own bodies.

Is there in fact a conflict of rights? Certainly not in legal terms, and the James White Bill makes no attempt to create a legal right for the unborn child. This would be far too difficult, and would in any case show up the absurdity of the attempt. (Would they demand, for instance, that all miscarriages be recorded as accidental deaths? That is the logical corollary of calling abortion murder. And if so, could the parents claim damages for such an accidental death if liability could be proved against a third party?)

Potential life

Certainly, abortion means a wastage of potential life. But so does contraception (or even sexual abstinence, if we want to take the logic all the way!). Some methods of contraception (IUDs) act to dislodge an already fertilised egg. (And another new method works by making the woman's body a 'hostile environment' in which a foetus cannot develop and is automatically aborted within a few days or weeks.)

One cannot therefore define abortion as fundamentally different from some methods of contraception. (One cannot

morally, but unfortunately the law does.) Those who have sponsored the Abortion Amendment Bill under the banner of the 'Right' of the unborn, should be prepared to argue the "rights", too, of millions of spermatozoa or dozens of eggs as against the right of a woman.

The earliest point at which a separate right can sensibly be defined is that at which the unborn child could survive outside the mother's body. This is months after the date for a safe abortion.

Of course, the less restrictive and bureaucratic the law, the earlier most abortions would take place, and the more they would resemble contraception. By giving women the unfettered right to choose, the law would be virtually abolishing abortion as it has been known: using the recently developed vacuum aspiration method, a woman could have an abortion as an out-patient as soon as she is aware that she has missed a period. The whole slow, painful and daunting procedure of pleading your case with one doctor after another and being subjected to moral bullying and impertinent interrogation, ending (at best) in a late, costly and major operation at an advanced stage of pregnancy — all this would be unknown.

Such out-patient clinics, on the NHS, would quickly do away with the need for the private abortion clinics, so maligned by James White, yet so gratefully used by many desperate women at present. We seek a free, readily available abortion service on the NHS: until the NHS provides for all who want treatment, the need will be filled by private clinics.

But instead of an advance from all the old anguish, we are faced with the prospect of a major regression in the law, based on emotive and lying propaganda and more in line with medieval superstition and Victorian morality.

LPYS CAMPAIGNS AGAINST BILL

THE ABORTION (Amendment) Bill, would really hit working class women, a meeting to combat the Bill, organised by the LPYS, was told last week. Dominic Costa, (Hammersmith Hospital ASTMS) showed this when he quoted the DHSS report for 1970, showing that about 73% of women of "Classes 1 and 2" are on the pill, whereas only 30% of "Classes 3, 4 and 5" are.

Working class women are less likely to have had adequate advice on contraception, and are far more likely to need abortions to end unwanted pregnancies. They are also of course less able to cope with unplanned and unexpected pregnancy.

It was also revealed that certain hospitals have a practice of harassing women to become sterilised at the same time as having an abortion. In some areas such as Cardiff — strongholds of SPUC — abortions will only be done if accompanied by sterilisation: which has a mortality rate ten times that of an abortion.

The viciousness of this sort of punitive treatment is of course not mentioned in the list of 'abuses' which was supposed to have motivated James White's Bill. We have the anti-abortionists, with their much advertised 'concern for life', foisting a possibly dangerous operation on women who are least able to defend themselves.

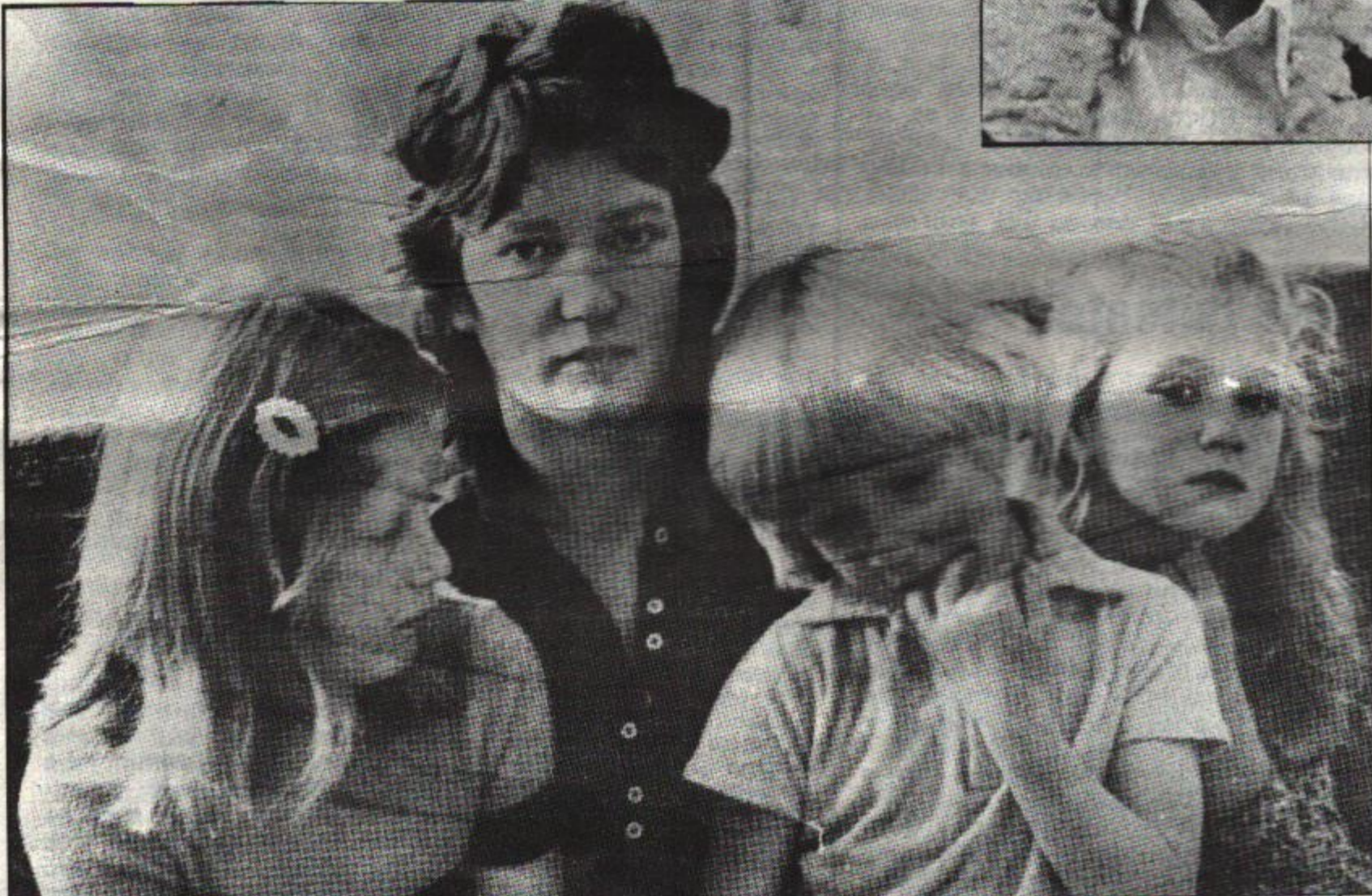
Christopher Price MP spoke and attacked the ignorance among MPs on the question: many MPs who hadn't even bothered to vote at all on the 1967 Act (which legalised abortion in a restricted way) had now voted for the Amendment Bill under pressure from SPUC and the Catholic Church. He emphasised the element in the Bill which would put the burden of proof on doctors to prove that a woman's life would be seriously or gravely at risk if pregnancy continued. This would mean a doctor would be held guilty until proved innocent; and the issue was a difficult one to prove anyway.

Other speakers placed the fight against the Bill in the context of the Health Service cuts: these cuts were also an attack on a woman's chances of getting an abortion.

The conference went on to pass a resolution urging the labour movement to campaign against the Bill, and supporting the National Abortion Campaign's demonstration on June 21st.

All LPYS branches should mobilise NOW for this demonstration, and for their members to get other sections of the labour movement pledged to fight the Bill.

WHY THEY ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE AT PORTLAOISE JAIL



Rita O'Hare with her children Terry, Rory and Jane Frances. Inset: Rose Dugdale

REPUBLICAN prisoners in Ireland's Portlaoise jail are once again on hunger strike — this time in support of Rose Dugdale's hunger strike, which in turn is in protest at the treatment in Limerick jail of Rita O'Hare.

Rita's story sums up the suffering of the Republican population of Northern Ireland over the recent years — and their courage and determination to fight back. She has been wounded, beaten, jailed, followed and watched by the police, and now framed and jailed for three years on no evidence.

Back in 1971, Rita was given a six month jail sentence in Belfast, her home town, under the Public Order Amendment Act: she had worn an IRA 'uniform' whilst picketing Belfast Magistrates Court, where men were being tried for the same offence. The Act (on which the Jenkins Prevention of Terrorism Act is based) also forbade counter-demonstrations — yet a brutally violent Protestant counter demonstration at the Courthouse was ignored by the RUC.

Shortly after her release from Armagh jail, internment was introduced, and her husband Gerry was 'lifted' to Long Kesh. Rita became active on the internees' behalf, and in the self-defence patrols set up to protect Catholic Belfast from the British Army and the Orange pogroms.

It was while on one of these, late in 1971, that she was shot in the head and hip by a British

Army patrol, kicked and beaten on her way to hospital, and then surrounded by an armed guard as she lay close to death after major surgery to remove a bullet from her head.

Facing charges that could have put her in jail for twenty years, Rita moved South while still recovering from her wounds. She was joined by her husband and three children, and they spent the next few years fighting attempts to extradite her to the North, while Gerry was twice jailed by the Green Tory state for Republican activities.

Rita kept up her activities on behalf of political prisoners, while constantly being harassed and followed by police. She regularly visited prisoners in Portlaoise, and it was after her last visit there that she was arrested and charged with smuggling gelignite in to the prisoners.

Harassed

The evidence against her was pathetic: though she was arrested only six hours later, there was no trace of explosives to be found. She was just one of many visitors to the prison that day. But they'd been trying to 'get' Rita O'Hare for years, and after failing to extradite her, they succeeded in getting the explosives conviction.

While Rita and Gerry have been constantly harassed by jail sentences, they have been bringing up three small children. Two weeks ago the family went to visit Rita at Limerick: visiting conditions are

oppressive for anyone, let alone children. The prisoner is kept in a perspex partitioned box, separated from visitors by a table and six feet of space.

One of the children found this intolerable, and got up to go nearer her mother. She was roughly prevented by a female warder, and Rita, seeing her child getting knocked about, tried to intervene. She was immediately herself knocked down by another female 'screw', and was last seen by her family unconscious on the floor — a woman with a serious medical history of major brain surgery when a British bullet was removed from her skull.

Failed

Rose Dugdale, the only other woman in the south of Ireland convicted on political offences, is also in Limerick. When Rita O'Hare arrived there, Rose had spent a year suffering intermittent solitary confinement, having her visitors restricted, her mail stopped, and giving birth to her child with inadequate medical or nursery facilities. They have both tried all the official channels to put an end to these conditions, and failed.

Now Rose Dugdale is on hunger strike. The men in Portlaoise are supporting their demands for improved conditions. British socialists, too, should take up and publicise and campaign for their demands.

Sue Carlyle

CPSA confirms opposition to Social Contract

UNTIL very recently, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) was a docile, passive staff association which would never think of militant industrial action. In 1973 the CPSA organised its first ever official national strike, and since then it has moved a long way towards being a militant trade union for 200,000 clerical and allied workers in the Civil Service and other public sector bodies.

The Margate conference of the CPSA, last week, continued this trend.

The Broad Left majority on the National Executive Committee, gained in 1974 for the first time since the witchunt against the Communist Party in the late '40s, was reaffirmed this year. The new NEC is balanced 16-12 in the Broad Left, and changes throughout the union have seen both the Broad Left, and the militant socialists in Redder Tape, take a number of important positions, at Section and Area level. The right wing challenge to the appointment of two left wingers to the posts of Assistant General Secretary and Editor of the union journal, was defeated overwhelmingly.

Victim

Along with a smaller civil service union, the CPSA was the only union to vote against the social contract at the last TUC Congress. At the Margate conference, also, the CPSA adopted — on paper, at least — policies well in advance of more traditionally left wing unions. For example, the Working Women's Charter is now CPSA official policy. There were fierce attacks from the right wing against the clauses in the Charter calling for free contraception and abortion on demand, but nevertheless it passed overwhelmingly.

On another point the delegates went ahead of the Broad Left dominated NEC. They stiffened an NEC motion calling for a closed shop with a commitment to industrial action if negoti-

ations fail.

The CPSA still remains a victim of the traditional white collar unions' prejudice against linking trade unionism with politics on the question of affiliation to the Labour Party. But only just. The motion calling for the setting up of a political fund failed by only 14,000 votes.

The fact that the Broad Left leadership feels a stiff breeze of rank and file militancy pushing it along came out very clearly in a debate concerned with rule 9.4. This rule banning unofficial groupings will probably be removed at the next conference, but at present it stands and attacks under it were brought against both the revolutionary socialist Redder Tape group and the right wing Moderates.

Anonymous

These resolutions were tabled, one of them calling for an inquiry into Redder Tape. Such an inquiry would probably have led to formal charges under rule 9.4 and a bitter fight over the right of rank and file organisation inside the union. The platform evaded such a confrontation by making sure there was time for only one of the three resolutions — one attacking the Moderates for their anonymous circulars.

And in the debate on that resolution the Moderates openly identified themselves as a definite grouping with definite policies — thus, in practice, breaking the taboo on open political debate within the union.

The conference was weakest on the pay issue. The hangover from 25 years' drugged sleep since the cold war witchunt still means that many delegates cannot conceive of any other system of pay negotiations than that of Pay Research (i.e. a system which relies on seeing how well other white collar workers have done, and giving the same to civil servants.) The latest pay offer — at 26% broadly within the terms of the social contract

was accepted, despite the overwhelming support given to the motion opposing the social contract. Many delegates would not have been so euphoric if they had understood Bill Kendall's qualification of his opposition — "opposition as it now is".

Once the present social contract is gone, or modified, the union will be without a policy on government wage controls. Militants within the CPSA will have to fight for a policy of opposition in principle to any state wage restraint under capitalism, and to rouse the membership to enforce that policy by industrial action if necessary.

Stephen Corbishley
(CPSA, British Library)

'Non-aligned' challenge to Rank and File Teacher

AT A TIME when stagnation of the Rank and File teachers' group is resulting in a great deal of internal debate, it comes as no surprise to see the emergence of a group of teachers standing on a "non aligned" platform for the Rank and File Executive Committee, to be elected at the annual conference in June.

It is necessary to understand why this group has emerged and what

precisely they stand for.

There is no doubt that in the past 18 months Rank and File has failed to increase its influence in the schools on a permanent basis. There have been sporadic successes such as the London Allowance campaign and the extension of the sanctions on covering for absent teachers, but these successes have either been one off affairs or else restricted to isolated highly militant areas.

Even where there was success, the concentration of Rank and File newspaper on pure trade union militancy to the exclusion of socialist politics (even on general educational questions, let alone broader issues) meant that when the specific issue dimmed, so did the relevance of Rank and File to classroom teachers involved. There was no discussion or development of political understanding.

This divide between the leading militants and the "shop floor" has been reflected in Rank and File itself. Many members are feeling "left out in the cold". The first official notification that most members got of the Annual Conference came after the deadline for motions, and a handful of branches "in the know" have managed to monopolise the agenda (34 motions out of 40 were sent in by three branches!).

Water down

It is precisely in this atmosphere that the "non aligned" candidates hope to pick up votes. And they will be helped by IS's attempts to water down the politics of Rank and File in order to increase the membership.

It is important that Rank and File members disillusioned with the current state of the organisation think clearly about the politics of the "non aligned" candidates and do not vote for them simply as a means of negating the influence of IS.

What are the politics of this group? Fundamentally they represent the social democratic and liberal tendencies which used to occupy leading positions in Rank and File 18 months to two years ago, since when many of its members have abandoned work in Rank and File only now to re-emerge as an organised group.

Lynchpin

The non-aligned group call for "a return to the assertion that R&F is the socialist wing within the NUT that will work alongside other socialists such as the Communist Party and the Labour Party left etc. where possible". Here are the seeds of the social democratic accommodationist policies which are the lynchpin of this group, one of whom argued against mass lobbies by teachers at the time of the victimisations over Houghton, in favour of the alternative of high level sophisticated legal wrangling.

The "non aligned" group also include two editors of the journal "Radical Education". But for all their 'radicalism', these two (though not the majority of the "Radical Education" group) still refuse to come out clearly for R&F's policy of kicking out National Front members from the NUT and the schools, saying this is still a matter "for debate".

Further the "non aligned" group advocate that no political group should be allowed to have a majority on the R&F EC.

The emergence of this new group will be valuable to the extent that it stirs up debate inside R&F. But what R&F needs is clearer and sharper politics, not the philistine and flabby fear of political groups and political alignments represented by their platform.

Ian Hollingworth

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ASTMS CONFERENCE By fair means or foul...

THE ONLY clear thing that came out of last weekend's Annual Delegate Conference of ASTMS was the ability of the bureaucracy to manipulate the whole thing to their advantage. It was a highly professional job on their part, and the many delegates who were disgusted by it should be preparing now to put in some very hard questions among the membership on the question of union democracy.

Shortly before conference, delegates were sent a programme of business, drawn up by the conference Standing Orders Committee (SOC), which succeeded in cutting out some two thirds of the business on the original agenda, either by compositing or by straight omission. The reason given for this by the SOC was that it had attempted to give 'priority' to the most important business — or, what they considered, the most important business.

The motion on Ireland, calling for troops out and a campaign against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, was completely scrapped, and the SOC refused to take it as an emergency, even though it has been re-passed as such by the branch. The same thing happened to motions calling for election of trainee officers, and deploring the NEC's failure to implement the union's policies on sex and race discrimination.

Card vote defeated

The SOC ruling was challenged at the beginning of the conference, but they replied by threatening chaos if their programme were not accepted.

In the conference itself, the system of reference or remittance of motions to the NEC was used by the bureaucracy on several crucial issues, along with blatant dishonesty from the platform. In the debate on women's rights, there was a motion calling for a National Women's Action Committee, and for maternity and paternity leave provision and adequate day-care facilities for children, under parental union control. It was called into question by the NEC speaker on the grounds that he couldn't see what such things could mean in practice. Therefore, the whole thing should be referred back to the NEC for their consideration.

In the vote on this proposal, a very close show of hands was interpreted by the chair as a clear majority, and calls for a card vote were defeated in the same way. Thus, after all the sentimental verbosity about International Women's Year from the ASTMS leadership, the union has effectively no policy on women's rights from the conference.

A similar procedure was used for motions opposing the social contract. Clive Jenkins successfully moved remittance to the NEC on the grounds that opposition to wage restraint was one thing, but there were positive social benefits to be gained from a social contract properly operated, and these were important. Again, the NEC now have a free hand to pursue whatever policies they like, as conference left all major policy decisions in their hands.

Jenkins used the debate on the social contract to expound his economic policy, which is to urge greater investment in British industry through a NEB which would work in full consultation with the trade union movement — Clive's "cadre of expert negotiators" — and the institution of 'planning agreements' between major companies and the government, to generate this investment, increase efficiency, and competitiveness, and with it wages and social justice.

End private practice

He violently opposed a motion calling for occupation in the event of closures or redundancies, a 35 hour week and a cut in overtime, and nationalisation without compensation. The job of the union was to prevent such things happening, he said, by pressing for new economic policies and new legal structures. Instead of direct action, pleas to the government to install Jenkins' bureaucratic utopia. This appealed the conservatism of most delegates very successfully.

Nastier still was the platform's rebuff to an attempt to suspend standing orders in order that an amendment excluding cooperation with racials in the anti-EEC campaign could be moved. A card vote produced a majority for suspension, but the chairman ruled that the precedent set by Lord Citrine necessitated a two thirds majority for such a step. So forget it.

The only achievement of the conference was the overwhelming support, against the opposition of the NEC, for a motion calling for an end to private practice and the blacking of all private patients' services, an injection of £1000 million into the health service, and the restoration of all cuts, and for elected committees of health service trade unionists to control and deploy all health service resources.

J.W.Harding

OCCUPYING WORKERS LOSE FIGHT FOR JOBS IN LONDON

THE struggle of the Crosfield workers to keep their jobs has been defeated. The north London factory occupation is over.

Their occupation of one of the three Crosfield factories near Archway began when the bosses said they had to get rid of 300 men. The bosses' plan was to move most of the machinery to the main factory in Peterborough.

Over 50 workers were involved in the initial move to occupy. The men moved in over Easter weekend, securing entrances and setting up tight organisation, with disciplined control in the hands of the stewards committee.

But the police and the bosses conspired with the security firm of Burns (who came in with dogs) to snatch some of the machinery in the occupied factory on the night of April 14th.

The response from the official labour movement was slow. Camden Trades

Council didn't get around to discussing the occupation at its last meeting: it was too busy working on the great working class problem of how much money and support to give the Get Britain Out Campaign.

In the face of legal injunctions to get the men out of the factory, North London AUEW finally moved to give active support. A mass picket was called for May 12th.

Ultimatum

But it was too late. The day before, the men had been 'offered' an ultimatum: accept 6-10 men reinstated, and take home a bigger pay packet; OR all the Crosfield factories would be closed down.

This was accepted on Thursday May 15th at a mass meeting in the afternoon. More men joined the dole queue, and many questions of how to organise a fight for jobs remain unanswered.

S.C.