

Blackburn Sept. 11 March to smash the racists' base

IN JUNE the National Front warned through the pages of the Lancashire Evening Telegraph that "Bloodshed in September verges on the inevitable" if anti-racists insisted on marching in Blackburn.

Their fellow fascist organisation the National Party feels it rules the roost in Blackburn. It won two council seats in the last local elections, one of them held by Kingsley Read, the Party's Chairman, whose recent comment on the murder of a Sikh youth in Southall was "One down, one million to go".

In Blackburn the fascists have a base of broad public support; the local press is little more than an organ of these racists and, as elsewhere, the police are their allies and protectors. The fascists have succeeded in turning this Lancashire mill town into a place where its large Asian community lives in constant fear of insult and injury.

But the Asians of Blackburn — particularly the youth organised in the Asian Youth Organisation — are fighting back.

On September 11th you can show whether Blackburn is to be left to the fascists, whether the Asian population there is to be left to fight on its own — or whether Blackburn can be turned into a demonstration of how the fascists should be humiliated and smashed.

The National Front and even more the National Party will see the march on September 11th for what it really is: a direct challenge to their domination there and indirectly an attack on them nationally.

They have warned that they will attack this demonstration because they understand that we are determined to smash them where their base is strongest.

- DRIVE THE FASCISTS OFF THE STREETS. No platform for fascists!
- Drive racists out of the labour movement!
- For a big drive to mobilise the labour movement, in particular the Labour Party, Trade Unions and LPYS, in this struggle.
- Mobilise for the September 11th demonstration in Blackburn.
- For unity in action of the revolutionary groups both in mobilising for the march and on the march.

WORKERS ACTION

No.27

AUG.7th

8p

BESIEGED!

The black community of Blackburn lives under constant threat of attack from fascists

AS one more legal avenue was closed to NOEL and MARIE MURRAY in their fight against a death sentence imposed by Dublin's Special Criminal Court, there has been a fierce clampdown on their defenders and supporters.

The Murrays can now only appeal to the Supreme Court against their conviction and sentence — a court headed by Irish Lord Chief Justice O'Higgins, a notorious extreme right winger.

The court that tried the Murrays consisted of three judges, and no jury. This Special Court has time and again refused to hear prisoners' evidence of beatings by the Gardai (police). In the case of the Murrays, this meant that a statement by Marie Murray which she gave under extreme duress was taken at face value. **AND THIS WAS THE ONLY EVIDENCE TO CONVICT THEM.**

'He'll be shot'

Marie Murray gave her statement after being threatened that Noel would be 'taken to the hills and shot' if she didn't. By then she had been kept 18 hours in the cell next to that where Noel and their comrade Ronan Stenson were being tortured. Their treatment was in fact so severe that Stenson cracked up completely during the trial and was ruled unfit to plead.

After Ronan Stenson was dismissed from the case, the Judges refused to hear any evidence relating to what had happened to him at the hands of the Gardai — evidence crucial in refuting the statement of Marie Murray that the Prosecution depended on.

The legal basis of the death sentence on the Murrays is

CRITICS OF DUBLIN DEATH SENTENCES CENSORED

doubtful too. The crime of capital murder in Ireland is for killing a police officer "in the course of duty". But Garda Michael Reynolds who was shot (allegedly by Marie Murray) after a bank robbery was off duty, out of uniform and accompanied by his wife and small child.

The campaign on behalf of the Murrays has not yet met with widespread support in Ireland. No doubt the Cosgrave regime picked them out as a 'soft target' — reckoning that it could use them to demonstrate its brutishness to its British overlords, yet feeling that the politically unattached victims would not be defended by the larger political formations. But legal and liberal opinion has been outraged by the way their appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal was handled. They were refused extra time to prepare their appeal, and their Defence lawyer had only a week-

end to go through a 1,600-page transcript of their trial — the second half of which was held with neither the Murrays nor their Defence present.

More disturbing has been a case of crude political censorship. The Editor of the journal *Hibernia* (a fortnightly on the political wavelength of the *New Statesman* here) has been prosecuted for contempt of court, after publishing a letter from the Murray Defence Committee. The letter had stated that the Murrays had not had a fair trial, and that statements got under duress and torture were the equivalent of perjury by the prosecution.

Valid 'Contempt'

The outcome of the case in the High Court was that *Hibernia* editor John Mulcahey was acquitted of contempt, the Court

ruling that the criticisms in the letter were valid comment and not contempt. But the Attorney General brought Mulcahey to the Supreme Court which over-ruled and reversed the High Court's judgment.

And this is the last court the Murrays can appeal to!

The Defence Committee are calling for a re-trial for the Murrays in a civilian jury court. In fact the use of the Special no-jury Criminal Court has been extended to "car-stealers, deer-poachers and a drunken practical joker, none of them with political connections". And though the Murrays' political ideas were used as justification for them being condemned to death by a no-jury "emergency" court, the press has had it both ways and insisted they should get no sympathy as they were "just common criminals".



MARIE MURRAY — statement given under duress

The extensive use of the Special Court by the Dublin regime has led to a serious worsening of conditions in Ireland's prisons, as prisoners are denied the chance they once had of appealing to a jury against the treatment they got at the hands of the police. The 'hear-no-evil' attitude of the Special Court Judges and their willingness to accept as evidence 'confessions' got by the Garda through physical or psychological pressure has given the Garda a free hand to step up beatings and torture in the jails.

The Murrays have until November 1st. Their chances in the Supreme Court are slim, and chances of a reprieve are pretty low if they have indeed been selected as an 'example'. If they are hanged, it will open the way for renewed calls in the North and in Britain for the death penalty.

Send messages

But a big international campaign, and particularly a campaign in Britain, could save them. Resolutions from labour movement organisations, letters and telegrams should be sent to the Irish Embassy at Grosvenor Place, London SW1; to the Minister of Justice, St. Stephens Green, Dublin and/or to the Irish Prime Minister, Liam Cosgrave, Government Buildings, Dublin.

Send copies to the Murray Defence Committee (and donations will help for publicity and legal costs) at 155 Church Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. And write to the Murrays to tell them you're working on their behalf: to Marie Murray at Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, Co. Dublin, and to Noel Murray at Curragh Detention Barracks, Curragh, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

West Bank strike

IN THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED West Bank, a general strike of Arab shopkeepers is under way. The strike is against the imposition of VAT by the Israeli Military Government, and against the 9-year Israeli occupation.

The Mayor of Nablus, the largest West Bank town, explaining the reasons for the closing of the shops, said: "We are against all Israeli taxes, we are against this tax in particular, and we are against being under occupation". The feeling generated against the occupation during the riots in the West Bank a few months ago has not subsided. Clashes between Israeli troops and young Arabs still occur. An Arab youth shot by troops last week during a riot in Nablus is still in hospital with bullet wounds in the arms and chest. Others were sent home after treatment.

But the Israeli occupying forces have learnt some lessons from the previous riots. Now, instead of simply gunning down demonstrators, they are keeping a low profile and using tear-gas to break up demonstrations. Although this tactic might well be successful in preventing riots spreading as they did before, it will not remove the Arabs' deep anger at the continuing occupation.

Defend jailed Polish workers

SIX POLISH worker militants, arrested after the June strikes against price rises, have been sentenced to periods in prison ranging from six to ten years. They were charged with 'group violence and damaging state property'.

Militant trade unionists in Britain would fiercely oppose such anti-strike measures directed against British workers — and so we should when they are directed against Polish workers. Despite its pretences of 'socialism', the Polish government has shown — by the price rises, and by these prosecutions — that it is an oppressor of the working class.

WORKERS' ACTION calls on all readers and supporters to press resolutions in their trade union branches and Labour Parties, condemning the jailings and calling for the immediate release of the imprisoned workers.

Palestinian camp under siege

JUST OUTSIDE BEIRUT the besieged Palestinian camp of Tel al-Zaatar is still holding out after six weeks of intensive onslaught by the right-wing Christian militias. Inside the camp conditions are increasingly desperate, with over 1,000 wounded and many hundreds of dead.

For over a month the camp has been subjected to heavy shelling by artillery and mortars, and has been completely cut off from all outside aid. The intensity of the attack has left the defenders no time to either bury the dead or give the wounded all but the most superficial medical treatment. Medical supplies and water are quickly running out.

During the last few weeks the International Red Cross has been attempting to get supplies through to the camp and remove the wounded, but have been thwarted in their attempts by the right wing leaders. Last week it seemed that they had managed to reach an agreement to get into the camp, only when the time came the attackers would not

let up their bombardment, denying them access. Now the Red Cross has been told that they must stop outside the camp, and the wounded will have to be brought out to them. Neither the Red Cross nor the Palestinians could agree to this conditions.

The siege of Tel al-Zaatar symbolises the dramatic reversal suffered by the Palestinians and the left-wing Muslim forces in the Lebanon in the last few months. Since the invasion of the country by Syrian troops in May, the course of the civil war has swung overwhelmingly in favour of the Christian rightists. At first the Syrian troops aided the Christians in their defence of their areas against the Palestinians, enabling them once more to go on the offensive.

The troops are still there, ready to aid the right wing when necessary. They have done the job required of them in aiding the Christians, and now they are simply holding the ring and letting the Christians get on with the job of crushing the Palestinians.

Every attempt by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation to get the Syrian troops out of the country has failed. Last week PLO delegates in Damascus supposedly reached an agreement with the Syrian President, Assad, which would lead to him withdrawing the troops. But this agreement was immediately repudiated by the PLO in Beirut when it was found that it included a clause enabling the new Lebanese government to impose severe limitations on the activities of the PLO in the Lebanon and also a denunciation of Egypt's president Sadat. Despite the fact that it was Sadat who signed the Sinai peace disengagement with Israel, Egypt has been supplying the Palestinians with arms in the last few months of the civil war in an attempt to embarrass Assad, and the PLO wants to retain his support.

All the signs are that the Syrian government has decided that the only way to bring the PLO under its firm control is to make it suffer a convincing military defeat in the Lebanon. Then, when the new Lebanese president, Sarkis, takes over, he will face no problems from an emasculated Palestinian resistance, which he can dictate to according to his wishes and those of Damascus.

The Syrians expect him to follow their directions faithfully, since he was elected only as the direct result of Syrian intimidation of delegates in the Lebanese parliament.

SAVAK in Britain

WHEN IRANIAN students occupied their embassies in Bonn and Geneva recently they uncovered documents exposing operations in Britain by Savak, the Iranian secret police. The documents show that Savak agents in Britain have been instructed to investigate relations between two Labour MPs — Stan Newens and William Wilson — and Iranian dissidents living in this country.

Other documents order Savak agents to search the homes of dissidents and to keep a close watch on the activities and members of the Committee against Repression in Iran and the Campaign for the Restoration of Trade Union Rights in Iran. Both these organisations have the support of trade unions and Labour MPs. Further documents show that Savak conducts activities in Europe on a large scale.

When news of this came out last week the immediate response of the Iranian ambassador, Parviz Radji, was to deny categorically that Savak operate in Britain or any foreign country. He claimed the documents were total forgeries.

Commenting on this denial, Stan Newens said: "I have known these people from the Confederation [of Iranian students, who published the documents exposing Savak] for a long time... and I have never found them so far to mislead me or to produce false documents". Savak has certainly been proved to work here in the past. In 1974 the Sunday Times tape-recorded and photographed a Savak agent trying to recruit an informer in London.

Stan Newens has called for a full Home Office inquiry into the activities of Savak in Britain. This demand must be supported. The activities of Savak threaten trade unionists and socialists in this country who support the campaign for democratic rights in Iran, and also the friends and families of Iranian dissidents who are living here. Iranians campaigning in this country have to do so under conditions of extreme secrecy. If their names become known to the Iranian authorities, then action is taken against people connected with them in Iran itself. For those people, it is not just a matter of surveillance and harassment, but torture and death.

PICKET OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE CROWN COURT — in protest against the trial of Iranian students arrested while demonstrating last April against the visit of the Shah's wife to Britain. 9.45am, Monday 9th August, at 1 Hans Crescent, SW1.

Abortion: trying to put the clock back

THE Parliamentary Select Committee formed to look into the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act have just published their report. The committee is now made up entirely of anti-abortion MPs. Six former members of the Committee walked out when it was reconstituted after an interim report and allowed to sit again looking for yet more restrictions.

The Select Committee was formed to deal with "those recommendations of the Lane Report (1 February 1974) which require legislation." In fact, their report runs directly counter to the findings of the Lane Commission, which supported the 1967 Act and was in favour of more easily obtainable abortions.

Doctors

As expected, most of the recommendations of the Select Committee make abortions more difficult to obtain. They say that restrictions should be placed on the two doctors required under the Act to consent to an abortion. They recommend that these two should not be partners, nor should one be an assistant to the other, nor should they have a common financial interest. One of the doctors must have had at least five years in general practice.

These measures mean one thing — delay. Which makes all the more threatening another provision the Committee recommends — that the upper time limit for abortions should be reduced from 28 weeks of pregnancy to 20 weeks, except in exceptional cases.

The Lane Commission recommended that abortions should be available up to 24 weeks, and the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain, commenting on the Select Committee report, say "Unfortunately there is a considerable margin of error in determining the gestational age and if

the proposals are not amended, law-abiding practitioners will decline to terminate after 17 weeks to avoid the consequences of inadvertent error...

As the Report also asks for fines for illegal abortions to be increased to £1,000 and the time limit for criminal prosecutions to be extended to 3 years, doctors will be further deterred from operating in borderline cases.

Fee charging agencies, pregnancy advice bureaux and pregnancy testing services are to be licensed, controlled by Acts of Parliament, and subject to 'special regulations'. The police will also be given powers to inspect and seize copies of records of any entries kept by these bodies. Previously these records were regarded as being private, like other medical records. Many women value the confidentiality of these agencies. This will be destroyed if this proposal is put into operation.

Caroline Woodruff, Chairwoman of the Brook Advisory Centres, said that this "will provide one more reason for people to go to disreputable agencies which might not keep files, rather than go to established agencies for fear of confidentiality being breached."

Attack

The Report has been strongly attacked by the National Abortion Campaign and by the MPs who withdrew from the Select Committee when it was set up again in February. One of these former members, Labour MP Joyce Butler warned that the Select Committee wanted to stay in existence and whittle away further at the right to abortion. Even without legislation, many of the proposals of the Committee's first report have been implemented by the Government.

The continued existence of the Select Committee and its present

report are a considerable victory for the anti-abortion lobby which set itself to destroy the 1967 Abortion Act. That Act, though it dramatically cut the number of deaths and injuries from backstreet abortions, was itself only a half-measure in freeing women of the compulsion to bear babies resulting from accident or ignorance. It still contains many restrictions and obstacles.

Back-street

And even in its present restrictive form, the existing legislation is not properly implemented. As even *The Economist* comments this week "nowhere in the Select Committee's report is there any mention of the worst failing of present abortion practice: the difficulty women have, in some regions, in having an abortion in a health service hospital. There is much in the committee's report about doctors' rights to opt out on grounds of conscience. Experience suggests that in some hospitals they are too ready to opt out anyway, without having to fall back on their consciences."

There are still women dying from backstreet abortions (like the Hackney woman who died last month after a plastic flower had been used to induce an abortion). And an uncounted number of women are having their lives distorted by having to bear unwanted children, despite demanding an abortion.

We must demand that the Government reject the Select Committee's report and disband the Committee. And we must Campaign throughout the labour movement for the right of women to have an abortion on demand, with no delays, no questions, no restrictions, and full and free public facilities.

GILLIAN ANCIANO

TAMESIDE LUNACY

FIVE LAW LORDS have given a green light to Tameside's Tory council to unscramble the comprehensive scheme due to start in September and bring in their own futile and destructive reorganisation of Tameside's education system along the old selective lines.

This re-organisation has thrown the Tameside education system into complete chaos. When teachers and children return from the summer holidays in 5 weeks' time, they will be re-directed to new schools, although at the moment they have no idea which they are to be.

The Council has proclaimed that its own, so far unknown selection system will ensure 'parental choice' of secondary school, and will be completed within the next two weeks. . . This, even though all the major teachers' unions are in dispute with the Council and are refusing (backed by Nalgo members at the Education Offices) to participate in the Tory Council's scheme.

The headquarters for this makeshift scheme in an estate agent's offices in Ashton-under-Lyne, staffed by voluntary and unskilled labour.

The crowning lunacy of the whole venture is that by 1977 the Labour Government's Education Bill will make it compulsory for ALL councils to go comprehensive. The Tameside education system will then have to be re-organised again!

In fact, before the election of the Tory council in May, the compreh-

ensive re-organisation was going reasonably well under the then Labour Council. 75% of all teaching staff had been re-appointed to new positions; 90% of all 11-year-olds had been given their first choice of comprehensive school; many 16-year-olds were for the first time in the area given a chance of further education in the new 6th form Colleges (created out of Hyde and Ashton grammar schools).

This last improvement will be the first to go, and because of the uncertainty created by the Tories' new scheme many would-be 6th-formers have left school to go on the dole, or find jobs if they're lucky. Now the places which would have been offered to these school leavers are to revert to the old grammar schools, being offered as sops to the Tory voters — all of whom are now clamouring to get their children into these privileged positions. So far 800 parents have put their children forward for the 240 grammar school places available. There will be an additional 320 places in the less prestigious 'mixed ability' grammar schools.

Selection

Out of a potential secondary intake of 3,000, this still leaves 2,440 children in the crumbling and demoralised secondary modern schools.

Initially the Tories proposed that selection to the grammar

schools would be by an 11-plus IQ test, but this had to be dropped in the face of vigorous opposition by the teachers' unions and the Parents Action Group. Since then 'guided parental choice' has been proclaimed as the new principle, though no-one seems exactly sure what this means! They have admitted that this "might not be perfect" but they "believe it will work".

Grantham, Tory leader of the Council, has said all along that "we are prepared to go to any lengths to get pupils' records" and now it seems that, given continued teacher resistance, he is going to have to sanction raiding all the primary school filing cabinets, rifling through variously recorded confidential and personal material, just so that the councillors can piece together some sham attempt at a selection procedure from the school records.

So far, £4 million has been spent in Tameside on Labour plans for comprehensives, yet Cllr. Donald Thorpe (Tory Chairman of the Education Committee) has said "If we win our case, the ratepayers will benefit. The children of Tameside will get a better education."

The Parents Action Group, the teachers' unions, and the Tameside Trades Council see things differently. All they see is chaos and confusion facing teachers and pupils in the Autumn and the certainty of more to come as Tameside lurches willy-nilly into the comprehensive system in 1977. What sort of better education is that?

SUE ARMALL



IT'S JUST A WAY OF LIFE

Four more years of the Social Contract

"It's not so much a programme, more a way of life" joked Len Murray about the new social contract agreement reached between the TUC and the Labour Party.

Some joke! All Murray means is that the programme of aims and commitments isn't worth the paper it's written on; what was important was only the fact of

agreement.

And Callaghan confirmed this when, to quote the *Financial Times*, he "made it clear that the package will have no more than a marginal effect."

The whole point of the social contract agreement was to enforce peaceful acceptance of anti-working class measures at home and to inspire confidence abroad

in the Government's control of the domestic situation.

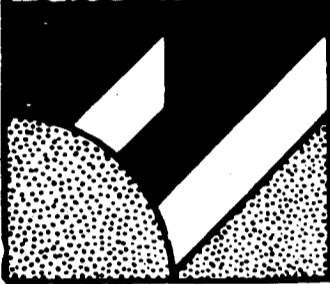
That is why the new agreed draft actually contains sections which, when they were presented by the lefter members of the Labour Party NEC on July 26, were rejected. For instance on July 26 an amendment urging more house construction was rejected; it is now accepted. Yet there has been no victory, no shift in the thinking of the TUC-LP Liaison majority. It is simply that "it's not so much a programme, more a way of life..."

Or to put it more plainly: it's not a programme at all.

What it is is an insult to working class intelligence. It actually promises an expansion of social service spending at a time when Healey has hacked another billion from that area and has promised in Parliament that there might be more on the way.

Given the circumstances of their previous rejection of the new social contract draft (most of the members were away drinking tea with the President of France) the Labour Party NEC not surprisingly fell in behind the Government without much fuss when it came to it.

Editorial



DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHT TO WORK MARCH

LAST March, when the Rank & File Organising Committee ran a 'Right to Work' march from Manchester to the Albert Hall in London, WORKERS ACTION supported the demonstration with clear criticisms.

We criticised the programme of the Right to Work Campaign — saying that, in the struggle against unemployment, we saw the following demands as being most central.

■ CUT THE HOURS, NOT THE JOBS. For a sliding scale of hours under workers' control, if the employers cannot provide work, with no loss of pay. For a national campaign against overtime and for a 35-hour week with guaranteed full pay.

■ OPEN THE BOOKS and meetings of the state, the employers and the corporations to the inspection of worker-delegated representatives. This must be the workers' answer to phony participation schemes — to protect and arm independent shop floor trade union organisation.

Fully Compensate

■ OCCUPATION — holding the bosses' property as ransom for jobs — as our answer to threatened redundancy. Occupation in order, to force nationalisation with no compensation recognising workers' control won by occupation.

■ NO COVERING FOR UNFILLED VACANCIES. Trade union opposition to all pressures to force women, black and young workers out first.

■ FULL TRADE UNION RIGHTS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED. Trade union registration of all vacancies and of unemployed workers.

On wages, we said that rather than vigorous calls for unlimited

wage increases we should adopt a policy of no limit on wage settlements (and no time limitation on them) coupled with a fight for automatic cost of living rises to fully compensate for price rises — the most effective policy for fighting the wage-cutting policies of the Labour Government.

We argued that in the fight against unemployment united front committees in the labour movement must be formed, drawing in trades councils, trade union branches, shop stewards committees and local Labour Parties. The practice of many local Right to Work Committees, however, of counterposing themselves to building united front local campaigns and of posing themselves as the "only people fighting unemployment" we saw as clearly running counter to the task of building a united fight against unemployment.

WORKERS ACTION also called on the Right to Work organisation to call a genuine trade union-based and sponsored conference of all labour movement bodies prepared to support the campaign to decide on and implement a perspective for extending the struggle for the right to work. The support the march secured showed that the Right to Work Campaign could stand as an alternative focus to the rigged and platform-orchestrated Labour Movement Assembly held on March 27th — but only if it was to draw in support in the labour movement through a democratic delegate conference to decide on the way forward.

The Right to Work "Council" has now called another march, from London to Brighton, to lobby the TUC: to call for a break with Healey and a fight against the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government.

We still disagree with much of the programme of the Right to Work campaign. The Campaign has not held an open democratic conference to decide on its perspectives. In many areas, Right to Work committees have fallen silent until the new march was announced.

Undemocratic

The supposedly sovereign "Right to Work Council" has never made it clear who its members are or how they were selected. In fact at the most recent Manchester Right to Work Council two elected delegates were excluded and one delegate refused, in protest, to be involved. A delegate from the Moss Side Labour Party (Chorlton Ward) was specifically invited to the Council by the Manchester Right to Work Committee Secretary when he spoke at a ward meeting. But when the Moss Side delegate arrived at the meeting, the organisers of the Campaign excluded him.

Such chicanery and undemocratic behaviour towards bona fide labour movement delegates bodes ill for the Right to Work Campaign becoming any more than an impressive but temporary sideshow.

WORKERS ACTION will be building support for the march to Brighton. We call on all trade union bodies, Labour Party organisations and Working Womens Charter groups to organise contingents where possible and financial support for the march. It can become a major display of opposition to the class collaboration policies of the TUC and the Labour Government.

But if that is so, the organisers of the march must make it absolutely clear how the Right to Work Council is elected and nominated. They must give a commitment that all bureaucratic measures against genuine labour movement delegations will stop immediately. And they must call an open planning conference for all bodies prepared to support the campaign to hammer out future perspectives and debate and decide on policies to fight cuts and unemployment. This conference must be open if the campaign is to be broadened and continued. It must be called now so that the policies and programmes of those supporting the march — for example the supporters of WORKERS ACTION, can be argued and put to the test.

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Bristol,
Cambridge, Cardiff, Chelmsford,
Chester, Coventry, Crawley, Durham
Edinburgh, Leicester, Liverpool, London,
Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle,
Newtown, Northampton, Nottingham,
Oxford, Reading, Rochdale, Sheffield,
Stafford, Stoke

Write for details of meetings & activities to:
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Name

Address

Games

The fact that they also passed a motion from Eric Heffer opposing the cuts simply means that some people never tire of playing games. This motion in fact completely accepted the priorities of the Chancellor's chops: it simply argued that Healey's way would not work.

The most interesting feature of the NEC meeting was its noted absentee: Wedgwood Benn. The same happened last year when Benn (and Foot) left the NEC meeting that discussed the £6 limit so that it would lose its quorum and be prevented from voting. The self-proclaimed democrat shows himself to be in reality a dyed-in-the-wool demagogue.

But if the Liaison Committee debate on the social contract revealed the treachery of the trade union leaders and the impotence of the Labour Left, August 2nd's Parliamentary debate showed these Lefts not only to be impotent but totally without principle. Tribune group leader Arthur Latham justified his voting for the latest round of public expenditure cuts by saying "To vote with the Opposition would be like turning a bad meal aside and taking a dose of arsenic instead."

Arsenic

But that really wasn't the choice, because while a body might be a certain victim of arsenic the working class is by no means a certain victim of the Tories. Last time round, the Tories and the bosses were the victims of the working class.

That is because the working class potentially has power — power that is a most dramatic contrast to the impotence of the parliamentary lefts. The point is to use it, and to refuse to subordinate the interests of the working class to the question of the survival of a capitalist government.

KARL MARX wrote a hundred years ago that "Labour not emancipate itself in the white skin where in the it is branded."

Marx was referring to slavery in America. He saw that as the white workers of the USA passively put up with slavery, then these white workers themselves would lend hand and foot to the ruling class which exploited

They would never fight against the employing class for their own emancipation, without also taking up the fight against slavery. As long as slavery was condoned, the working class would be content with their lot as slaves... as long as they were better than the white slaves.

Finally, the American workers, together with many thousands of freed and escaped slaves, did take up arms for the Union (northern) slag against slavery and against it. But in a different sense Marx's words have as much importance for the working class today as they did

Black people in this country are just as surely branded as were the American slaves. They are not branded with the hot iron of the slave master, but with the hundreds of indignities and attacks they are subjected to because of the colour of their skin.

In Britain today black people face constant discrimination in housing, jobs and education. To have a black means to live with the threat of being physically attacked by racist gangs or the police.

The mass of such attacks never make the headlines, recently they have amounted to hundreds just in the area of London in a matter of two or three weeks. Besides the physical assaults, there are the verbal attacks. Any right wing politician can get up and stigmatise black people as lazy, criminal, unclean etc., and the press and TV will give him all the publicity he could hope for.

These slanders black people have no means of reply. Why is it that the working class turns a blind eye (at least to the oppression that black people face? Why is the official trade union movement has never lifted a finger against the blatant discrimination that black people suffer, and against the racialism that is rife in their own ranks?

Every trade union militant knows that 'Unity is Strength'. Regardless of race or nationality, the workers of the world have more in common with each other than they have with the employing class of any nation. Yet many workers allow themselves to be duped by the propaganda of the racials.



logan which expresses the true interests of the working class, "Workers of the World, Unite!", appears on the union banners, at the same time as racialism, the ideology of the ruling class, eats like a cancer at the heart of the movement.

There is one factor which, more than any other, is responsible for the grip that racialism has on workers, and that factor is imperialism.

The wealth of Britain was built on the cruel exploitation of Africa and Asia. In search of profits, the British put in chains and shipped to the West Indies as many as 20 million Africans. India was divided by the British drive for plunder, which destroyed the existing structure of agriculture and trade and made a permanent feature of Indian life.

As the British fought bloody wars in order to establish their 'right' to import opium, which the Chinese had banned.

How could these barbarous acts be justified? In Britain in particular were supposed to be the centre of enlightenment and progress. And yet here was a country producing slavery, running a massive trade in slaves and systematically robbing the resources of the rest of the world.

The only way it could be justified was by making the Indians, Africans and Chinese were inferior, and deserved no better than to be pushed around. The myth of the happy slave or 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' type of happy Indian who was grateful for British rule, and the destruction of those civilisations which existed before Europeans ever came to Africa and Asia, and the myth of the great civilising mission of the British, to educate and enlighten the backward races.

THE WHITE MAN AS CANNIBAL

The Roots of Racism

This was the way that the ruling class justified their pillage of vast sections of the world. But who did they have to justify it to? Well, perhaps, being men of 'conscience' they had to justify it to themselves. But more important, they had to justify it to the workers.

After all, it was not so long ago that the capitalists had raised the cry of 'freedom' against feudal lords. Being genuinely interested in freedom themselves, the mass of ordinary people had followed the bourgeoisie and won their freedom for them. Now these same people who led the movement for 'freedom' were systematically robbing the peoples of Africa and Asia of any freedom at all.

The 'free labourer' of Europe might well look suspiciously on any attempt to introduce forced labour in Asia and Africa — how could the idea of the 'free labourer' co-exist with the ideology of slavery? The only way of settling this contradiction was to make out that black people are inferior.

"In general" said the wage master and slave master rolled into one "we are in favour of 'freedom', but in the case of Africans and Asians, who are inferior beings, it is

conquered by Europeans who, if they traded in Africa, had to negotiate with the various kings of these states.

When Vasco da Gama went round the Cape of Good Hope and sailed up the Eastern coast of Africa he found dotted along the coast the city states of the Eastern seaboard. These city states had a history of trade with Asia and even ancient Greece which went back two thousand years, and Vasco da Gama reported that the goods he had brought to trade with evoked not the slightest interest.

The 500 years that followed the first contact between Europe and Africa was to see Europe develop out of feudalism to the capitalist stage of today. And what happened to Africa?

Slavery

By the 19th century the old civilisations of Africa were completely destroyed, so completely in fact that the European countries were able to colonise the whole of Africa in a flash at the end of the 19th century.

For the racist the explanation is that the innate superiority of the Europeans enabled them to develop, while the Africans went backwards. In fact, the answer lies in one word: SLAVERY.

The wealth of 18th Century Britain, which formed the basis for the industrial revolution of the 19th Century, was built on the slave trade. Manufactured goods were taken to Africa and traded for slaves; the slaves were shipped to the West Indies where they were sold to the sugar plantations, and the ships returned to England loaded with sugar. This triangular trade raked in immense profits for the manufacturers, the plantation owners and the shippers. There was hardly an element of commercial life in 18th century England which was not in some way connected with the triangular trade — and slavery was essential to the whole operation.

The colonisation of the West Indies presented a glorious opportunity to the British capitalists. There they found masses of fertile land. The only problem was labour. At first, forced white labour was used. These whites were not slaves, but in many respects they were little better off. They consisted of indentured servants, criminals who opted for the West Indies rather than execution, Irishmen who escaped the massacres of Wexford and Drogheda or people who simply had the misfortune to be kidnapped.

But the West Indies' thirst for labour could not be quenched by this flow of whites. The colonialists now turned their eyes toward Africa and black slaves.

The exact number of Africans who crossed the Atlantic in chains can only be guessed at. The highest estimate is 50 million. What is certain is the devastating effect that slavery had on African civilisation.

Slavery had existed previously in Africa just as it had existed in Europe. Conquered armies would be taken as slaves and kept by the conquerors, or perhaps traded. But whereas previously local wars were fought and slaves were a by-product, now the wars were fought solely for the purpose of capturing and selling slaves.

The economies of the African states now became predominantly concerned with the barbaric human trade. Even those states whose rulers bravely refused to have anything to do with the trade had to watch out for raids from European ships or other African states. Moreover, these raiders would be armed with guns, whereas those who refused to trade in slaves could get no guns.

For Europe and in particular Britain, the rewards of the slave trade were massive. Most people know of the saying that Liverpool and Bristol were built with the blood of slaves. What is not recognised is that it was the capital accumulated through the triangular trade that made possible the industrial revolution in this country.

For example Manchester, which became the centre of the industrial revolution, grew up in the 18th century around cotton and, of Manchester's cotton exports, five sixths went to Africa and the West Indies.

Birmingham in the 18th century was producing between 100,000 and 150,000 guns, with Africa as one of its most important customers. It was a common saying that "The price of a Negro is one Birmingham gun".

It would take pages to go through the industries that in one way or another were connected with the triangular trade, but one that must be mentioned is banking. Profiteers from the slave trade and the West Indian plantations very often started up in banking when the slave bonanza

was over, and it was must of the initial industrial revolution.

It is sufficient to mention that the Lloyds all had their hand in the trade.

There could be no question of the British ruling class and misery of the wealth of 18th century trade — and the ideology of the ruling class all reflected

For example, in 1791 the captain of the ship threw overboard the lifeboats when the ship was short of water. The matter. Not, as you might think, whether the insurance company ruled that "the case of the ship had been thrown overboard" but whether the insurance company was liable.

Today the legacy of the black people of Africa is a legacy of the various historians who try to make a nature intellectually inferior to the African history. Standard British history of any African history

In similar fashion the various different peoples under the flag of the Africans, Cypriots — their various characteristics the master race.

For example, the Chinese strong civilisation which attempts to colonise the world cunning and sly... a

Listen to John Quijano: "The moral obligation between nations is for the Christian precept... But China not being a Christian precept, to love their

Chinese bastards — they wouldn't buy our opium. Dr. Johnson once said a scoundrel. We can find a refuge in nationalism: Whenever there is a ruling class turns to Hitler made the Jews the ills of German capitalism. British ruling class local they have an obvious

After the war there was a country. Lavish public buildings, Indians to Britain, where they The black people came and dirtiest jobs.

When there was a racialist Duncan Sandys going to the Asians then Ugandan citizenship. He obviously hoped that But now the capital queues stretch out are looking for a scapegoat British imperialism the easiest victim.

For class victory answer. Defend black whether it comes from workers who fall for himself from the ruling off the most poisonous

an entirely different matter. These people wouldn't know what to do with their freedom if they had it. They are a lot better off under my rule."

So racialism came about as an ideology of the ruling class which justified the oppression of what today are known as the underdeveloped countries. And as the British empire expanded, so did the labyrinth of distortions and falsehoods, and they permeated through every layer of society.

The working class too became poisoned with the racist myth. 300 years of colonialism and imperialism have imprinted racialism on the consciousness of the working class. That is not to say that every worker goes around insulting or attacking black people (though a good many do just that). But it is the case that many workers hold to a whole mass of misconceptions about black people and it is against this background that the racials such as Enoch Powell and the fascist groups operate.

Trees

Take a statement that you can hear often enough from any racist — "Before we went to Africa they were all swinging about in trees." The racist will blurt it out — but many more workers will actually believe it, even if they don't say it.

What are the facts? 'We' (Europeans) first went to Africa more than 500 years ago. The Portuguese explorers, who sailed down the West Coast of Africa, far from finding men swinging around in trees in fact found civilisations which they recognised as being similar to their own. The feudal states of West Africa were surprisingly similar to the feudal states of medieval Europe.

The strength of these states is testified to by the fact that for four and a half centuries they remained un-



Slaves were branded for

money which helped to finance investment required for the industrial

note that Barclays, William Deacons for origin in some aspect of the slave

clearer case of the profit and wealth class being directly due to the degraded 'underdeveloped' countries. The British was dependent on the slave economy, law and religion of the British and this fact.

1833 the captain of a Liverpool slaver carrying 32 slaves he was carrying because here was a court case to investigate you might imagine, to find out whether of mass murder, but to find out company was liable! The judge of the slaves was the same as if horses board, and therefore that the insur-

able. Britain's cruel exploitation of the still exists. We have quack psychology out that black people are by inferior to whites. We have quack make out that there is no such thing that is independent of European textbooks deny the existence before Livingstone.

socialist myths are created around all peoples that were exploited by Britain glorious empire. Irishmen, Indians, and, according to the racists, have statistics which make them inferior to

Chinese, who had an exceptionally resisted to the last Britain's China, are presented as being even worse, "un-Christian".

Adams lecturing on the Opium degradation of commercial intercourse ended entirely, exclusively, upon to love your neighbour as yourself. being a Christian nation, its inhabitants bound by the Christian neighbour as themselves. ... This is system. ... The fundamental Empire is anti-commercial. ... as outrage upon the rights of on the first principles of the rights see." Get the idea? Those immoral they were so un-Christian they

aid patriotism is the last refuge of y of the ruling class that their last and racialism. crisis in the capitalist system, the help from the racists. Just as in Germany the scapegoats for all italism, so we are seeing the king round for a scapegoat. And target.

crisis

was a shortage of labour in this city campaigns were started to get and Pakistanis and Africans to come would find a land of opportunity. and were used to do the worst paid

labour shortage, the ruling class by racial considerations. That arch-ys toured Kenya and Uganda appeal not to take up Kenyan and ut to keep their British passports. at they would come to Britain. list system is in crisis. Now the t into the street and the ruling class goat. The racist ideology of kes black people in this country

workers there can be only one people against the racist onslaught, the state or from those backward socialism, No worker can emancipate class and their ideas without shaking of ruling class ideologies - racialism.



any act of defiance or petty offences

Why not ban the NF

THE ERUPTION of fascist and racist violence has been met by the Left in two different ways.

Some have taken to the streets to defend the black community and to smash the fascists and racists physically, while others have concentrated on calling for a ban on fascist organisations and activities.

The second approach, which is the official line of the Communist Party, is well expressed in the *Morning Star* of July 12th, which speaks of the need to develop a strong anti-racist campaign whose first two policy points are:

■ Demand a ban on all racist activity and strengthen the Race Relations Act against incitement to race hatred;

■ Stop police harassment ethnic minority groups."

At first sight these demands might seem plausible. But are they? Certainly the record of the use of the Race Relations incitement clause (which has been used more against blacks than against anti-black racists) would make anyone doubt the

good sense of making this demand.

Take the following story which appears in the latest edition of the South London paper *Pavement*: "Moves to prosecute the local National Front candidate in the Southfields by-election have failed. The Attorney General has thrown out a call by Wandsworth Council for Community Relations - the Borough's official Race Relations body - to take the Front to court for 'incitement to racial hatred' in its election address.

Blatant

"The Attorney General stated that 'The document you have sent me puts forward a political viewpoint, and although its contents might be presented in a somewhat exaggerated or even distorted manner, I do not consider it can be said that it is intended to stir up racial hatred'."

The Attorney General, presumably, knows that he can't



draw a clear line between the anti-black slanders put out by the National Front and those put out by 'respectable' politicians like Powell and Mellish. Thus (at least in part) the ineffectiveness of the present law - and of any similar or 'stronger' law.

But the ineffectiveness of the existing laws in this respect, while blatant, is not the basic error of the Communist Party's line. The basic mistake lies in their reliance on the capitalist state for solutions rather than on the strength of the working class.

This becomes clear the moment you ask "who is going to carry out this 'ban' and enforce the strengthened Race Relations Act?" The answer, obviously, is the usual law - enforcement agency, the police.

But the *Morning Star's* Point tells us what's wrong with that the police, it rightly says, harass ethnic minority groups. The first demand therefore amounts to this: the Government should ban racism, using to enforce the ban the very people who harass ethnic minority groups!

Police

They expect the police, who they admit are part of the problem, to provide a solution!

Seeing that the police are to be 'stopped' from their harassment presumably the Communist Party is in favour of the creation of another police force to enforce the laws against the racist police force. Certainly, a policy of relying on the state to combat racism can only imply support for expanding the state structure, in particular, the police force.

Revolutionary socialists totally oppose this approach: it is a policy not of reliance not on the working class's own strength but on the strength that has been built up by the capitalists precisely as a counterweight to working class strength.

Inadvertently the same *Morning Star* proves this point. Quoting a Communist Party leader speaking on the previous weekend, the paper reports "She also criticised ultra-left groups who saw anti-racist activity as solely a question of generating direct confrontation with racists and fascists which often led to violence, and generally with the police, not their intended opponents."

In other words, in any confrontation between the working class and racists or fascists the police take sides against the pro-working class forces. And yet the *Morning Star* wants anti-racist laws enforced by these police!

Defence

The following story (from the June issue of *Race Today*) illustrates not only the racist nature of the police, but their opposition to the most important anti-racist organisations, the black self-defence groups: "Monday 7th June 1976, 9.30pm. Sujlu Mia and Nuruz Zaman, two young factory workers, are leaving the workplace on Richard Street, London E.1.

"As they turn the corner twenty to twenty-five whites descend on both Bengalis, stabbing, kicking and punching. Both of them are taken to hospital, one of them is seriously hurt. It is midnight before the police begin their 'investigations'. They ask a few questions... They take a few notes. Within twenty minutes the 'investigation' is over.

"Meanwhile ... an hour after the incident six Asian youth were arrested. They are being held at Bethnal Green police station. Down at the station the police claim that they are holding an Asian vigilante squad. In the early hours of the morning the youth are finally released on bail but not before the policeman in charge has seen their passports. 'There are a lot of illegal immigrants in the area' he says, and sends their friends at 3 in the morning to fetch their passports from five different addresses."

'Don't offend the racists' says the manager

LEICESTER is a notoriously racist town. Since the Imperial Typewriters strike, when the National Front cashed in on a situation where strikers and scabs were divided along lines of race, the fascists have built themselves a serious base in Leicester. In that dispute the white scabs got the backing of local T&GWU officialdom; and a racist local Labour weighed in too against the strikers.

Now Leicester has the biggest National Front branch in the country. With numerous candidates in local and national elections, they have managed to gain a measure of respectability.

Working in a big unemployment benefits office in Leicester, ANDY SMITH is daily aware of the racist atmosphere, as hundreds of black and white unemployed workers crowd through the office. A month ago, Andy started wearing a FIGHT RACIALISM badge to work.

Badge

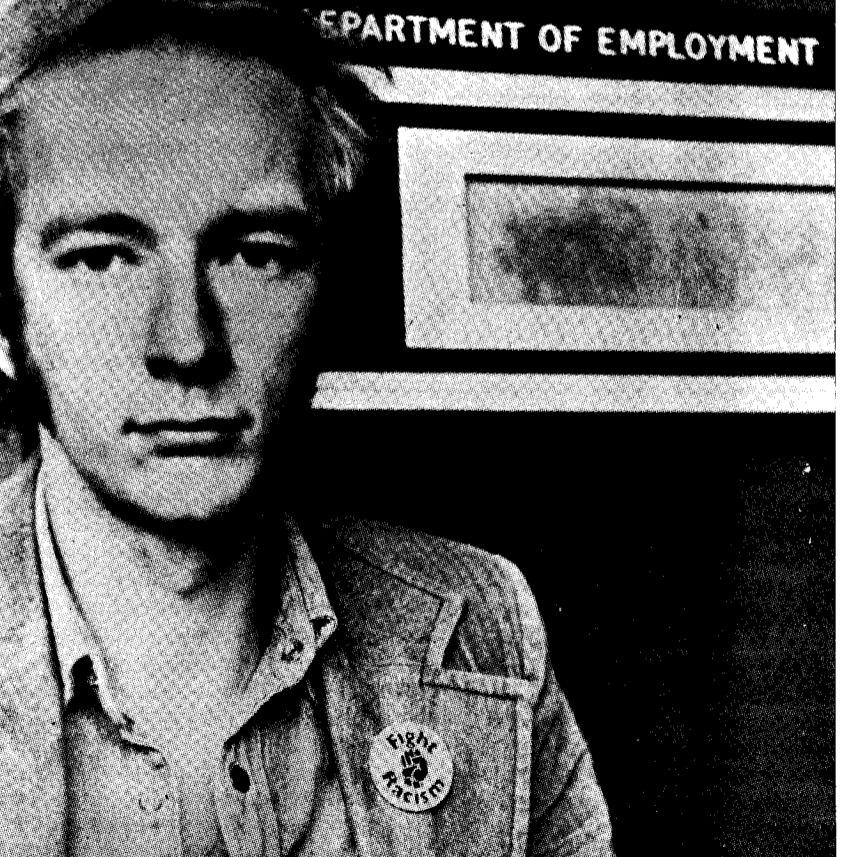
First reaction was favourable, with, in particular, Asian claimants welcoming someone taking a stand on the other side of the counter.

But it wasn't long before a white claimant - a known member of the local National Front - took violent and abusive exception to the badge and complained to the manager of the office.

In what must be an unprecedented case at a dole office of 'the customer is right', the Manager obsequiously lined up with the racist complainant and told Andy to get his badge off.

"I reminded the Manager that Government departments have a policy of opposing racial discrimination, and told him that the man who had complained was a well known local fascist." The badge, said Andy, would stay put. Next day, Andy Smith brought lots more badges in to work. He told fellow workers what had happened and soon 6 more FIGHT RACIALISM badges were being worn in the office.

This really incensed the little fascist, who now called in the local



WORKERS ACTION supporter Andy Smith: still wearing his badge

paper, the *Leicester Mercury*, in an attempt to force the management to act through fear of publicity and embarrassment.

Back down

In the next two weeks the badge wearers, all members of the CPSA, were threatened with the sack and generally intimidated. But eventually, following the workers' continued refusal to give in and the in-

tervention of the CPSA both locally and nationally, the management was forced to back down.

Today the badges as still being worn in the office.

But the story doesn't end there. Last week, a resolution was successfully moved in the local branch of the CPSA committing the union locally to oppose racism and fascist organisations like the NF. And the branch also decided to affiliate to the Leicester Anti-Fascist Committee.

EYEWITNESS OF AN EPOCH



Frank Ives on Honoré Daumier

THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT Museum in London has a small exhibition of lithographs by Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), the brilliant caricaturist, whose work spans the revolutions of 1830, February 1848, June 1848, and 1871.

Daumier wasn't a revolutionary himself. His sympathies are not clearly on the side of the working class.

He is on the side of the principles of the Great French bourgeois revolution of 1789 (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) and against those who finally profited from the revolution. His sympathies are with the liberal bourgeois, the artisans and the students who in 1830 overthrew

the Bourbon monarchy that had ruled France after Napoleon, and against the vulture politicians who benefited from that insurrection but betrayed its principles.

In 1848 he is against the rule of Louis-Philippe, nicknamed 'The Pear' for his grotesque fatness — like a walking money-bag — but not on the side of the masses of the working class. From 1850 onwards he is bitterly opposed to Louis Bonaparte, who became Napoleon III, but still clings to his bourgeois democratic principles.

Nevertheless, from the vantage

point of the intelligent artisan — his real hero — he attacks every layer of the French bourgeoisie throughout this period. When the censorship laws are more liberal his attacks are often devastating and direct, like his drawings of the massacre of the inhabitants of the rue Transnonain (1832). When they were tighter his attacks were milder and delivered in the form of a comedy of manners.

For instance, he attacked the government of Louis-Philippe, making merciless caricatures of the Deputies in the Parliament — several of these are in the exhibition, together with

the small clay busts of the Deputies he used as models — drawing them all seated on benches and labelling the drawing "The Legislative Belly". But when the censorship laws became stricter, he turned to gentle mockery of the bourgeoisie, often adding the figure of Robert Macaire, the swindler, for, as Marx wrote, at the time, "Robert Macaire was on the throne".

The same cycle is visible after the bloody suppression of the workers in June 1848 and in particular after the coup d'état by Napoleon III in December 1851. He begins with

sharp attacks. He invents the character Ratapoil — a sculpture of which is the brilliant centre-piece of this exhibition. Ratapoil is the universal reactionary, the police agent, the rumour-monger, the old soldier with the battered top hat, the symbol of devious cunning and reactionary violence. Ratapoil wears the clothes of the gutter but bears unmistakably the features of Napoleon III himself.

As the reaction after 1851 hardens, however, we find Daumier back with his comedy of manners drawings: he draws actresses, people in the public baths, bad painters and their even more deplorable critics and admirers, landlords and bailiffs, bourgeois couples gazing at the wonders of science, day trippers at Versailles, and, as before, above all else judges — though these are not the evil, brutal judges of 1834 who tried the activists in the Lyons rising, these are the vain, self-seeking, stupid pompous bourgeois themselves in the guise of the authorities indifferent to humanity.

The exhibition, which will stay in London until September and then go on tour, shows Daumier as what he was, "An Eyewitness of an Epoch" (the subtitle of the exhibition). It is a fascinating exhibition for socialists to visit, but they are wasting their time if they are looking for a confirmation of their own ideas, because, to quote the novelist Henry James, "Daumier reproduces admirably the particular life that he sees because it is the very medium in which he moves... the absolute bourgeois hems him in".

What is enduring in these works — or most of them at any rate — is the hatred of brutality, greed, self-seeking, arrogance and oppression, even if they are criticised not from a class standpoint but rather from the standpoint of a man who said of himself, "I haven't a particle of ambition, and by nature I'm lazy. I care more for my pipe than about fame and honours".



The inventor of the 'needle-gun' dreams of his success, in Daumier's cartoon of 1866

state, and to maintain those "bodies of armed men" requires military spending.

Who will abolish defence spending? The government? But to call on a capitalist government to 'abolish' the backbone of the capitalist state is only to breed illusions. The revolutionary working class? But a workers' government would not 'abolish' defence spending — on the contrary, it would set about spending, arming, and training for the defence of the working class!

In fact the slogan, 'abolition of defence spending', is only a rehash of the old Kautskyst slogan of 'disarmament'. I hope last week's article was just a slip, rather than a new policy.

COLIN FOSTER

EDITORS' REPLY: Colin Foster is right. The formulation on last week's front page was a mistaken one, written in a last-minute rush.

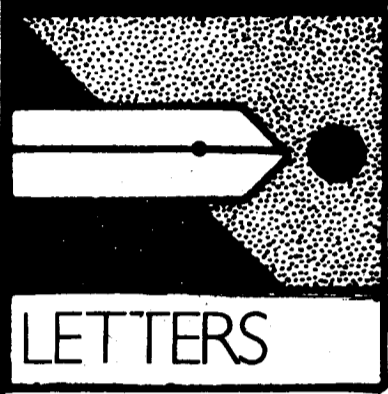


Dear comrades,

With reference to your recent article on the trials in Poland of workers who protested against the rise in food prices, I thought Workers Action readers might like to know of a resolution the British Library branch of the CPSA has sent to the August CPSA NEC meeting. It runs:

"The British Library branch committee urges the NEC to send a strong protest to the Polish embassy at the recent show trials of worker militants active in opposing the now-withdrawn plans to increase basic food prices 100%. Noting its own campaign against the Shrewsbury trial as an attack on working class militants, it condemns the vicious 3 and 5 year sentences handed down by the Polish courts, and declares the trials to be political victimisation of workers who, like ourselves, struggle against their country's leaders destruction of basic living standards.

Stephen Corbishley (CPSA)



Just a slip

Dear comrades, I was surprised to see in last week's Workers Action (front page) that you argued a different line on defence spending from that you have put forward in the past.

Previously (for example in the Workers' Action cuts special) you argued: "We opposed the capitalist standing army and the huge spending on weapons of mass destruction. If there is a need for 'defence', instead of a standing army, there should be a workers' militia, based on universal military training and under trade union control. Immediately, we demand that any cuts to be made should come off military spending".

Yet last week there was a call for the "abolition of defence spending". This duplicated the policy of Red Weekly, who put forward the demand as a more radical version of Tribune's call for cuts in arms expenditure.

To demand the 'abolition' of defence spending is as senseless as demanding the 'abolition' of the state. In fact, it comes to the same thing — for "bodies of armed men" are the essential backbone of the

A bullet out of Bradford

Obituary for a bureaucrat — VIC FEATHER

VIC FEATHER's father named his son Victor Grayson Kier Feather, hoping that he would follow in the footsteps of the "independent socialist" MP Grayson or Kier Hardie the hero of the letter members of the Independent Labour Party.

But when Vic Feather died Ted Heath was able to say of him "He always had the national interest at heart" adding that "in negotiations he was flexible and greatly helped by his wry sense of humour."

Campbell Adamson the ex-head of the CBI claimed he "had the greatest admiration for Vic Feather as a person and trade unionist". Winston Churchill, MP for Stretford who is at the moment witchhunting the strikers at Automat, praised Feather as "a great and much loved trade union leader".

How did Feather develop from a background of staunch support for the most radical representatives of Labour in Parliament to being the subject of such glowing tributes from the unswerving representatives of the ruling class?

It is said that during the harsh winter the young Vic Feather stole food for his family and protested against the low level of Poor Relief by throwing a brick

through the window of the offices of the local Board of Guardians. During the General Strike he even organised pig and sheep stealing to feed the strikers. He was an ILP member and a worker in the local Co-op.

In 1936 he entered the TUC as an administrative assistant and began the long climb to the top, acquiring on the way all the necessary skills of compromise, bluff, wheeler-dealing, bureaucratic methods and evasion. Above all, as a member of the official trade union apparatus he developed a total loyalty to it.

Cold War

Whatever his previous views, he was now an ardent anti-communist who undertook the work of monitoring the activity of trades councils and keeping track of Communist Party influence there.

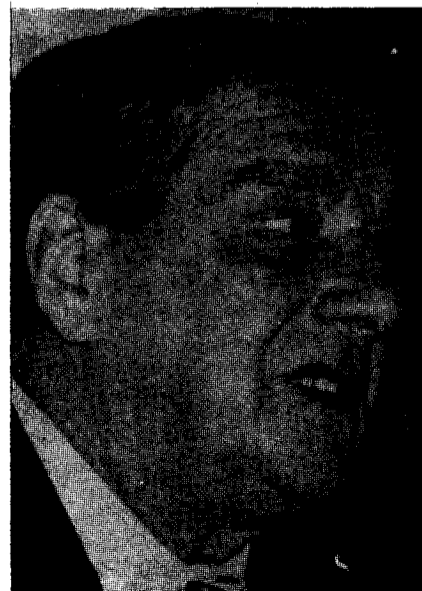
After the war, Feather was one of the team sent by the Government to Greece to wrench the trade union movement out of the hands of the Greek Communist Party. He was soon to become a leading and zealous Cold War

warrior, keeping all the time he was at the TUC an extensive personal file on "communists" active in the trade unions.

As soon as he became General Secretary of the TUC in 1969 he was faced with the Labour Government's "In Place of Strife". The son of Mr. Feather of the Bradford ILP was forced to confront the daughter of Mr. Betts of the Bradford ILP — not because the grown-up Vic was any more left than the grown-up Barbara (now Castle); he wasn't, in fact she was a famous "left winger" — but because Feather had chosen his career within the trade union bureaucracy while Castle's career was identified at that point with the Government.

If their positions had been reversed by different career choices it would still have been the trade union bureaucrat in opposition and the Government minister on the side of open reaction. For the trade union bureaucrat could not give up the institutional independence of the trade unions which 'In Place of Strife' threatened, however conservative his ideas.

Feather's opposition thus did not come from any shift to the left. And that became clearer after the Labour



Although Vic Feather rose to the highest position in the trade union movement, he never once stood for election by the rank and file.

Government had been defeated in 1970 and a Tory Government installed under Heath.

Feather's attitude to the Tories' anti-union law, the Industrial Relations Act, was to adopt a policy of "non-cooperation" in the belief that in relation to

Governments, the trade unions' greatest weapon is not action but simple passive resistance.

That policy of "non-cooperation" soon became reduced to mere refusal to register as a trade union. In fact before long TUC unions were going to the National Industrial Relations Court — not only to defend themselves, but to initiate actions.

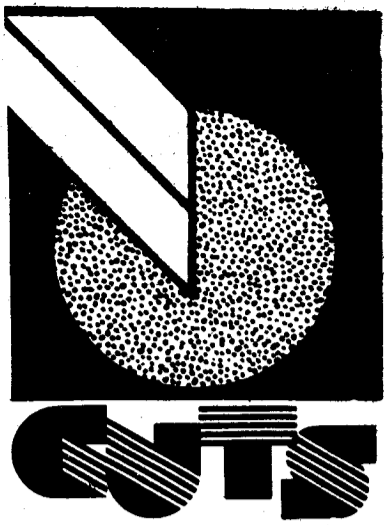
Feather was of course against direct action to smash the Act. But when in 1972 the working class opposition to the Act reached near General Strike proportions after 5 dockers were jailed in Pentonville, he had to bend with that pressure and agree to call a one day general strike.

Afraid

He was no doubt much relieved when the Tories released the dockers and he was saved from having to carry out this call. Neither the Tories nor the TUC wanted a full-scale confrontation. The Tories were afraid they would lose; the TUC was afraid it might win. . .

Victor Grayson once said that he was "simply a bullet aimed from the working class at the employers". Victor Grayson Kier Feather, whatever his background, his early affiliations and actions, was a bullet travelling in the opposite direction. He earned the tributes of Heath, Adamson and Churchill. Let them write his epitaph — the working class has better things to do.

NEAL STATHAM



Riding in a taxi?

ROCHDALE NOW HAS a Fight the Cuts Committee which meets fortnightly. It draws up information about the way in which the cuts affect local people, and has been actively involved in two campaigns, producing leaflets and taking round petitions.

One of these relates to the education cuts. The local Tory council are trying to use insurance money from a primary school which was burnt down last year to renovate other schools in the area. The Parents' Action Group, the local Trades Council, and the Fight the Cuts Committee say that the primary school is an essential part of the estate in which it was situated, providing both educational and social facilities.

The other campaign at present supported by the committee has been initiated by some local disabled women, concerned at Alf Morris's decision to phase out the Trikes at present used by disabled people. Instead they are to get £5 a week mobility allowance. As one man said: "£5 would be great! I could go for a ride in a taxis for an hour a week..."

Disabled people in Rochdale are demanding 4 wheeled cars instead of either the Trike or the £5. This is a group of people that Fight the Cuts Committees should not ignore.

K. Bennett.

A FIGHT OVER the allocation of resources at Basingstoke Hospital, has led to the victimisation of NUPE branch secretary, Maureen Thorpe.

Early in July the NUPE branch protested over management plans to spend an extra £5,000 on the doctors dining room, while at the same time workers in the catering department are suffering in temperatures of 95 degrees. The new air-conditioning equipment they need would cost £4,000...

When the NUPE branch organised to fight for better conditions for its members, a witch-hunt was launched in the local press against Maureen Thorpe. Prominent doctors joined in the hurling of abuse, and Maureen has received threatening letters and phone calls.

But Maureen has the support and confidence of the branch — a branch which is not only taking on the hospital bureaucrats and leading doctors, but has also involved itself in the local campaign against racism and fascism.

300 NURSES at the 1,200 bed St. Margrets Hospital, Great Barr, are taking action against bad staffing levels in the hospital.

They went from ward to ward dismantling unoccupied beds to ensure no new admissions, and threatened a complete walk-out on any ward that admitted non-urgent cases.

They passed a motion of no confidence in the Walsall Area Health Authority. They called off their action after David Ennals, Minister of Health, had visited the hospital and promised that the West Midlands Health Authority would look into staffing levels.

But despite Ennals' promise, they decided to carry on with the action committee that organised their protest.

THE NUPE Executive has sent details to all NUPE branches of an Action Programme on Cuts in Public Expenditure. It calls for all negotiators (shop stewards, branch secretaries and divisional officers) to seek clear guarantees from employing authorities.

Negotiators are urged to secure guarantees of no redundancies and of no loss of earnings as a result of public expenditure cuts. They are also asked to win guarantees that there will be 'no increase in workloads without appropriate increases in earnings'.

Tie

With nearly 1½ million unemployed we must oppose all increases in workloads, and also oppose all attempts by employers to tie increased earnings to increased workloads and higher productivity. But in other respects these instructions to NUPE negotiators will be an important focus in the battle against the public expenditure cuts.

As negotiators from NUPE meet with blank refusals from the local authorities, the question of action to secure no loss of jobs, no loss of pay, no increase in the workload and no deterioration in the service will be sharply posed. As a newsletter from the NUPE United Manchester Hospitals branch has recently pointed out "the management are intent on a collision course with the unions over the cuts."

Action

The NUPE Executive has discussed the question of action. It asks all branches to give consideration to tactics to be used when the union campaign comes up against the stonewalling of the local authorities. They suggest that all-out strikes "can be counter-productive

NUPE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CUTS

in that they will, by reducing wage costs for the period of the strike, provide employing authorities with the savings in expenditure they are seeking." But hospital wages, saved for a few weeks by the authorities, will not provide the savings and cutbacks that the employing authorities are seeking. Such arguments can, however, provide a let-out for those seeking to avoid action.

Tactics

But the circular clearly does recommend that branches decide on meaningful forms of action — "guerilla tactics are likely to be the most effective when industrial action is considered necessary." It recommends short strikes, work to rule and non-cooperation as well as, *most importantly*, the unilateral rearrangement of work schedules by members to offset the effects of the cuts and "refusal to accept additional workloads or changes in works arrangements."

The Executive makes it clear that in the situation of 'massive redundancies' or 'reductions in earnings' it will consider requests for official strike action subject to the usual requirements of the Union's rules.

The NUPE Executive intend to back up this campaign with a barrage of posters and leaflets leading up to a lobby of Parliament against

the cuts in public expenditure. They are calling for NUPE to work in coordination with other public sector unions at all levels to secure support within the labour movement for the lobby and Action Day against the Cuts.

Not all the points of NUPE's campaign are useful. Alan Fisher, NUPE General Secretary, has made it clear that he sees 'import controls' — unemployment for workers elsewhere — as an alternative to cuts. We cannot agree with that. Moreover, we don't think that the use of the all-out strike weapon can be reserved necessarily only for fights against massive redundancies and wage cuts.

But the call from the NUPE Executive does provide a framework within which militants in NUPE can build up the fight against cuts.

The policies of no covering for unfilled vacancies, no increase in the workload and the re-arrangement of work schedules under *trade union branch control* must be taken up and organised in the workplaces. It is not enough for them to be 'official policy', they must be organised for now as the Government's cuts bite deeper.

With the NUT in many areas set to implement class size maximums by direct action the fight by NUPE cannot be seen in isolation. Policies of direct action to prevent all deterioration of conditions and

standards in the public sector must be coordinated by the public sector unions. At national and local level public sector committees must be formed to ensure coordination in struggle and the maximum of support for all workers taking action to fight the cuts.

The NUPE call for a day of action can provide a focus for action throughout the labour movement against the Labour Government's cuts. It is vital that anti-cuts committees drawing in not only the public sector unions, but also the trade union movement as a whole, (Labour Party organisations, the Working Women's Charter Campaign and National Abortion Campaign and tenants' organisations too) are built and that they give full support to those in NUPE fighting to put their campaign into practice.

Cuts

The Labour Government's cuts threaten the wages, jobs and conditions of all public sector workers. They threaten also the already hopelessly inadequate social and health services, housing and education on which all workers depend. The NUPE campaign must be developed as part of a campaign throughout all the labour movement against all cuts, and for an extension of all the social and welfare services on which workers rely.

CLARRIE JONES

A strange idea of unity

A "Unity Meeting" called by Leicester's *Inter Racial Solidarity Campaign* at the beginning of August was all set to go ahead without even inviting the Leicester Anti-Fascist Committee, the revolutionary groups (which have borne the brunt of the local fight against fascism) and an Indian Workers' organisation which is actually affiliated to the I.R.S.C.

Among those who did get an invitation were various Catholic organisations, trade union officials and just about every organisation connected with the Liberal Party.

But the Anti-Fascist Committee did get itself credentials and went along to the meeting. And it was able to illustrate in practice the difference between a militant, active opposition to racism and the approach of the Platform.

The meeting's organisers had prepared a long resolution calling for a united campaign which would call on various bodies to ban the fascists. The role of workers' organisations in getting rid of this menace which threatens them was not clear, though they did get a mention 'other bodies, churches, pubs, trade unions etc.'

The tone was set by Barry Brazier, local Community Relations Officer, who did a commercial for the Government's forthcoming new Race Relations laws. He did admit that stronger laws "aren't necessarily used properly" and seemed to know that the Public Order Act and conspiracy laws

had never been used against fascists. But he failed to say who these laws had been used against: trade unionists and the left.

On immigration law he said that since "every state has the right to control entry" we should press for 'non-racist' immigration laws.

The meeting was opened to the floor and quickly polarised between what were caricatured as the advocates of peace and the advocates of violence.

What had produced this caricature was the resolution presented by the Anti-Fascist Committee, proposing mobilisation of the working class and the black community to stop the Front and take up the fight against racism within the labour movement.

Though the AFC had put out a leaflet explaining its resolution, there was still a lot of confusion when it came to the voting.

The call for an elected coordinating committee of delegates from the AFC, the IRSC, trade unions and political & black organisations was rejected as sectarian (perhaps it should have included the churches?) but it was later agreed that a coordinating committee should be set up with representatives from all the organisations attending, and interested individuals.

End

The section of the AFC resolution calling for "an end to immigration controls, racist legislation and state harassment of immigrants" was carried — and then later contradicted by passing a motion (from the platform) "to campaign for non-racistist immigration and nationality laws."

"Support for black self defence

groups and black struggles within the trade unions" was agreed — as was the platform's call for "the strongest possible representation to the police to request adequate protection for the immigrant community." The meeting also carried the AFC's call for the expulsion of fascists from the trade unions.

But when it came to demonstrations the meeting baulked at "mob-



'Unity' — OK with Churches, not militants like these Leicester Asian strikers.

ilisations to prevent racist demonstrations, paper sales and meetings by whatever means necessary and opted instead for peaceful demonstrations and calls for other bodies to do the job by banning the fascists.

The meeting ended up in a chaotic welter of points of order, and in the confusion the IRSC's motion got through in its entirety — though in intent and in places explicitly it totally contradicted those parts of the AFC's motion that had been passed.

A strange idea of unity...

GERRY BYRNE

Bosses clamp down

WITH the union leaders in full retreat, employers throughout the country are waging a campaign to clamp down on shop floor organisation.

Their methods are various. Shop stewards and convenors are being coaxed into participation committees and boards to represent the company to the workforce, rather than the workforce against the employers.

There has also been a marked increase in the confidence of employers to victimise and dismiss known militants who can't be silenced by the lure of 'consultation' and 'joint decision making'.

WORKERS ACTION has recently covered the dispute at J. Blackwood Hodge in Northampton where the employers sacked a known militant and the trade union officials didn't lift a finger. AUEW members in Northampton are demanding an inquiry into this case of flagrant victimisation.

Trade union officials are offering little resistance to this wave of victimisation and sacking Jack Sprung, of Triumph in Coventry (who had been a steward there for 27 years!) was dismissed recently on the pretext that he had brought a film team into the plant. In fact he was an arch opponent of the employers' recipe of participation and deteriorating wages and conditions. Again in his case, the official union machinery in the area, for example the Confed, did not lift a finger to help him.

Jack Sprung has now produced a short documentary pamphlet on the history of his sacking. It can be obtained c/o The Coventry Workshop, 40 Binley Road, Coventry. It shows clearly how the employers have managed to get their way and been "allowed to decide who is going to be a union representative and what a steward cannot do in discharging his duties during a dispute situation."

The labour movement must alert itself to the spate of victimisations. And it must learn how to fight them.

The trade union officials cannot be relied on to lead a fight. Only direct action on the shop floor, where management are trying to assert their control can put a stop to their plans. In the Longbridge plant in Birmingham last month the employers attempted to summarily dismiss workers, clearly suspecting them to be militants. Management withdrew the notices immediately when they were met with a clear NO from the plant union organisation and the threat of strike action.

WARRIORS IN ACTION

Gops escort scab trucks through at Trico's

THE LAST WEEK of July was a crucial one at the TRICO factory in West London where nearly 400 women and over 150 men are involved in an Equal Pay strike.

After two months of the strike, the factory was running seriously low on raw materials; the strikers' victory on the Monday night in turning back a big convoy of scab trucks increased the urgency of the employers.

Their attempts to break the strike reached a climax on the Thursday evening. 5 coach-loads of police (many drafted in from outside the area) accompanied a convoy of 6 trucks to make sure the 'mercenary' scab lorry drivers, paid huge amounts of blood-money, could deliver their supplies.

At first the police said they would allow 6 women to talk to the lorry drivers. The first driver refused to talk to the pickets, and when they tried to speak to the others the police abusively pushed them out of the way. Scuffles followed at the gates with the police linking arms to allow the lorries to pass.

During the battle three people were arrested: Jack Dromey (Secretary of Brent Trades Council), an AUEW Trico worker and a member of NUPE.

The events that followed are yet another example of the police collaboration with the scab convoy. An emergency

Strike Bulletin published the next day takes up the story: "When the lorries left the factory, at least one of which had its number plates covered up, about 20 police officers blocked off the junction of Boston Manor Road and Great West Road to prevent any cars following the convoy.

"Nevertheless, one car did manage to follow 3 of the lorries. On the M1, one of the lorries tried to ram the car and, when the convoy left the M1 near Northampton, the lorries forced the car following them to stop. The scab drivers then chased the two pickets from the car, one of whom had to take refuge in a house. There is no doubt that but for the two pickets running to escape from the drivers and their heavy mates, this strike would have had its first serious casualties."

Brutal

Since the events of that Thursday night, even though the line had been broken, the strikers have felt stronger than ever. The brutal picket-busting backed up on management, causing fork-lift drivers and workers in the 'goods-inwards' and short-order departments to join the strike.

The confidence of the strikers was shown early on, when they supported a

call by the AUEW to boycott the Industrial Tribunal set up under the Equal Pay Act. An investigation into cases brought before the Tribunal showed that in the majority of cases they had not given women a proper and fair hearing and had decided in favour of the employers.

A massive show of solidarity by the widest possible sections of the labour movement is needed to maintain the momentum of this strike and to ensure that it wins.

Production is somehow still continuing at the factory, which makes windscreen wipers for the motor industry. Many of those still working are clerical workers, some of them in TASS and ASTMS. The threat of night convoys bringing raw materials and taking out

finished goods makes 24-hour picketing essential.

But the majority of strikers are women and because in this society women are expected to fulfill their 'family commitments' it is difficult for some of them to play a full and active part in the strike. Now schools are closed for the summer, with children at home to be minded. It's important to get a creche or playgroup set up for the strikers - some women have been paying large sums of money to childminders so they can attend the picket.

The events of the past few weeks demonstrate the need for a broadly based support committee under the direction of the Trico Strike Committee, which would draw in the active support

and solidarity, coordinated to bring pressure on the leadership of those unions whose members are still scabbing, and get them to ensure that their members don't ever cross the picket line again.

Solidarity

Workers in the car industry should organise strikes in solidarity with Trico, and should in any case tighten up on blacking of products, including those from the Northampton Trico plant.

And send messages of support and donations to Trico Strike Committee, AUEW House, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall, Middlesex.
PAT LONGMAN
MARY CORBISHLEY



Haringey Council looks for short cut to 'legalised lump'

by Paul Adams

TONY MORELY was a shop steward on a Haringey Council building site. Now he has been suspended after a frame-up charge of fiddling travelling expenses; the council has set spies to watch his wife's house, and the men he works with fear they might be for the chop if they don't get support.

According to Haringey Council, this is all to further the cause of workers' participation!

The Council's pet participation scheme is called PELAW - Participation Experiment in Local Authority Work. Originally it was an extension of the direct labour force with one difference: PELAW was supposed to be a joint decision-making profit-sharing enterprise. But it has quickly become a system of legalised lump labour. As one local UCATT branch secretary put it, "This is partnership like the partnership between master and servant. We seem to have stepped back 100 years with this scheme."

Opposition to the way PELAW was running started about 7 months ago. The main ground for the opposition was PELAW management's drive for complete flexibility, trying to use the PELAW 'constitution' to break the union's 'Working Rule Agreements'. "We're not fanatical demarcationists," says Tony Morely, "but their idea is a brickie doing the wooden stairways or a plasterer the roofing."

The Council could see that the only way it was going to get the legalised lump situation it wanted was to break the union organisation in PELAW. The problem for them was that when PELAW was set up it was agreed that it would be 100% trade union, recruiting new labour in the first place from unemployed members of the union through the

union branches. This guaranteed that most recruits to PELAW would be active trade unionists. So management tried to avoid recruiting labour from the branches. Instead they attempted to transfer workers from the council's direct works department. That way they thought they could kill two birds with one stone: run down the direct works labour force by 'natural wastage' and at the same time transfer inactive and right-wing trade unionists into PELAW. When management found this road blocked by the workers, they tried another tack; they split the PELAW workers into two units, putting the militants into Unit 1, with the excuse that "the other men don't want to work with you because you're not cooperative". They then proceeded to disrupt the work of Unit 1. They held back supplies when they were needed or only ordered half of what the tradesmen had asked for; they refused to accept the tradesmen's advice; they purposely delayed making decisions so as to hold up the progress of work.

After a short while of operating like this management produced a document 'proving' Unit 1 was losing £1,400 on each of two jobs, while praising the co-operation of Unit 2. Then, just over 5 weeks ago, Unit 1 were told on a Friday that there would be a full meeting of PELAW on the following Monday in the presence of councillors Eric Smith and Vic Butler, the borough engineer and the personal officer.

But at a union meeting on that Monday Unit 1 instructed Tony Morely as shop steward to demand an adjournment of the meeting to ensure a longer notice,

an agenda, and figures on the profit and loss of PELAW. They decided to boycott and picket the meeting scheduled for that day.

Tony was also instructed to contact the Unit 2 shop steward, but he was refused permission to leave the site. At this, the men downed tools, though later they agreed to return to work after the local union official, Frank May, had ordered them to.

It was understood that the return to work was on the basis that Frank May and Tony Morely would get the PELAW management and council to set up a meeting like the one that had been boycotted - but this time with ample notice, an agenda, figures, and a notification of the union official. Nevertheless when the meeting was called none of these conditions was fulfilled.

The meeting itself was just a courtroom trial of the Unit 1 men. The complaints against them were accepted by the councillors as important, while all their complaints and explanations were said to be "petty".

Between the boycotted meeting and the actual meeting, however, the council launched a second line of attack. They charged Tony Morely with fiddling travelling expenses and brought him before an 'auditing enquiry' the day before the meeting with the councillors. They decided to delay their verdict on Tony until the PELAW meeting was over so as to prevent any protest there.

As expected, the day after the PELAW meeting the 'auditing enquiry' produced a verdict of 'guilty' and sacked Tony Morely. But Len Heaton, the UCATT Regional Officer, who had watched the farce of the meeting, agreed with Tony's work-mates that he should instead be sus-

ended on full pay pending an appeal.

To make sure of the complete ghettoisation of the militants on Unit 1, the council also decided now was the time to start its Plumbers Unit...using the labourers from Unit 1! This left Unit 1 with five tradesmen - one of whom was suspended.

This elaborate game of isolation, victimisation, harassment and evasion has one chief aim: to break the opposition to making PELAW a lump scheme operating on a union ticket.

The workers on Unit 1 see this as directly related to the cuts. Haringey Council, which says its going to oppose any cuts in expenditure, clearly wants to soften up the union organisation amongst its building workers as a prelude to cutting back on labour. Tony Morely and the Unit 1 men are not the only victims of this. Bricklayer shop steward Allan Johnson has been moved to another part of the Council's works so that he cannot be in touch with his members. Two other stewards have been moved for the same reason.

But the lessons aren't limited to Haringey and the cuts. The PELAW story is a parable of 'participation' schemes. It reveals the basic anti-trade union motives behind the democratic phrases and the managerial sharp practice behind the nonsense of 'partnership'.

Trade unionists in the area, particularly those who are active Labour Party members, should put pressure on the Council to reinstate Tony Morely and to stop its anti-union practices.

On the evening of the 29th July Eric Smith (the Labour councillor whose brainchild PELAW is) spoke at an LPYS meeting in Haringey. Before he started his speech - all about the horrors of international capitalism - he made clear that he would refuse to talk about Tony Morely's victimisation or PELAW. But a large part of the audience, which included most of Unit 1, demanded a hearing.

Luckily for Smith, the local LPYS is dominated by the 'Militant' tendency, who are notorious for their toadying to Labour Party worthies...especially those prepared to spice a speech with references to international capitalism. The 'Militant' chairman finally chose to close the meeting early rather than let any of the Unit 1 men have a hearing.

STOP PRESS

We have just learned that, at a PELAW 'team' meeting involving councillors as well as workers, Unit 1 was informed that its workers were to be seconded to the council's direct labour scheme.

"This means a definite wage cut for Unit 1," said Tony Morely, "but that is not the real issue. The real issue is that they want to destroy the structure we have set up and leave the rest of PELAW to run amok virtually as a lump scheme."

Manchester strikers fight flexibility

Members of the AUEW in the West Gorton works of International Computers are striking against the 'rationalisation' plans of management.

In the final Assembly Shop there used to be 50 AEU fitters and about 50 ETU 'wire-men'. In 1970, for a £1 rise, the two unions agreed to 'fringe flexibility' - a relaxation of demarcation.

This year management wants total flexibility - one grade of wire-men/fitters, no demarcation at all. The ETU agreed - without even a pay rise. This rationalisation would have led to the loss of jobs in the Department.

On May 18th, management moved ETU members, the wire-men, to the fitters' benches. The AEU members refused to work with them.

By June 28th, when there was still no solution the AUEW put a picket on the gate and called out the rest of its members. Manchester District Secretary Walter Mather said "...we have now decided to bring this dispute to a conclusion."

But the dispute is still going on. ETU members are persistently breaking the picket line, doing their own and the fitters' jobs, and piling up overtime doing 7 twelve-hour shifts a week.

They rush in in their cars, in such a hurry to get past the pickets that one of the pickets has already been put into hospital by a speeding scab.

The staff union ASTMS is not directly involved and has blacked work and instructed its members not to allow their cars to be used for smuggling components. But it has not called them out.

Unlike Automat, the factory across town where AUEW members have been out for 7 months, ICL is not a small private company run by a crank. This offensive is a deliberate one and ICL will only be encouraged to push for further such measures if the union fails to organise solidarity action in other plants to win this dispute.

AUTOMAT - Red-baiting is bosses' latest trick

PRESSURE is growing on the strikers at AUTOMAT (Swinton) to reach a settlement - or, more precisely, to give in. In the local press, Stretford MP Winston Churchill has been conducting a red-baiting campaign against local AUEW District Official John Tocher - known to the strikers as not so much as a red-hot Communist agitator as a cautious man given to lecturing them on how very long the strike can last.

Churchill claims, however, that the strike (of 25 AUEW members who walked out in support of victimised steward Tom Smith and were themselves sacked) is part of a "nationwide Communist plot to smash democracy in Britain." This absurdly wild accusation has been given wide coverage in the pages of the Daily Mail and the local paper the Manchester Evening News. And

some days later well-known witch-hunter Woodrow Wyatt had taken up the cause of Automat's anti-union boss John Chamberlain, writing in his regular Sunday Mirror column that the strikers were 'hooligans'.

The same week, the bosses' blue-uniformed allies weighed in, threatening and harassing the pickets, who were told to 'shut up', 'move on' and not even lean on the factory fence.

What's even worse is the scandalous behaviour of some students from Manchester Polytechnic. At least 10 students have taken jobs in the factory over the summer. When the Union Executive found out about this it sent a delegation down to the picket to argue with these

scabs, and even offered to find them alternative work. But the student scabs are still working at Automat.

Perhaps the most threatening development is the action of the AUEW National Executive in deciding to refer the dispute to ACAS - over-ruling the decision of the North West organiser Tocher. The strikers themselves are also against going to ACAS - they have already seen what tribunals mean, when an Industrial Tribunal in May ruled that the company were right to dismiss the strikers.

With all these pressures on them, the strikers need maximum support. Moves are being taken to set up third party blacking, and last week 600 engineers from Stockport swelled the picket line and gave the strikers a much needed boost.
SUE ARNALL