

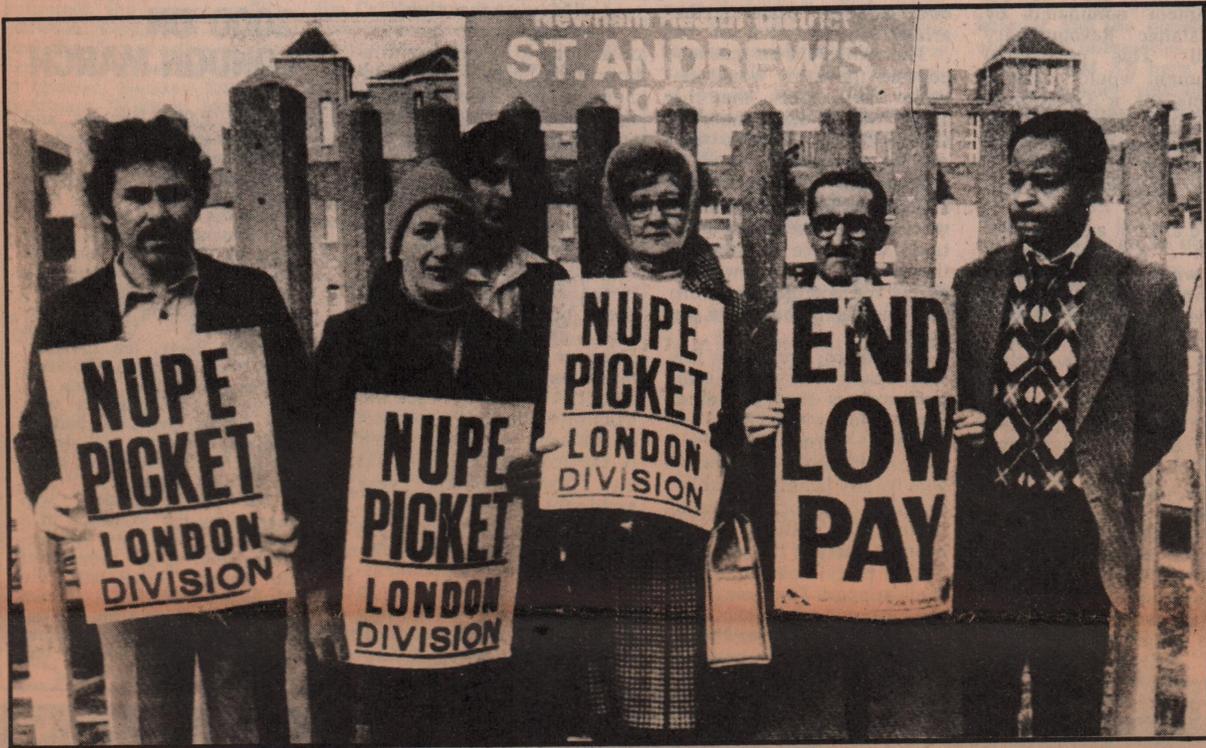
LEYLAND JOIN THE PAY FIGHT

workers' ACTION

No.133

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10p



Don't blame them PAY THEM

LOW-PAID workers are stepping up their action, while well-paid Labour Cabinet ministers sound off about 'excessive pay claims'. Civil service clerical workers — who are, on average, paid even worse than the local authority and health service workers — will be on one-day strike on 23rd February.

British Leyland workers are planning to strike against their bosses' brazen refusal to pay out parity money agreed last December. Miners are pressing for a better wage rise than the 3½% insult which the Government has so far come up with. And teachers' union leaders say they will need a 35% rise to restore 1974 living standards.

The press denounce industrial thugs, wreckers, and greedy workers. Their hypocrisy is so brass-faced that they don't even hesitate when the articles insisting that a £60 minimum wage

would bring rack and ruin appear just opposite reports about how property millionaire Eric Miller doled out gifts worth thousands from his company funds to influential friends like Harold Wilson and Reginald Maudling. According to their ideas, parasites like Miller deserve their millions because of their success in playing the great free-enterprise system, while essential workers are irresponsible if they make any protest against poverty wages.

Meanwhile the leaders of the labour movement are hard at work: not answering the bosses' press lies, not insisting that the £60 demand must be met at the expense of the millionaires, not trying to forge unity between the different workers' struggles — but trying to damp down the struggles and fix up some sell-out deal. The TUC and the Government are hard at work trying

to establish a new Social Contract — another con-trick like the one which cut real wages so drastically between 1975 and 1977.

The TUC right-wingers who last week put out a call for an incomes policy are the outriders and the kite-filers for this effort. But no more. The whole TUC leadership wants to put a brake on the wages struggle.

Last autumn the union leaders decided the Government was going too far with the 5% limit. They opened the taps of militancy. Now they think militancy is going too far.

Their argument is that, according to the opinion polls, the Tories now have a 19% lead, and electoral disaster looms for Labour unless the Government and the unions can fix up a deal.

If the Labour leaders try to compete with the Tories in denouncing trade-union militancy, of course the Tories

will win. If union leaders try to compete with the bosses in telling workers to be moderate and patient, then of course a lot of people are likely to believe the bosses' attacks on the unions

The answer is not a new con-trick, but a drive to unite the struggles round policies which pin the responsibility for capitalist chaos where it belongs, and which point the way to a socialist alternative.

- Build support committees for the strikes
- All-out strike (with proper emergency cover, under workers' control) to win the £60 and 35 hours.
- Bring forward other claims, join the struggle, add industrial muscle to the public service workers' fight
- £60 minimum for all. A shorter working week for all, to end unemployment.
- Reverse the social spending cuts. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'!

BRITISH LEYLAND

They mustn't get away with it

A HUGE wave of anger has swept through the British Leyland workforce with the news that the company's much-vaunted 'parity scheme' will not be paying out.

The parity scheme was the central part of BL's 5% 'package deal' put to a ballot and accepted last December. The first payments were due on February 2nd, and should have amounted to up to £10 a week, plus backdated pay of up to £140, for workers in lower-paid plants.

The company's reasons for cancelling the payment are an insult to the intelligence of every BL worker. Bill Maclean, BL's 'employee relations director', claimed that productivity had been too low to finance the payments and that this had been the case even before the lorry drivers' strike affected production. But only 10 days earlier, Austin-Morris divisional boss Ray Horrocks appeared on TV and said that the drivers' strike was threatening the payments — implying the money was there up until then.

In fact BL sales have been at the unusually high level of 26% of the British car market since the end of 1978. There are over 79,000 unsold cars in stock. BL produced 19½% more cars in 1978 than in 1977, with 15,000 fewer workers.

When the '5%-plus' package was put to the ballot, both the bosses and the unions glossed over the fact that parity had to be 'self-financing'. It was widely understood that the massive job cut-backs made during 1978 would be sufficient to pay for the scheme.

In the statement issued jointly by the company and the trade unions at the time of the ballot, only one short paragraph was devoted to the productivity requirements: "in addition to the completion of the job evaluation exercise, the one further precondition for the movement to parity indicated above is that the additional labour costs generated can be paid for by increased productivity. Current plant discussion on improvement on

labour efficiencies are aimed to achieve this objective". No figures for the required increase in productivity were ever produced.

Now the convenors and officials on the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee, who recommended acceptance of the deal, have been shown up for the fools they are. To retain any credibility they know they must take some action. On Friday 2nd February they recommended an all-out strike, and were widely understood on the shop floor to be giving five days' notice from the 5th, with the strike to start on Friday 9th. This call was stalled by the Combine Committee of convenors and some senior stewards, who met on Monday 5th. The plan now is to give notice of strike on Monday 12th.

At Longbridge, however, a mass meeting on Wednesday 7th voted to come out straight away.

BL workers cannot place any faith in either the Joint Negotiating Committee or the Combine Committee — made up as they are of the very people who negotiated the deal in the first place. A rank and file strike committee, made up of elected representatives from each plant, must be formed to coordinate the action and control all negotiations.

The BL workforce cannot afford a half-cock strike led by the bungling vacillators on the JNC. The company knows that its parity double-cross makes a strike virtually inevitable. Almost certainly it has set out to provoke a strike, reckoning it can win. If it defeats the strike, it will use it to justify cancelling the parity payments for good and, possibly, closing down yet more plants.

That is why BL workers must make sure we win this time. The demands must be for bringing forward all parity payments with no strings; and no more job loss. Any plant threatened with closure should be occupied, with the demand for the reorganisation of production under workers' control to guarantee work-sharing with no loss of pay.

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KHOMEINY RETURNS

Promises, Promises...

A testimonial for Dr. Bakhtiar

To the extent that Shapour Bakhtiar — the man whom the Shah appointed as prime minister — has any credibility at all, it rests on his history as a member of the National Front, the party which claims to represent the tradition of Mohammed Mossadegh's fight against imperialism in the late '40s and early '50s. But this letter, written by a British oil boss in Iran in 1948, shows that even then Bakhtiar was nothing but a stooge.

BY COLIN FOSTER

PRECISELY because he has nothing to say on the future of Iranian society, Khomeiny appears to say everything.

Acclaimed by millions when he arrived in Tehran on Thursday 1st February, Khomeiny addressed them in the cemetery where hundreds of victims of the Shah's army's massacres are buried.

He said that the present Bakhtiar government would be replaced by a provisional government nominated by his 'Islamic Revolutionary Council'. This provisional government would organise elections for a Constituent Assembly. (On February 5th, Khomeiny named Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister of the provisional government).

"We are not against modernism", Khomeiny said, "but we oppose its brutal and immoral aspects".

"We are not against television, cinema, and modernisation, but we are against imperialism. We are not against freedom for women, but we are against prostitution. We are not against co-operation with foreigners, but we want to run our own country".

All his listeners could take away the message that the "good sides" of capitalist development in Iran would remain, but Islamic piety would purge away its "bad sides". Rich merchant or super-exploited worker,

everyone could believe the message, whatever their definition of the good sides and the bad sides.

On the army, Khomeiny said, "We want you to be independent, Mr General, Mr Colonel; don't you want to be independent? Do you prefer to be a lackey? ... What do we want? A free, proud, strong army. Is that a reason to kill those who stand up for the independence and the pride of the army?"

The rich could be reassured that the army would remain; the workers, that the army would stop shooting them if the 'Islamic Republic' came about.

Khomeiny's words on the army must have rung hollow with some of the young militants who were shouting in the streets, only a few days ago: "We said the army were our friends. What fools we were!"

But there are very few voices, as yet, to tell the Iranian workers that the great causes for which they are fighting — freedom, an end to exploitation — cannot be won by any Islamic Republic, but only by a socialist revolution. The official 'Communist' party of the Iran, the Tudeh party, has stated that they support Khomeiny and the Islamic Republic, for "there are no overwhelming differences between scientific socialism on the



Will Khomeiny [right] oust Bakhtiar; and if so, what then?

one hand and the social content of Islam on the other".

They say, "We have no objections to working with a bourgeois party", and even claim proudly (though probably falsely) to have "considerable support" among the bourgeoisie themselves.

The euphoria that reached a high point with Khomeiny's arrival will end soon, as the great promises give way to sordid haggling between the Muslim leaders, their bourgeois allies, the army, and the USA — with Shapour Bakhtiar's government as a powerless fifth wheel. A link-up between the Muslim leaders and a section of the army's officers, which is far from excluded, could end the euphoria very suddenly and very bloodily.

Everything depends on Iranian workers and socialists organising independently, ending the euphoria in their own way, and putting forward a sober socialist programme in place of Khomeiny's demagoguery.

2000 ON LONDON MARCH

ABOUT 2,000 Iranians and British socialists marched in London on Saturday 3rd, demanding an end to all British arms supplies and other support to the Iranian regime.

A statement read out at the start of the march from the four British revolutionary groups which had been involved in organising for the demonstration — the Socialist Workers Party, the International Marxist Group, Workers' Action, and Big Flame — stressed that solidarity with the Iranian workers had to continue. The only real victory for the Iranian revolution could be workers' power.

The demonstration was marred by the exclusion of a left-wing group, the Spartacist League, on the grounds of its slogan 'Down with the Mullahs'. Workers' Action was in a minority on the demonstration planning committee in voting against this exclusion.

Copy

Confidential

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Ltd.

Britannic House
Finsbury Circus
London E.C. 2

EHOE/ KT

1st July, 1948

P.C. Mitchell Esq.

Petroleum Division,
Ministry of Fuel and Power,
7, Millbank, London, S.W.1

My Dear Mitchell,

Referring to your letter PE/148/47 of 5th June concerning a report which you received from Persia about the activities of Mr. Bakhtiar, I have recently received information from our people in Abadan to the effect that the position as reported to you was in their view not so serious as would appear to be from the report in question.

Bakhtiar is considered by our Management in Iran to be carrying out in an able manner the very difficult task of reconciling the conflicting claims of five separate elements namely, employers, an awakening labour force, a Union virtually Government sponsored, the vote-seeking Government group to which Bakhtiar owes his job, and the requirements of ill-drafted and muddled legislation.

Although in these circumstances it is inevitable that he should occasionally speak out of turn, he has not caused our management any serious embarrassment. Indeed, they maintain that they seldom fail to persuade him to adopt a correct point of view over major matters and that he maintains a close personal contact with them.

It would seem, therefore, that such apprehensions as we had following on the report referred to are not in this case justified and that Bakhtiar is serving conflicting interests in as satisfactory a manner as possible under difficult conditions. Our Management also feel satisfied as to his personal probity.

....

E.H.O. Elkington

[An AIOC director and former General Manager,
1929-1937, in Iran]

Source: E 6849/ 4638/ 34/(F.O. 371/ 68738)

*) Khorramshar Diary No 4, 16/4/48-15/5/48.

LITTLE WONDER THE WHITES SAID 'YES'

RHODESIAN whites voted overwhelmingly last week in a referendum to approve a new constitution under which 'one man one vote' elections are to be held in April.

But the 85% vote in favour of the deal between Smith and the black participants in his 'Transitional Government' Muzorewa and Sithole, was not for genuine majority rule. The vote was in favour of Smith's latest device for maintaining white supremacy.

The new constitution will give the quarter-million whites 28 seats in a new 100-member parliament — while the country's six and a half million blacks will elect the remaining 72.

This deal will give the whites, who still maintain a firm grip over the police and army, a massively disproportionate voice. To alter the constitution would require 78 votes in parliament, thus giving the whites a built-in power of veto over any changes.

Furthermore, Smith has declared that he will stay on in the cabinet after any elections.

However, this latest manoeuvre by Smith is threatened by the escalation of the war being fought by the Patriotic Front guerilla armies against the Transitional Government for an independent Zimbabwe with genuine majority rule. On February 1st, Patriotic Front leader Joshua Nkomo declared that the referendum result was simply irrelevant and that the guerilla war is being stepped up.

Nkomo claims that over the last two months the number of Patriotic Front guerillas operating within Rhodesia has doubled and large areas of the country are effectively under their control. His Zimbabwe

People's Liberation Army now controls most of Matabeleland in the west of the country, while Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army controls large areas in the East.

Smith's gerrymander election will only be able to go ahead due to the operation of martial law in three quarters of the country. Under the Terrorism & Public Order Act the armed forces in these areas are allowed to 'make their own laws to help them find and kill terrorists', 'confiscate or destroy property' and 'hold their own courts with ... power to sentence people to jail or death'.

To ensure they win votes, supporters of Muzorewa and Sithole are being organised into 'private armies' trained and equipped by the Rhodesian state.

Smith is also hoping to repeat the techniques recently used by the South Africans in the elections in Namibia. The elections in April will be spread over a number of days to allow the army to make brief incursions into areas that are barely under government control with heavily guarded mobile polling stations and coerce the black population into participating.

Despite such desperate measures, designed to win western support for the 'internal settlement', many whites clearly have little hope in its success and are leaving the country in larger numbers than ever before.

Even David Owen, who had no compunction about backing the reactionary regime of the Shah of Iran, has realised there is little hope of Smith succeeding and has attacked the latest moves.

NIK BARSTOW

Take your partners for the next tango

FOR TEN months the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) has kept the right-wing Christian Democrat government, headed by Giulio Andreotti, in power. Now the PCI has withdrawn support, and the government has fallen.

At first the CP supported Andreotti by abstaining in parliament. Ten months ago the Christian Democrats — the biggest party of the right — agreed to stay in power with direct PCI support. But, said Andreotti, the Christian Democracy would not agree to rule if the PCI were actually in the government.

Now the Communist Party is demanding just that. It wants a government of national unity in which PCI members will hold cabinet posts.

The PCI leaders seem to

have been prepared to tolerate the outsider role — at least until there were indications of an improved electoral performance. But pressure from the party rank and file, who always saw the outsider role as a very short-lived tactic, has forced them to end that role now.

Andreotti will try to cobble together yet another combination of right-wing factions to keep the CD in power without drawing directly on PCI support. He will try to placate the PCI by including a number of PCI nominees — but not members! in the cabinet. There is one obvious option all parties are trying to avoid — new elections now.

The Christian Democrats certainly don't want an election before they have got their

three-year-plan safely through parliament and created — however temporarily — the kind of economic climate that will win the party votes. And the PCI don't want elections while they continue to do poorly in regional polls.

It is impossible to predict what ingenious device the bourgeois parties and the PCI will work out so that they can all save face — in particular so that the PCI can placate its left wing and the CD its right. Central to any tactic of the Italian bourgeoisie and the Communist Party, however, is an intensification of the 'austerity' programme.

In other words, there will be ever sharper attacks on workers' living standards and trade union and civil rights.

While the parliamentary

juggling of ten months ago is being re-enacted, so is the kind of anti-terrorist hysteria that ten months ago surrounded the Moro kidnap and murder.

Every day there is news of more arrests of terrorists. The biggest anti-terrorist demonstration since Moro's killing was held in Genoa last week when 250,000 people marched part the open coffin of Guido Rossa, steel industry shop steward and PCI member said to have been shot by the Red Brigades.

In what was tantamount to a state funeral, President Pertini and the leaders of all major parties and trade union federations huddled round the graveside. Rossa was posthumously awarded the Gold Medal — Italy's VC.

Spectacular actions, dreadful slogans

ON 30th January the police headquarters in the town of Longwy, in eastern France, was besieged. 400 angry workers attacked it, pelting it with paving stones and iron bolts for an hour, while police fired tear gas grenades at them.

That clash came at the end of a trade union demonstration protesting at a police raid on a local steelworks at 4.15 that morning. 300 workers had invaded a joint management-union meeting and staged a sit-in, keeping three bosses prisoner. The police came in to get the bosses out.

The issue at stake is 20,000 jobs. In September the French government did a 'rescue operation' on the steel industry, pumping in millions of pounds of subsidies and taking a share in the industry's

management. In December a plan followed to cut 20,000 jobs. About 5,000 jobs are to go in and around Longwy.

After the stoning of the police station, the unions began to talk about 'outside agitators'. But a series of other spectacular actions have been organised with official union backing. There was a general strike in the Lorraine region on 12th January, and there will be a general strike throughout the steel industry on 16th February.

On several occasions demonstrations have blocked railway lines by emptying freight wagons onto the lines. On one day, 23rd January, there were occupations in the Longwy telephone exchange and in tax offices, steel company headquarters, and rail-

way stations in several other towns in Lorraine.

The crisis in the steel industry is world-wide, and the French workers' fight is in essence an international one. West German steelworkers have just been on strike — unsuccessfully — for a 35 hour week. And the British Steel Corporation's latest plans call for chopping 18,000 jobs.

The fierce anger of the French steelworkers has not been matched by any real political perspective on the part of the trade union leaderships. The French revolutionary weekly *Lutte Ouvrière* reports that on the main demonstration on 12th January,

"The slogans that were shouted most and taken up most were 'Lorraine lives', 'Save Lorraine', 'Giscard,

Barre, Lobé, sold out to foreigners' — the slogans put forward by the French Communist Party. You even heard, 'Lorraine is French' [an anti-German slogan]. Giscard is the French president, Barre the prime minister, Lobé a top steel boss.

The same sort of thing has been heard too often in Britain. Workers in each area campaign — in concert with local businessmen, vicars, shopkeepers, etc — to save 'their' area, with the result that the steel bosses and the Government can play at divide and rule. But the militancy and spirit of the French unions are a lesson to hopeless do-nothings like Britain's steel union leader Bill Sirs.

RHODRI EVANS

The horror stories, the myths ... and the yawns

"UNFORTUNATE". That was the verdict of most speakers at last weekend's East Midlands regional conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists on Jim Callaghan's appeal to workers to cross picket lines.

And apart from that comment, the current conflict between workers in struggle and the 5-per-centers of the Labour Government was largely ignored. Speakers from the dominant 'Militant' tendency told us again and again how horrible it would be if the Tories were to win the next election, and proposed their usual cure-all: calls for the Labour Government to carry out mass nationalisations.

In the debate on Ireland, the Provisional IRA were slandered as 'individual terrorists' who go around 'bombing and shooting workers'. The Northern Ireland trade union movement (which has never done anything about the use of state violence against the Republican movement) was placed on a pedestal and described as "the only organisation upon which Catholic and Protestant workers can rely".

Despite the fact that the Militant-dominated LPYS has done nothing to build a cam-

paign to get the troops out, or to support the Republican prisoners of war, and instead repeats all the lies which the Fleet Street press invents about the IRA, 'Militant' speakers felt that the LPYS had reason to be proud of its record on Ireland. Apparently Jim Callaghan is not the only person in the Labour Party proud to be a scab.

The usual myths were trotted out about the struggle against racism and fascism: the myth that the LPYS is in the forefront of the struggle, that the LPYS contingent defeated the fascists at Lewisham, that black youth is flocking to the banner of the LPYS... plus a new myth about "the magnificent campaign by the LPYS in Leicester", a town where the 'Militant' majority in the LPYS has either failed to support anti-fascist mobilisations, or, when it has turned up, has not put into effect the policy of 'no platform for fascists'.

But most of the time speakers just competed to tell the best horror stories about the Tories, and meanwhile the Government's attempts, here and now, to beat down workers' struggles and limit wages, were lightly passed over.

STAN CROOKE

Gay-bashing in Bradford, Brighton & Scotland ...

ON 10th February a demonstration in Bradford will protest at the blatant frame-up of Frank Kelly, who has been charged with buggery and indecent assault of a male under 21 years of age. Frank Kelly is a well-known anti-racist and activist in the gay community in Bradford.

Kelly signed a 'confession' after being beaten up in the police cells and interrogated for 30 hours. It was only after the police told him that he was being transferred to Armley Prison as a 'child molester' and that there would be a 'reception committee' to meet him at the prison that he 'confessed'.

The case has a particularly nasty twist to it which shows how the police never hesitate to use people who are in a vulnerable position because of racist laws. The main evidence against Kelly is a statement by Shaikat Ali, an illegal immigrant. At the time he made it, Ali was facing a Home Office inquiry into his right to remain in this country.

In the statement he said that he had sexual intercourse with a man called 'David'. When the police first arrested Kelly, they called him 'David'. It was only by looking through their files of anti-racist activists that the police were convinced that he was Frank Kelly.

There is no doubt that the police put pressure on All with the aim of putting Frank Kelly behind bars. How long Kelly may go down for will depend on whether the police can find out whether All is over 16 or not. His age has variously been given between 13 and 17. If All is shown to be under 16, then under the Sexual Offences Act 1967, the penalties are heavier and the question of consent is immaterial.

Kelly and All have never had a sexual relationship. But even if they had had such a relationship, they should still be defended. There has been no allegation of force or rape in the case. It demonstrates quite clearly how the law can be used by

the state to divide and weaken the fight against racism and anti-gay bigotry.

★ *Demonstration, Saturday 10 February: 2pm from Leeds Rd Vicar Lane, Bradford.*

A RECENT article in the *Brighton Evening Argus* shows just how far anti-gay bigotry can go. Five gay clubs have recently been closed down in Brighton, and in the past two weeks, 50 gay people have been arrested. These attacks on the rights of gay people culminated last week in the National Front attacking a showing of the gay film, 'Word Is Out'. They assaulted eight people, two of whom had to be taken to prison.

The next day the *Argus* commented editorially, "some people still hold strong views on homosexuality". Not until after a picket of its offices did the newspaper print any word of condemnation of the NF violence.

UNDER Scottish law it is a crime for men to have sexual relations with men. The Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, formerly the Scottish Minorities Group, has been campaigning to end this situation.

The group has adopted a charter including:

- Equal rights under the law for gays;
- Protection of employment. (The General Teaching Council for Scotland has a long record of striking gays off the register because of the 'crime' of 'sexual offences')
- Sex education in schools;
- Ending discrimination in housing and child custody.

The campaign sees the importance of fighting for support in the labour movement, and approaches have been made to Edinburgh Trades Council to set up a series of trade-union seminars on gay rights.

Meanwhile, three gay people, two men and one woman, have decided to put the Government in the dock for infringement of human rights. Their case has been accepted by the European Court in Strasbourg.

... and in Brazil

IT APPEARS that 'Lampiao de Esquire', Brazil's first serious gay newspaper, may be forced out of existence after only eight months.

The paper's policy has been to avoid pornography and eroticism, but despite this, and maybe because of this, the authorities have been incensed by what they call 'homosexual propaganda', and have already subpoenaed five of the editor-

ial staff with a view to a trial on charges of outrage to public morality.

Two of the most influential Brazilian papers, 'Jornao da Brazil' and 'O Globo', have published articles on the subject, suggesting that the ultimate aim of the department of Federal Police (which has investigated the inquiry) is to shut down the paper by intimidation and economic pressure,

such as the seizure of one complete issue (15,000 copies), rather than by the process of a formal trial.

The editorial staff of the paper have told us that "the solidarity of friends from foreign countries has a deep meaning for us", and that the Brazilian government is susceptible to pressure from

abroad. The staff of 'Lampiao' and the members of the London Gay Activists' Alliance therefore request that letters of protest be sent to the Minister of Justice, Ministro Armando Falcao, Ministerio da Justica, 70064 Brasilia DF, Brazil.

RICHARD PROUT
MIKE YOUNG
for the London Gay Activists' Alliance.

Socialist Organiser

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LAST WEEK angry Asian women lobbied Home Secretary Merlyn Rees. Under immigration rules, fiancées get immediate entry, while wives have to wait at the end of a long queue — so the immigration officers have been imposing virginity tests, to check that fiancées are not really wives...

Would they do this to white women?

HOME Secretary Merlyn Rees last week ordered a rapid halt to vaginal examination of women immigrants. This followed the disclosure in the *Guardian* that an Asian woman had undergone such an ordeal at Heathrow Airport two weeks ago to 'determine whether she was a fiancée'.

The initial response of the Home Office was to justify the practice on the grounds that it helped to weed out illegal immigrants. Indeed, it was not possible to deny that vaginal examinations have been used, since the Heathrow Immigration Office has a special form for the purpose of getting women to 'consent'.

But what about Labour

Minister Rees? Maybe he personally was unaware of what was going on? He certainly tried to give that impression when the matter was raised in the House of Commons: he ordered an inquiry into it.

In fact, according to Mary Dines, formerly a worker for the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, she told Merlyn Rees about the tests in 1968 (when he was a junior Minister in the Home Office), and he promised to do something about it. He did nothing whatever — until the *Guardian* exposé and the picket of the Home Office last Friday (3rd) by Asian women and anti-racists.

Behind the *Guardian* revelations were the Indian

Workers' Association (Southall), and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. In a statement this week these organisations point out that the humiliation of Asian women through these 'virginity tests' is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a battery of measures designed to harass and degrade blacks who have the 'nerve' to come to this country.

They also explain that the immigration officers' concern to exclude as many people as possible — rather than allow one black person 'too many' to get through the door — follows inevitably from the way that both Tory and Labour leaders have for years peddled the idea that

black immigration is a terrible threat.

The IWA and the JCWI go on to call for the publication of the Government's secret instructions to immigration officers, and for an independent inquiry into the conduct and control of the immigration service.

But the function of official inquiries into issues like this is always to bury them, not to clarify them. Racist immigration checks stem from the very existence of immigration controls, implemented on racist assumptions by a racist state. We need a campaign in the labour movement and immigrant communities for the complete removal of all immigration controls.

RADIO BOOST FOR FRONT IN L'POOL

'RADIO City' in Liverpool gave massive coverage to a visit by National Front leader John Tyndall to Merseyside on the weekend of 3rd-4th February.

On the Saturday, an interview in which he announced a NF recruiting drive and election candidates in Edge Hill, Walton, and Wallasey, was made the lead item on the hourly news bulletins.

In the evening the NF held a meeting in a British Rail social club. 170 of their members turned up, but they had booked the club under a phony name.

The stewardess of the club said: "I was conned, there's no other word for it... as soon as they arrived it was obvious they were the National Front. I would never have accepted the booking if I'd known who they were". She ordered them out, turned off the lights, and called the police — who later persuaded the fascists to leave.

They were greeted outside by a protest, called at very short notice, by 50 antifascists.

BAS HARDY

Don't play games with racism

West Bromwich is one of the National Front's strongest areas. But NF chants are not heard at West Bromwich Albion's ground as they are at many other grounds. The NF must recognise that a policy which involves the 'sending home' of three WBA stars — black players Brendan Batson, Laurie Cunningham and Cyrille Regis — would not be too popular with Albion fans.

It is not, however, as simple as Mr. David Chakravarti of the Birmingham Community Relations Council would have it. 'You can't have a black hero and hate the blacks'. West Brom still has fans who are NF supporters. It may be contradictory, but then racism usually is.

And West Brom manager Ron Atkinson has just proposed a testimonial match between an all-white team (West Brom's team with

Batson, Cunningham and Regis replaced by white substitutes) and an all-black team (the Albion trio plus eight others).

A local Community Relations Council chairman, Bob Badham, has already condemned this match, saying it 'could easily be used by certain sections of the community to make political capital'. Many black people relish the opportunity to see a team of black players... who would probably win. But Badham is right in condemning the match, though his reasons are wrong.

The social-democratic/Community Relations approach starts from two premises: one, that blacks should not be seen as different from whites — they should try to be as 'white' and 'respectable' as possible; two, conflict must be avoided at

all costs, whether between race and race or class and class.

But in fact there is no way that the match will aid black people and the fight against racism. The teams are to be chosen purely on racial grounds, with the implicit follow-up — in a society where racism and chauvinism are rife — that you should support your own racial team.

Only because of racism could such a match be proposed. Except for a casual kick-around, nobody would suggest a game between left-footed footballers and right-footed ones, or brown-haired and blond footballers, or any such thing.

The black team may win, or the white one may. Whatever happens, racism will win and anti-racism will lose.

JIM MORRIS

THE NAZI WHO HUNGERS FOR BYGONE GLORY

ROBERT RELF, 'race rebel' and darling of the press in 1976 for defying a court order to take down a sign advertising his house for sale to an English family only, was in court again last week.

This time he was found guilty on charges of publishing material likely to stir up race hatred, within the terms of the revised Race Relations Act. He was sentenced to 15 months' jail, while his pal and co-defendant, British Movement fascist Michael Cole, received a suspended sentence and a small fine.

In 1976 Relf was freed after a hunger-strike campaign orchestrated by the National Front, with generous help from Fleet Street. Since that victory Relf has been eager to find himself back in court. But this time, despite promises

by former British Movement boss Colin Jordan that Relf will fast again and 'could be dead within 50 days', the media have so far paid scant attention.

It is likely that Relf will find difficulty getting the kind of sympathy he once won from the press: along with the Government, Fleet Street seems for the time being concerned to rebuild the battered credibility of the race relations industry. Besides, there are bigger fish to fry: Martin Webster of the National Front is due in court soon on similar charges.

It would be unfortunate if Relf gave up his hunger strike before those 50 days are over. Readers should consider dropping him a line letting him know how keen they are that he keeps it up this time.

JAMES RYAN

LOW PAY LOW PAY LOW PAY

STRIKE ROUND-UP

YES, WE CAN

Manchester

ACTION BY hospital workers in Manchester has hit hard throughout the area. Most hospitals are operating emergency services only, and one major hospital, Salford Royal Infirmary, has warned that it is faced with total closure if the dispute does not end quickly.

To combat the effect of the strike, the Area Health Authority and local hospital administrators have opened their doors to a "Mum's Army" of volunteers. These heroic and dedicated strike-breakers are performing many of the essential ancillary jobs to the resounding applause of the local business community and Press. Nearly every day the Manchester Evening News has carried their sob-stories and published pictures of them. But anti-strike 'idealism' and press plaudits are not enough. The volunteers are actually being funded by the Tory-controlled Greater Manchester Metropolitan Council. In a statement to the Evening News, Arnold Fieldhouse, Tory leader of the Council, admitted that it is providing money to cover "volunteers' expenses". Quite how much he wouldn't say.

Such strike-breaking activities are not surprising coming from a Tory council — but far worse is that Labour councillors supported the move. This has outraged many Labour Party activists in the area. Already a resolution has been successfully moved through a local Labour Party branch asking Withington CLP to condemn the Labour councillors concerned and demand they review their decision. Similar resolutions are being moved in other constituencies.

The past year has seen many attempts by constituency parties in the Manchester area to bring into line their councillors, who often flout official Party policy with impunity. This latest incident should harden the determination of Labour activists to make sure that councillors really represent the views of those who work to get them elected. Now is the time to say that enough is enough.

■ ■ ■
USDAW members at CWS Packing are calling on the Trades Council to establish a support committee for the low-pay action.

Meanwhile, action spreads. The Housing Department has suspended all repairs on account of a work to rule in the Direct Works Department... though many tenants will hardly notice it, so drastically has the department been cut back in the past few years.

Bus workers in Manchester are also continuing their series of lightning strikes. All services stopped on Friday 2nd and Monday 5th.

G&MWU dustmen are continuing their all-out strike action in Manchester, and it is likely to spread to Bury and Rochdale.

JOHN DOUGLAS

Rochdale

The strike in Rochdale's hospitals is being stepped up in response to the council's use of volunteer strike-breakers. The Health Authority was bragging that 'service is better than usual'. This angered laundry workers, cooks and cleaners, who are now on all-out strike.

The organisers of the 'death to secondary pickets' march in Bury on 20th January, against the lorry drivers' strike, have now turned their attention to the council workers. On Saturday 3rd twelve members of a "Housewives' Campaign against the Strikes"

went to London to present a petition to Callaghan.

The 'non-political' organiser of the group, Olive Avery, who said their activities would be 'ladylike and peaceful', turns out to be a close friend of Elsie McBriar, the National Front's parliamentary candidate in Bury.

SUE ARNALL

NEWHAM

ALL NEWHAM schools were closed last Thursday and Friday (1st and 2nd) as a joint NUPE-TGWU-GMWU strike committee swung into action. Their tactic is to bring out the caretakers only. The cleaners and the dinner ladies can't get into school, but they're not on strike so they should still get paid. The strike committee levies the cleaners and dinner ladies 5% of their wages to finance the strike fund.

But the Education Authority is up to dirty tricks. Attempts are likely to be made to lay off cleaners, dinner ladies, and teachers, if the schools are shut for more than ten days. What is more, the two days of strike so far have been designated "occasional holidays". This means that cleaners and dinner ladies get paid half rates and the two days are taken out of the teachers' half-term! School workers are up in arms about this.

Thirty left wing teachers met last Thursday (1st) and formed themselves into an action group. Since then we have heard that the strike action is continuing from Monday 5th, with a counter offensive by the employers in the shape of attempting to open one of the borough's sixteen comprehensive schools where the caretaker is not in one of the unions involved.

What is needed here is a dose of secondary picketing, with workers and teachers from other schools in the borough joining in.

The local NUT's Annual General Meeting is this week, and the Action Group has drafted an emergency motion calling on all NUT members to refuse to enter any school where members of the three low-paid unions are involved in an action, whether or not there is a formal picket line. It calls on the NUT Executive to bring forward the teachers' salary claim for a common struggle, and asks all NUT members in the borough to give 5% of their salary to the strike fund.

We must, together with the strike committee, make it quite clear that we will tolerate no victimisation of any union member, NUT, NUPE or whatever, who ignores official union advice and observes the cardinal trade union principle of never crossing a picket line.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

Nottingham

THE ONLY effective action that has been allowed so far in our NUPE branch (Social Services) is an overtime ban by van drivers. After a scare story put out by County Hall that the vans were used to transport kidney machines, the union's Assistant Divisional Officer ordered the drivers to lift the ban, without even checking on the facts. At weekends, in fact, the vans are mainly used to shift furniture about, and never for kidney machines.

After this was made clear, the ban was officially reinstated, though with conditions attached about keeping up 'meals on wheels' services.

At Rushcliffe Comprehensive School, the caretaker has been out, stopping supplies of oil and coke, since Thursday 1st February. Now the regional office is telling him to get back

to work on Wednesday — the very day when the supplies would have run out and the place closed.

And the regional office is instructing dustmen, on all-out strike in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe, not to picket the one depot which is still at work.

Our strike committee has been fighting a running battle with the regional office. They have refused to distribute the committee's material on the grounds that the union rules do not allow branches to correspond with each other except through official channels. The Assistant Divisional Organiser, Tony Morris, didn't stop there: he sent out a circular telling members not to go to a meeting of the strike committee being held on Friday 9th!

Militants have organised a Campaign for Action in NUPE group, which is producing regular bulletins.

The main action on the picket line in Nottingham has been at Toothill comprehensive school, near Bingham, where pickets have been attacked, arrested, and pilloried in the local press. The workers at the school staged an unofficial walk-out last week and are now staying out.

One parent, an ex-police sergeant, drove his car at the picket line, scattering the workers. The anti-union Nottingham Evening Post splashed his story on the next day's front page: 'Pickets made my child cry'.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Pickets at the school have been warning parents of the dangers of sending their children into the school because of the temporary gas heaters the authority has fitted. Already two children have suffered asthma attacks as a result of fumes from the heaters, and others have fainted.

Another driver charged the picket line on Monday 5th, and an area officer of NUPE, John McQuiggan, chased after him to complain. The driver turned out to be a police superintendent, who then charged John with threatening him.

TIM THORPE [NUPE]

Birmingham

THE MAJOR effect of the low-pay campaign in Birmingham is in the hospitals. The Accident Hospital ancillary staff began an all-out strike on Monday 5th. Management tried to use volunteer strike-breakers. Pickets have responded by stopping all but emergency supplies. Only emergency cases are being admitted.

Telephonists at East Birmingham hospital are only taking calls which they consider to be emergencies, and ambulance crews at all but two stations around Birmingham are handling emergency cases only.

On Tuesday 6th, 9,000 CoHSE members joined the dispute with a number of walk-outs taking place. 100 nurses walked out of the East Birmingham hospital at mid-day.

DOUG MACKAY

HARINGEY

SCHOOL and college caretakers in Haringey (north London) have decided to continue their strike action. All schools and colleges in Haringey are closed. The caretakers have also been joined by other local authority manual workers, including dustcart drivers, in Haringey.

Haringey's Labour Council says it will shortly be issuing a leaflet to all the parents in the borough, explaining the situation and indicating support for the local authority manual workers' pay-claim.

JOHN BLOXAM

THE LOCAL authority and health service workers' low-pay battle is entering its fourth week, and there are more and more signs that victory is possible.

Action is spreading. Despite scurrilous press attacks, hospital workers are among the most militant. Sewage and water workers, who have more industrial muscle, are joining the action in greater numbers.

The water workers have

been offered 16%, and negotiations are continuing. The Government, which only a few weeks ago was trying to stand firm on 5%, is hinting at 10% for local authority and health service workers.

A few local authorities — Labour ones like Norwich and Basildon, and Tory ones like Medway — have offered to make local settlements at between 10% and 14%, on the basis of paying any excess in the local settlement

over the money won nationally out of the rates.

Clearly the money is there. There is no Law of Nature which says that the community's most essential workers must get by on poverty, or below-poverty, wages, while bankers and financiers rake in millions from the interest payments made to them by local and central government.

In a scraping-the-barrel attempt to ease the pressure, Denis Healey and Jim Call-

aghan have that big pay in better in res small ones, tion just erod The dishonest you look at which Healey have recently lonalised inc and top armed They didn't ge ing back the o note saying, ' be just as well



Schoolkids and parents from Haringey (where all schools are closed) demonstrate at Downing St in support of the low-pay strikers. In Newham, a 300-strong teachers' union meeting has voted overwhelmingly to respect picket lines and to help form flying pickets to close schools opened by the authorities in an attempt to break school-workers' strikes.



A by

NIK BARST the TUC appeal for an policy.

THE T.U.C. against all wa did the Labour ence, and m ferences.

But no rig leader worth small thing bother him. right wingers lished a d Better Way''



WE JUST HAD TO CALL A HALT

by **CHARLIE SORELL** [NUPE shop steward, Leicester Royal Infirmary]

WORKERS in the National Health Service have a strong sense of loyalty to the job, because it is about providing care for the sick, not profits for the bosses. We do not need well-off Fleet Street hacks and right-wing politicians — people who would never consider doing a job like ours or living on a wage like ours — to give us lessons on the importance of caring.

But because of our loyalty — and the way Governments exploit it — health service employees are among the lowest paid in the country. There comes a point at which a halt must be called: health service workers also have a loyalty to their families.

Even now, in my own hospital in Leicester, many workers are horrified about the reports of all-out strike action in the big cities like London, Manchester, and Birmingham. Partly this is because of the distorted reports in the press... and the failure of the unions to produce national strike bulletins giving a true account. Partly it is because workers in the big cities, where the labour movement is stronger, tend to see the need for trade-union action more easily.

But every health service worker understands what the action is about.

We can't take action without harming the patients at least slightly. For many the answer is to look for another job. The turnover rate in hospitals is very high.

But that can't be an answer for everyone. And these days many cannot find other jobs. All that is left is to strike or go slow or work to rule to get a decent wage.

Now that the initial emotional barriers are down, this action will continue until the strike is won.

LOW PAY LOW PAY LOW PAY

CAN WIN!

been arguing increases are no terms than because infla- s their value. is obvious if he 25% rise and Callaghan given to nat- industry bosses forces chiefs. anyone send- and 20% with a No thanks, I'll off with 5%".

And when profits rose 80% over the last three years, there weren't any bosses suggesting they would have been just as well off getting profit increases which were in line with the Government's norm for pay rises.

Prices will rise whether wages lag behind them or get ahead of them. The only answer is to make sure wage stay ahead. The best way to do that is to demand a

clause in every wage agree- ment saying that wages are adjusted monthly, with a £1 increase for every 1% rise in the cost of living. In the meantime, low-paid workers need the full £60 as a mini- mum to protect themselves against inflation.

The £60 and 35 hours can be won. It should be won now, and quickly. All-out strike action, with proper provision under strike com- mittee control for emergency

cover; refusal on the part of the unions to allow the strongly-placed water work- ers to be dealt with separ- ately from the whole low-pay dispute; and an appeal to other workers, with more industrial muscle, to come out in support of the public sector workers — these are the steps needed to win with minimum harm to patients and to all working people who depend on those public services.



stab in the back by TUC right wing

W analyses right wing's incomes

The gist of their idea is that yearly TUC-Government-CBI talks should decide on a norm for pay rises, plus a limited list of exceptions for special-case, above-the-norm rises. A new Prices and Incomes Board would super- vise this agreement.

The document as it stands is wildly unrealistic: It calls for strict price controls and for Government action to direct 'excess' profits into chosen investment projects or profit-sharing schemes. Its pay-talks system is based on the West German system;

but Britain does not have the 'advantage' of a trade union movement which was smash- ed by fascism and recon- structed on American spec- ifications after World War 2. The West German system, anyway, has come closer and closer to breakdown recent- ly, as German workers have fought back.

But the aim of the docu- ment — as of Transport Min- ister William Rodgers' speech calling for a pay freeze — is to fly a kite, to get the idea of new pay con- trols into circulation, and thus to increase the Govern-

ment's range for man- oeuvre in its talks with the TUC. Almost certainly the Government is behind the document; a junior Min- ister, John Grant, got it together.

The document is to be cir- culated to Trades Councils and Constituency Labour Parties. It could lead to some useful discussions, if Labour and trade union activists use it to recall some elementary truths about wages, profit, and exploitation — element- ary truths which the right- wingers try so hard to blur over.



STRIKE ROUND-UP

BRENT

A MASS meeting of Brent (north-west London) council workers on Monday 5th decided to take all-out strike action from the 6th for a week (except for school caretakers, who will start their strike on Wednesday 7th in order to give parents one day's notice of the closures that will result). NUPE, the T&GWU, and the G&MWU are all involved.

PETE FIRMIN

EDINBURGH

THE LOTHIAN Health Board has restricted admissions to emergency cases only, as the action continues with a work to rule in Edinburgh South Hos- pitals. Action is being stepped up by refusal to use time clocks, but branch officials feel more should be done. Rank and file hospital workers in the area are producing a bulletin, 'The Needle'.

NUPE officials in Scotland are arguing for 'highly select- ive action' to cause 'the maxi- mum disruption by calling out the minimum number of work- ers'. So far 350 of NUPE's members are on official strike, mainly in water and sewage plants.

From Thursday 1st, five men at the Paites Hill water filtration station near West Calder have been on strike. Now all drinking water in West Lothian has to be boiled.

All treatment of sewage effluent has been stopped in Edinburgh after 20 NUPE members at the Seafield Rd sewage works walked out, as did workers at plants in Wally- ford and Newbridge. 50 million gallons of untreated sewage are being pumped into the Firth of Forth every day.

East Midlothian refuse col- lection broke down on Friday 2nd after 19 NUPE members at the Stobe Hill cleansing depot walked out.

JOHN MACDONALD [NUPE]

CARDIFF

DUSTMEN and road sweepers in the G&MWU are on strike and regional officials of the union estimate that 90% of all refuse collections in South Wales have been suspended. Cardiff council has announced plans to organise volunteers to break the strike, but G&M members say they will put on pickets to stop any strike- breakers.

In south Gwent, the health authority has claimed that action by NUPE members will force hospitals to close. NUPE official Stuart Barber said the authority was lying. NUPE members are 'maintaining emergency cover, and any closures will be management decisions'.

Hospital authorities at the Heath hospital in Cardiff joined the attempts to break the strike, ordering nurses to cover work normally done by ancillaries. Nurses refusing were threatened with the sack.

STEVE LEHARNE

COVENTRY

THE HOSPITAL porters are staying out on strike for a fur- ther week, and ambulance crews will be dealing with emergency services only from 7th February.

The NUPE nurses' section is still very new and 'struck on dedication', so that means we're tied down at the mo-

ment by a no-strike policy that a lot of the nurses support. But no strike does not mean no action. Nurses are going to explain the low-paid case to workers at the British Leyland Canley plant on the 7th, collect- ing signatures for a petition in support of the claim.

JENNIE LONG [NUPE]

LEICESTER

AT THE City General Hospital the NUPE porters came on strike over the weekend 3rd-4th after a proposed joint gos- low with CoHSE fell through. Refuse collectors are only burning infected waste and human tissue.

At the Royal Infirmary, the NUPE porters are working to rule, and CoHSE are partially supporting this. Refuse col- lectors have not been burning anything since the 22nd, and have been collecting only from clinical areas. It looks as if they will be out on strike from Monday 5th.

Other workers have been taking action but are facing stalling tactics by the union leaders. Water workers at Anstead Lane were ordered back to work by Alan Fisher, having refused to go back initially when told to by their local officials. Dustmen are planning to strike, but are still waiting for the go-ahead from the union's regional office.

CHARLIE SORELL [NUPE]

LIVERPOOL

LIVERPOOL grave diggers have gone back to work after a vindictive press campaign. But the return to work was carried by a very narrow vote amongst the GMWU members involved. Together with grave- diggers who also returned to work in Tameside, Greater Manchester, they declared that if the local authority manual workers didn't get a satisfac- tory offer within four weeks they would strike again — this time, indefinitely.

Car park attendants at three of Liverpool's largest car parks began an indefinite strike last Friday, 1st. The 28 workers, all disabled, were angered after a manager crossed their picket line on a scheduled one- day action on Friday and put up 'honesty boxes' for motor- ists to pay.

Barbara WOJCIECHOWSKA

USDAW

WHILE poorly paid members of NUPE and the GMWU are taking action for £60 and a 35 hour week, members of USDAW are being told by our retiring general secretary, Lord Allen, to 'pledge our- selves to making 1979 the year of achievement'.

How? Why, by getting 'ac- cepted the view that British productivity and innovation can be made to pay personally and nationally'.

No mention of the bakers' fight or struggles of other low- paid workers, still less the possibility of achieving £55 for 35 hours, which is USDAW policy!

The message is clear: if there is no increased product- ivity, then we get only piddling increases, plus threats of shut- downs and unemployment. The bosses couldn't say it better themselves. Lord Allen is on the board of the BBC and the British Airports Authority. He won't go hungry when he retires.

The Broad Left in USDAW are standing Audrey Wise MP for the presidency and John Dilkes as general secretary this year. Audrey Wise's record as an activist is well- known. She was arrested on

the Grunwick picket line. However, on the Govern- ment's scabbing on workers, its use of troops in strikes, and its pro-capitalist policies, she has nothing to say.

The Broad Left is USDAW should stress the lessons of the Social Contract — which meant wage cuts, mass un- employment, and increased profits for the bosses. It should also come out clearly against productivity deals and selling jobs. The 35 hour week and a minimum wage should not just be campaigning slogans to attract new members, but targets to organise and fight for.

Both Audrey Wise and John Dilkes commit themselves to increasing union democracy. Audrey Wise has said that a conference for women mem- bers of the union, who are in the majority, could be set up.

An USDAW women's con- ference is necessary, but it must organise action rather than just pass motions.

A motion to the USDAW Annual General Meeting from CWS Packing, Manchester, calls for a new target of £70 and a 35 hour week — and for a recall conference in October to decide action if this claim is not met. The Broad Left should support this motion.

JOHN DOUGLAS

NUT

AFTER initially telling its members to respect ancillary workers' picket lines, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) now says that the ancillary workers' union, NUPE, doesn't mean the picket lines to apply to teach- ers or pupils. NUT members should cross the pickets but not do the work normally done by those on strike, like starting up the boilers or cleaning the classrooms.

The NUT's about-turn on crossing picket lines appar- ently came as a result of statements by NUPE lead- ers. In its usual mealy- mouthed and ultra-legalistic 'Advice to Members', the NUT 'Action' Committee says: 'If any local pickets should attempt to stop Union members entering their plate of work, the pickets should be told of the... state- ments made by the NUPE officials, and teachers should proceed to enter the school'.

Such advice is calculated to drive a wedge between classroom teachers and those other school workers current- ly in dispute. In that respect the NUT is doing exactly the same job as the employers, with their attempts to take days lost through this strike out of teachers' holidays. And what chance does such union advice give for poss- ible solidarity action over the teachers' own claim for 35%, which comes up in the next month or so?

It appears that the union Executive have deliberately pitched the pay claim figure so high that it has no credi- bility with the mass of the membership. That way the Executive don't have to organise a fight — they can claim there's no support for it! In the *Guardian* of Satur- day 4th February there was a letter from a group of snivell- ing teachers who say the off- icial claim is irresponsible and that we should all stick to 5%.

Unfortunately for the union officials, though, rank and file NUT members are aware of the need for solid- arity, and for a serious fight to protect their living standards.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

by GORDON BREWER and JAMES DAVIES

"IN ALL the countries during the war", wrote Lenin in 1917, "there has been observed — notwithstanding the gagging of mouths and the ruthless persecution by the bourgeoisie — a trend of revolutionary internationalism. This trend has remained loyal to Socialism..."

"To this trend belong, for example, Maclean in England, who has been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment with hard labour... Karl Liebknecht in Germany... [and] the Bolsheviks of Russia..."

To Lenin, John Maclean embodied the British revolution and the spirit of internationalism. Yet today, the left wing of the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Labour Party of Jim Sillars have 'adopted' Maclean and stamped his image on the coinage of petty nationalist small change.

Maclean was above all a dedicated propagandist for Marxism, to which he was won at the beginning of the century. He joined Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation in 1903, after it had lost many of its members to the Socialist Labour Party.

Maclean — a school teacher by profession — was the best sort of revolutionary intellectual, coupling tireless concern for theoretical rigour, absolute refusal to 'talk down' to the working class, and total identification with the industrial working class and immersion in its struggles.

He soon threw himself into the SDF's educational work, giving speeches and conducting classes in economics and industrial history. Not being an industrial trade unionist, he joined the cooperative movement.

Through this as well as through the local SDF branch, he campaigned for socialists on the school boards that had been established by the Liberal Education Act.

But above all he fought to establish in Scotland an equivalent of the Central Labour College which had been set up in 1909 as a result of the students' strike at Ruskin College, Oxford. Those who insisted on a Marxist education left Ruskin to start the CLC.

In and around Glasgow the great agitational issues were housing and unemployment. Maclean was tireless in campaigning on both — always linking them with explanation of basic Marxist ideas. In 1910, for instance, he argued:

"I am one of those who believe that we ought to have a law of minimum wages, but ever increasing with every increase in prices... and a law of maximum hours, ever falling with increased productivity. Tom Mann does right to insist on this... for the organised workers... and for the absorption of those as yet unorganised". This fight "would bring to the surface the fact that the producer creates profit, and would thus enable us to raise to eminence the fight of the workers against the capitalists". In contrast, he argued, the false demand for price controls could be justified only from "the point of view opposed to Marxism, that profits are the result of fleecing the consumer. Such a fight would blur over the class issue entirely..."

The struggle that gained John Maclean the admiration of Lenin was the struggle against war and chauvinism. It began in 1910, when Maclean's branch of the SDF protested against the agitation by the SDF's leader, Henry Hyndman, for a bigger and bigger British navy.

Hyndman's pro-imperialism was then the laughing-stock of the parties of the Socialist (Second) International. Yet it would be only four years before nearly all of them would end up, like Hyndman, beating the war drum of patriotism.

After 1911 the SDF, having fused with a number of smaller groups, became the British Socialist Party (BSP). Inside the BSP, the opposition to Hyndman's rank chauvinism centred on the non-English members like Theodore Rothstein and Zelda Kahan.

Maclean, however, almost alone actually undertook the task of exposing the warmongers directly to the workers. He and his comrade Jimmy MacDougall spoke at factory gates and at stormy public meetings. At the same time they organised relief for destitute dependents of soldiers.

With the war underway and the BSP's paper, *Justice*, firmly in the grip of the clique round Hyndman, the anti-war majority of the Glasgow branch had no more use for it. As a parting shot Maclean wrote in *Justice*:

"In last week's *Justice* Belfort Bax exhorts us to 'hate the present Prussian military and bureaucratic state-system'. Our first business is to hate the British capitalist system that, with 'business as usual' means the continued robbery of the workers... It is mere cant to talk of German militarism when Britain has led the world in the navy business..."

"It is our business as socialists to develop 'class patriotism', refusing to murder one another for a sordid world capitalism. The absurdity of the present situation is surely apparent when we see British socialists going out to murder German socialists with the object of crushing Kaiserism and Prussian militarism. The only real enemy of Kaiserism and Prussian militarism... was and is German social democracy. Let the propertied class, old and young alike, go out and defend their blessed property. When they have been disposed of, we of the working class will have something to defend, and we shall do it!"

In his anti-war activity as in everything else, Maclean combined patient basic propaganda with breathtaking organisational energies. After the Conscription Bill was passed, Glasgow became the centre of the anti-conscription campaign. Maclean's meetings were so packed that he had to run two per night. At these he put forward his position: an immediate armistice, no annexation and no indemnities. The workers could end war by overthrowing the capitalist class, he stressed.

Meanwhile on Sunday afternoons the Economics class he ran was attended by nearly 500 workers.

Despite persecution and arrests, John Maclean stamped out the simple truth the opportunists of the labour movement could not face. Tirelessly he dashed from meeting to meeting to explain that war and exploitation were inextricably linked. The duty of the working class of Britain was to the other workers of the world and not the bloodsucking capitalist class.



John Maclean speaking at Glasgow Green, May Day 1923

Agitate, Educate, Organise, the life of John Maclean

Maclean has been 'adopted' by every sort of 'left' Scottish nationalist. They remember his advocacy of Scottish independence in the last years of his life, but not his Marxist principles, nor his lifelong internationalism. Maclean combined that internationalism with a deep involvement in the local workers' struggles in Glasgow.

THE Glasgow area was one of the great centres of British industry: mining, shipbuilding, engineering, munitions and textiles. It was also a powerhouse of militant trade unionism. Glasgow was the only place in Britain where those two great pre-war trends of American revolutionary socialism, the Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Labour Party led by Daniel De Leon, had any real presence.

The IWW stood for militant industrial unionism under the slogan, 'One Big Union', but its members turned their backs on anything they saw as 'politics'. They thought that preoccupa-

tion with theory was useless and participation in electoral struggles positively a dangerous diversion. The SLP — much stronger than the IWW in Glasgow — emphasised the importance of Marxist theory but was narrowly sectarian and maximalist — wage struggles were almost beneath them!

The BSP and the Christian socialist Independent Labour Party also had hundreds of members in the area. And thousands had benefited from the classes and speeches of John Maclean and his co-workers.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it should have been Clydeside that gave

birth to the boldest examples of militant factory organisation during World War 1. But militancy, Maclean would remind the shop stewards, was not enough. It was necessary to ground the spirit of rebellion in a theoretical understanding of the laws of motion of capitalism, and link it to the burning issues of the day outside the workshop.

The Clyde Workers' Committee, the hub of militant trade union organisation on the Clyde, started as the Labour Withholding Committee in the 'tuppence or nothing' strike of 1915. Prices had been rising since 1900, and with the onset of war they rose even more steeply. In response the Glasgow engineers demanding the unheard of rise of twopence.

The issue came to a head at Weir's, where American workers were employed at nearly twice the local workers' wages. The Weir's workers struck for parity and the rest of the Clyde engineers came out in solidarity, demanding twopence an hour on the rate.

For the first time the shop stewards' movement could be seen as a force. Maclean's influence was indirect. Many of the strike organisers had been students at his Economics classes, including Smith and Messer, two of the leading lights at Weir's.

The strike ended with the workers winning a penny extra. But this was no defeat. The strike revived the fighting spirit that had last burst into life in the strike wave of 1911-12. The new spirit not only affected the workshops but fuelled the campaigns against evictions and rent rises.

Meanwhile Maclean's leading role in all this was rewarded by the authorities with the threat of dismissal. After a protest by Glasgow workers, the Govan School Board decided instead to move Maclean to another school. That was in May 1915. Then, on November 16, the Board was again to discuss a motion to sack Maclean.

As in May, hundreds turned up to protest. The Board, obviously unnerved by the angry audience, demanded that the gallery be cleared. At first the protesters refused to move, but then agreed to leave after an appeal from Harry Hopkins of the ILP.

No sooner was the room cleared than another crowd rushed in. These were workers from Beardmore's, the Dalmeir munitions works. Their shop steward delivered an impassioned speech in support of Maclean, and the members of the Board fled. Two days later, part of a march protesting against rent rise went to the school where Maclean was a teacher, under notice of dismissal. He was called out and carried shoulder high through the streets to the Sheriff Court. That was John Maclean's last day as a school teacher.

At the Sheriff Court, the landlords — or 'factors', as they were called — hoped to beat the tenants who had imposed a rent strike. Eighteen men had been summoned to appear at the court, but they did not appear alone. All the big factories of the area sent delegations. They told the Sheriff that if the men were fined and the rent arrears deducted from their wages — as the landlords demanded — then the workers would down tools immediately. Meanwhile, the streets outside were jammed with a crowd of 10,000, being addressed by Maclean and others.

The threat of a strike by munitions workers in the middle of the war was too much for the government. The case was stopped immediately and the Minister undertook to put a Rent Restriction Act through Parliament. The next day Maclean was jailed for five days for speaking out against army recruitment — but the mood of the Glasgow workers was such that he was released early.

At the end of 1915, the Clydeside workers also faced a move by the bosses for 'dilution' of labour in the engineering factories. This meant the introduction of unskilled male and female labour into jobs previously monopolised by skilled engineers.

The issue was a difficult one. For the bosses dilution held out the prospect of a general reduction of wage levels. The Clyde Workers' Committee were obviously right in opposing that. But they also played on backward attitude among the skilled workers, petty craft jealousy and belief in female inferiority. Maclean insisted that dilution had to be fought by demanding equal pay for women.

This was not seen simply as a trade union tactic, but, as always, part of a greater historical unfolding. John Maclean's closest comrade-in-arms, Jimmy MacDougall, explained: "As women enter out into production in huger and huger numbers, as they take their place alongside the men, their importance to society will be more fully realised, not merely as producers of wealth, but as producers of men. Women themselves will become more conscious of the decisive part that they play in human development, and will not longer be content to sit at the feet of the male sex, or should we say, remain under the heel?"

"They will arise in their power and demand their rightful position as equal friends and comrades of men. Then there will be no question of treating women as inferiors by refusing them the vote or in any other way. For woman with practice will acquire just as great an influence over society in the future as she has today in the home. That influence will, I am convinced, be used for the humanising of this mankind which is today wallowing in filth and beastliness."

Because the dilution moves were part of the government's drive towards military conscription, the issue called for a linking of the trade union defensive struggle with the struggle against the war. The worst dangers of short-sighted trade unionism were realised when Lloyd George, then Munitions Minister, toured the Clyde.

At Parkhead Forge, the convenor, David Kirkwood (later Lord Kirkwood) agreed to accept dilution and speed up production, if the shop stewards were given some share in the management of the firm. Later he was to boast at the speed-up introduced... though the stewards never got their share in management!

Kirkwood's sell-out was the beginning of a widening split. But it was hardly noticed as the militants of the CWC shouted down Lloyd George.

Throughout, the CWC's greatest weakness was that it never faced up to the political issue of the war. **NEXT WEEK: Part 2 — the Communist Party, Scottish nationalism, and Ireland.**

THE QUESTION IS: DO THE CAMBODIANS WANT THEM?

LEFT PRESS

ON 7th January the Cambodian government fell, overthrown by an invading Vietnamese army and the Vietnamese-backed 'Salvation Front' of Cambodia. Marxists have taken up widely varying attitudes to this invasion.

Ultimately Marxists want to do away with invasions as with all wars and violence. But we recognise that the fight for liberation here and now cannot be fought without violence, wars, and invasions.

Clearly Marxists support class war. We also support wars which do not set the working class against the bourgeoisie, but which nonetheless defend a progressive cause: democratic rights (the Spanish Civil War, or wars of national liberation), or a higher form of social economy (the defence of the USSR against Germany in World War 2). But Marxists do oppose imperialist wars and all wars which merely serve the greed of ruling cliques.

These general principles have been applied very differently to Cambodia by different groups.

In *Workers' Action*, we neither condemned nor endorsed the invasion. 'No-one outside the country', we wrote, 'knows just what the people of Cambodia think about the overthrow of their government'.

The question is: whether the invasion corresponded to the wishes of a real movement in Cambodia against the Pol Pot regime, or whether Vietnam's wish for security on its western frontiers dominated.

The International Marxist Group's *Socialist Challenge* (11th January) came down, more or less, on the Vietnamese side. (We reviewed their analysis in *WA* on 20th January). *The Militant* (19th January), paper of the IMG's co-thinkers in the USA, was more plainly on the Vietnamese side.

But a statement (published in *Intercontinental Press/Interprec* of 5th February) from the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, to which the IMG is affiliated, sharply condemns the invasion and calls for the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops. In Britain, *Socialist Press* (10th January) has come out with the same line: 'Hanoi invaders out of Cambodia!'



It is difficult to make much sense of *Socialist Press's* argument. They describe the invasion as 'further proof of the lengths to which these parasites (the Vietnamese ruling bureaucracy) will go in stifling all forms of opposition. In this respect the invasion is an echo of the Kremlin's brutal military suppression of political opposition in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968)'.

But the USSR's interventions in 1953, 1956, and 1968 were against potentially revolutionary working class upsurges. There was nothing of the sort in Cambodia. On the contrary, *Socialist Press's* assessment is that the Cambodian 'peasants

obviously welcomed the Vietnamese forces'.

The only logic to the arguments in *Socialist Press* is knee-jerk anti-Stalinism — opposing the invasion because it was carried out by Stalinists.

There may be an element of the same in the USFI statement: the USFI's most important section, in France, is under heavy pressure from the OCI, a 'Trotskyist' group which gives fundamentally social democratic politics a revolutionary appearance by ferocious hostility to Moscow line Stalinism. The OCI's *Informations Ouvrières* denounced the invasion as 'a war of pillage'.

Most of all, however, the USFI's arguments are saturated with a sense of outraged illusions in the Vietnamese and Cambodian leaderships.

The bureaucrats are attacked for following the theory of 'socialism in one country', for resolving their political differences by war, and for disorientating militants who have looked to the Indochinese revolution as an inspiration. The USFI statement puts forward the slogan — 'Return to the Leninist tradition of genuine proletarian internationalism', apparently directing it at the bureaucrats.

The statement describes the Vietnamese regime as a 'bureaucratic dictatorship'. But its authors have clearly not freed themselves from their previous illusions in the Indochinese revolutionaries as having 'assimilated the basic ideas of permanent revolution'. The frantic tone of the condemnation derives

from this incoherence. It is illustrated when the statement describes the Cambodian leaders as communists (without qualification) and then, later on, as 'bloody terrorists'.

The imperialists' sanctimonious howling about national sovereignty is clearly condemned in the first paragraphs of the USFI statement, but it does seem to concede some ground to that liberal hypocrisy. Why, after all, is the invasion — which has not, according to any reports, involved any



Cambodia's deposed prime minister, Pol Pot.

significant repression against the Cambodian civilian population — more of a 'disaster' than repression in Vietnam itself?

The USFI statement describes Vietnam as a workers' state, and implies that the same definition applies to Cambodia. (It describes the Pol Pot regime, with dubious accuracy, as a puppet of China.) *The Militant* starts from a different assessment of the social character of the

states involved.

The differing social nature of the regime in Cambodia and Vietnam is the key to the line-up of forces in the recent war. Vietnam is described as a deformed workers' state comparable to the USSR and China. Cambodia more vaguely as 'a bizarre authoritarianism based on the labour of a militarised peasantry'.

In a discussion article (*WA* 14th January 1978) I have argued that in Cambodia a petty-bourgeois dictatorship, having raised itself above an atomised and war-shattered population, was trying to reintroduce the ancient 'Asiatic mode of production'. That attempt was, in the modern world, necessarily doomed. The result could only be the fall of the regime (as has actually happened) or its reversion to a state capitalism of the Burmese type.

Not all our editorial board accept this analysis. The theoretical issues are still open for discussion among Marxists; in addition, information on Cambodia is very incomplete.

It is not clear whether the editors of *The Militant* are cautiously suggesting a similar analysis. This analysis would oblige Marxists to oppose any Cambodian conquest of Vietnam; it would not oblige us to support the Vietnamese invasion. After World War Two, Trotskyists called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the East European states long before they came to the conclusion that capitalism had been overthrown in those countries.

To back up their conclusions,

The Militant's editors have to try to prove, in addition, that Cambodia was becoming a base for counter-revolutionary intervention against Vietnam. They argue that a Cambodian-US military link-up was becoming a looming danger. But the evidence does not amount to much: Pol Pot's last-minute appeals to the UN, a couple of friendly articles in the US press.

Quite probably Cambodia's economy will now be assimilated to the model of the Vietnamese deformed workers' state. But that in itself does not warrant support for the invasion. Our attitude still has to hinge on the wishes of the Cambodian people.

Despite their mystical and (in our view) non-Marxist view of the Stalinist states as 'bourgeois states without the bourgeoisie', the French Trotskyists of *Lutte Ouvriere* have brought out this question most clearly.

The only question is: who represents the people? ... Every imperialist leader in the world considers he is justified in intervening when a Head of State, even one detested by the people, calls for aid. We, as proletarians, who should have no fatherland, consider that a military intervention by a foreign state can be justified when it has the backing of the people calling for assistance, even against their own leaders. That is what should guide our judgment'. (*Lutte Ouvriere*, 13th January).

COLIN FOSTER

2 REVIEWS OF 'BLUE COLLAR'

AS GOOD AS WE'LL GET FROM HOLLYWOOD

THERE is a scene in the film 'Bonnie and Clyde' where the gang hide briefly in a cinema. It is the early thirties; outside, millions queue up at soup kitchens and tens of millions are looking for work; poverty and hunger are everywhere.

But inside, the cinema is showing Hollywood's latest offering to the masses — Busby Berkeley's dance-and-romance spectacular, 'I'm in the Money'.

That's show business! almost, anyway. Hollywood's neglect of the working class as the subject of its films has been almost total. So when 'Blue Collar' came along it was hailed as a breakthrough.

'Blue Collar' is the story of how three car assembly plant workers, Smokey (Yaphet Kotto), Zeke (Richard Pryor) and Jerry (Harvey Keitel) try to solve their money problems by robbing the union safe.

But things go wrong. Instead of finding cash, they find proof of union corruption. They try to blackmail the union, but they have bitten off more than they can chew. Smokey is killed, Zeke is bought off by being made shop steward, and Jerry — the only white of the trio — runs to the FBI for protection.

The film ends with Jerry and Zeke about to come to blows — divided now by race and a mutual sense of betrayal. As the action is frozen into a tableau of discord, Smokey's disembodied voice is heard repeating a remark he makes much earlier in the film: 'Everything they do — the way they pit the lifer against the new boy, the old against the young, the black against the white — is meant to keep us in our places'.

The motto is supposed to act

like a rivet, pinning the two halves of the film together — up to the robbery and after. It is also supposed to pin the race theme more firmly in place. But it doesn't work. By that time the film has collapsed into a mixture of social drama and gangster movie.

'Blue Collar' opens with a series of scenes showing the pressure at work and at home that Zeke, Smokey and Jerry have to face. The assembly line is patrolled by the foreman 'Dogshit' Miller, who is always trying to speed up the line. The union branch is run by a steward who doesn't give a damn about the workers.

Zeke is being squeezed by the Inland Revenue for unpaid taxes, Smokey is being squeezed by a loan-shark and Jerry can't find the money to pay dentist's bills.

Even the automat at the plant rips the workers off — you put in your coin, but no drinks come out.

Everywhere pressure. It's just like Zeke says: 'I know why they call this plant a plant. It's just short for plantation'.

But there is no collective

response. Zeke complains about his damaged locker to the union official and slaps off the steward. Another worker rams the automat with a forklift truck.

So far so good. The scenes are tightly organised; a real feeling of pressure is built up; and the dialogue — centering around Zeke's black humour (in both senses of the word) — sparkles.

Pretty soon, however, all this has been squandered for a gangster plot that runs like Starsky, Hutch and Huggy Bear with race roles reversed. Within this new context, the insights — like Zeke's explanation of the difference between the black man's idea of opportunity and the white man's — come like treasures, but irrelevant ones.

How does this compare with the usual treatment of industrial workers in Hollywood films — those few that have dealt with industrial workers at all?

Clearly it is a step forward. This is not an old Cagney or recent Stallone rags-to-riches fairy-tale. It soars over the mid-thirties response to the

great strike wave in the US — stories about loveable Joe being lured by outside agitators into leading a strike, but then seeing he is being used and affirming that hard work, honesty and keeping clear of the commies is the key to happiness.

And it beats the kind of film where the union is the only evil in society — films like 'On the Waterfront' and, more recently, F.I.S.T. 'Blue Collar' says that unions are an evil, but only one among many — unfortunately, after the first twenty minutes, all the other evils are forgotten.

That may not be a very big step forward, but it's all we are likely to get from Hollywood for a very long time. If we want more we will have to stay with the smaller independent film-makers. This is not because of the anti-union prejudices of film-makers like the director of 'Blue Collar', Paul Schrader, but because Hollywood is one of the most powerful instruments of the employers and it is still strong enough to break more radical screen writers.

ANDREW HORNUNG

Fighting back with the wrong weapons

'They pit the lifers against the new boys, the young against the old, the black against the white. Everything they do is to keep us in our place'.

This is the message of a new film, 'Blue Collar', by Paul Schrader, set in a Detroit car factory. Maybe because it's true is why the film is being restricted to one posh cinema in London where seats are £2 a go.

Three car workers burgle their corrupt union's offices for money and come away instead, with evidence of dirty dealings. They decide to try and blackmail the union, but the situation is too hot to handle.

In the end the big boys are breathing down their necks and, after one of the three comes to a sticky end, the other two give up and sell out. One sells out to the union itself, accepting a backhander and becoming steward, arguing that he can change the union as an individual from a position of power within it. The other sells out to the state in the form of the FBI, who have been trying to dig up dirt on the union since the start of the film.

When each learns what the

other has done, the two [one black, one white], who have been mates throughout the film, finally come to blows.

Schrader says that his conclusion is despairing, that things are not necessarily going to get better, and that the seeds for improvement are not necessarily in hand. It is this conclusion which stamps itself on the film, making the divisions and defeat reflected in its closing words inevitable. It is this that severely limits the film.

Granted there's no guarantee that things will get better. But by concentrating on the actions and responses of the three workers in isolation from the rest of the shop floor, we are denied in advance any chance to see whether other sorts of action would come off any better. What would have happened, for instance, if instead of 'going underground' and playing the union chiefs' own game by attempted blackmail they had [as Zeke briefly suggests] used their find to 'raise hell' in the union?

But that would have been a different film. As it is, 'Blue Collar' is entertaining, and for those not overwhelmed by its pessimism there's a sound negative message: if you fight corruption with its own weapons, you're bound to lose.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH



'Blue Collar': three buddies on the car assembly line



[* Gate 2 Cinema, Brunswick Square, WC1].

WORKERS' ACTION

BUS WORKERS GO FOR £65

BUS-DRIVERS are going for £65 a week (£81 for one-man operators), basing this claim on the haulage drivers' success.

Officially the claim — covering municipal bus-workers represented by the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC), is for a 'substantial' increase, consolidation of increases under Phases 1 and 2 into the basic rate, an extra week's holiday, and maintenance of a 25% differential between

one man operators and crews. Local authority negotiators have been given until the end of the month to respond.

Despite TGWU and GMWU conference decisions in favour of the 35 hour week, there is no reference to it in the claim. The 35 hour week is, however, included in the claim to be presented for National Bus Company workers in April.

The local authorities are not going to give £65 without

a fight. But the union leaderships have done little to prepare for battle. They have chosen not to link up with the current low-pay fight, and the T&G trade group secretary, Larry Smith, has been quoted as proposing 'guerrilla tactics' instead of all-out strike. This probably means lightning strikes and work to rules — a recipe for exhaustion and failure.

Millitants in the branches need to start organising. **PAUL BYERS**

DUNLOP SPEKE WILL FIGHT CLOSURE

WORKERS at Dunlop Speke have set up a joint union action committee to fight the bosses' plans to shut down their factory and sack all 2,400 workers.

A mass meeting on Tuesday 23rd January, four days after Dunlop announced the closure plan, decided to fight to save the jobs. The action committee's battle plan is:

- To stop all movement of goods, plant and equipment from the tyre division.

- To contact MPs to block any application for funds by Dunlop from the National Enterprise Board or the Industrial Development Agency unless it goes to Speke.

- To seek meetings with MPs, councillors, etc.

- Contacting dockers and other workers.

- Getting combine meetings on the closure.

- Seeking top-level union meetings about the closure.

The Speke workers have already got agreement with other Dunlop tyre division workers at Inchinnan and Birmingham (who also face some job cuts, but fewer) to black all transfer of work.

Arthur Todd, AUEW convenor at Dunlop, told a Garston CLP/Merseyside LPYS meeting last Friday, 2nd, that the action

committee was still considering the possibility of a factory occupation.

The action committee is stressing one point above all: the need to fight to save jobs rather than take redundancy money. The closure is not just an issue for Dunlop workers, but for the whole Merseyside working class. 12,500 jobs have been lost on Merseyside over the last year, and in Speke 19% are on the dole.

Donations to the action committee should be sent to R.Rinaldi, 11 Rudley Walk, Speke, Liverpool 24.

KEVIN FEINTUCK

HOW THE DRIVERS BUST THE PAY NORM

THE LORRY drivers have broken not only the 5% limit but the 15% that seemed to have become a new norm at the start of the year. The settlement was something over 20%, and only £1 short of the claim on basic pay.

But we won that much despite, not because of, the TGWU officials.

It was an unofficial rank-and-file conference that forced the recall of the official T&G road haulage conference at the end of last year, the conference which called for a strike from January 3rd. It was the fact that the whole country was coming out unofficially that forced the TGWU leadership to make the strike official.

It was the unofficial strike committees who organised the picket lines and got support from dockers and other workers to refuse to handle scab loads.

In the West Midlands, where there was delay in making the strike official, some drivers were saying it was better to keep it unofficial, simply because it kept the union full-timers' noses out.

In most areas, the full-time officials clearly dragged their feet. Angry drivers in many areas occupied district offices in protest: in Birmingham, in Warrington, in Scotland. Once they had made the strike official, the full-timers were issuing 'exemption certificates' like confetti, clearly scared above all of the strike becoming too militant and effective.

The rank-and-file links developed during the strike need to be strengthened. We need to extend the sort of links which exist between militants in container haulage to the whole industry.

A campaign which started

on the London Docks — called "It's Our Union" — is trying to get branches to submit resolutions to the TGWU conference this year for election of full-time officers every five years. Though five-yearly elections are far from adequate democracy, even that would be a step in the right direction.

There was one bit of good news on the union democracy front as the strike ended. Alan Law, T&G district officer in the West Midlands, went too far when he tried to stitch up a deal with the employers to keep the West Midlands out of the strike. The regional committee has had to tell him that he is retiring at 60 (in June) and meanwhile a new officer has been appointed to negotiate for those branches who refuse to have anything to do with Law.

SIMON TEMPLE

Action against all-in schools chop

TEACHERS in 26 Liverpool schools are refusing to cover for absence staff, in protest at plans for reorganisation of the city's schools.

The schools covered by the action include most of the big comprehensives threatened by

the Tory-Liberal Council's proposal to chop their sixth forms and boost selective schools.

Supply teachers who were previously nowhere to be found have already been sent

in to fill the gaps.

Education Minister Shirley Williams is to make a decision on the proposals soon, and the action is to put pressure on her as well as on the Council.

Barbara WOJCIECHOWSKA

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Friday 9 February. Spartacist League public meeting. Defend the Gains of October! 7.30 at Central Library, Fieldway Crescent/Holloway Rd, London N5.

Saturday 10 February. Trade Union and Labour conference on the Times. 2pm at the 'Y' Hotel, Great Russell St, London WC1. Credentials for trade union delegates from John Mitchell, 01-928 1481.

Monday 12 February. Campaign for Action in NUPE public meeting on the Low Pay Campaign. Speaker: Ray Varnes (NUPE District Secretary, ILEA). 7.30, Workers Educational Association, Shakespear St, Nottingham.

Saturday 10 March. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference, at Friends House, Euston Rd, London. Credentials for TU delegates £1 from J.Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Rd, Ilford, Essex.

Saturday 10 March. Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory fund-raising social, at Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way, N19 (Archway tube). 8pm to midnight, with 'Embryo' plus disco. Tickets £1.

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VICTIMISATION AT WEST HAM COLLEGE

JOHN REGAN, chairman of the NATFHE (teachers' union) branch at West Ham College, London, has been sacked. The charge is "gross misconduct". The crime is that he failed to fill in some extra student report forms asked for by the College which the NATFHE branch objected to. The real reason for the sacking seems to be conflict between the college authorities and the union branch, in which Regan has played a leading role over four years. Regan was suspended — and banned from the college

premises! — on 2nd December. On 24th January the college Governors met and recommended Regan's dismissal.

According to any normal trade union procedure, the sacking is flagrant victimisation. No warning was given; efforts at conciliation were rejected; the application of the "gross misconduct" charge (which usually means criminal offences) was unprecedented. The union is putting an appeal to the Newham Education Committee, and, if that fails, to an Industrial Tribunal.

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SEND TO WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

Bakery pickets trial: 'WE DIDN'T CONFESS'

THE DAY before the bakers' strike ended, the police mounted their largest operation against the flying pickets. At 4.15am on 12th December, 68 bakery workers from South Wales who had come to Tewkesbury to picket the Heelings Flour Mill were all arrested.

They were held until 7pm, interrogated, and pressurised by being told that others had confessed to damaging vans at the mill. Eventually some signed confessions, and seven were charged.

John Rees from Swansea, and Eric Hansen and Derek Stewart from Cardiff, were charged with causing criminal damage. Paul Fox and Peter

Salter from Cardiff were charged with intent to cause criminal damage. Two other pickets were charged with assaulting police officers, and their cases have been adjourned.

John Rees pleaded guilty and was fined £50 with £52 costs. The remaining four cases are now being heard before magistrates. So far the case has centred round whether statements extracted from Hansen, Fox, Salter, and Stewart by the police are admissible as evidence.

The four bakers say that they were denied their right to see a solicitor, even though

one dealing with the case was in the police station at the time. They say that eventually they were ready to sign anything just to get out.

The police say the four were denied access to a solicitor because 'it would have interfered with the inquiry into the crime'.

■ ■ ■ The four men's jobs are on the line, too. Their bosses have threatened them with the sack if they are found guilty. John Rees has already lost his job, although Swansea Trades Council is fighting to get him reinstated, and has agreed to pay the fine.

SUNBLEST TAKE THEIR REVENGE

ALWYN REES, union branch secretary at the Sunblest bakery in Swansea, has been sacked for allegedly hitting the General Manager on the shop floor.

The story is that Alwyn hit the manager after being approached about the staff canteen being vandalised and asked by the boss if he was now satisfied with the damage. Four floor managers (supervisors) were allegedly in the area when the incident occurred, though norm-

ally these people supervise machinery in different parts of the factory. Another thing to come out in the disciplinary hearing was that a large amount of money had been collected by those floor managers for drinks in the night.

Alwyn Rees has a work record stretching back 15 years in the bakery, and not once has he been disciplined or received any warnings.

A statement from one floor manager indicated that he heard the General Manager

say that he was 'going to get' Rees over another issue before the whole incident occurred.

The workers in the factory want to take industrial action to get Rees reinstated, but the union is putting the case through an industrial tribunal. The solicitors have already informed Alwyn Rees and the union that there is no guarantee of reinstatement even if the tribunal finds in their favour.

GEOFF WILLIAMS