

CHARTIST

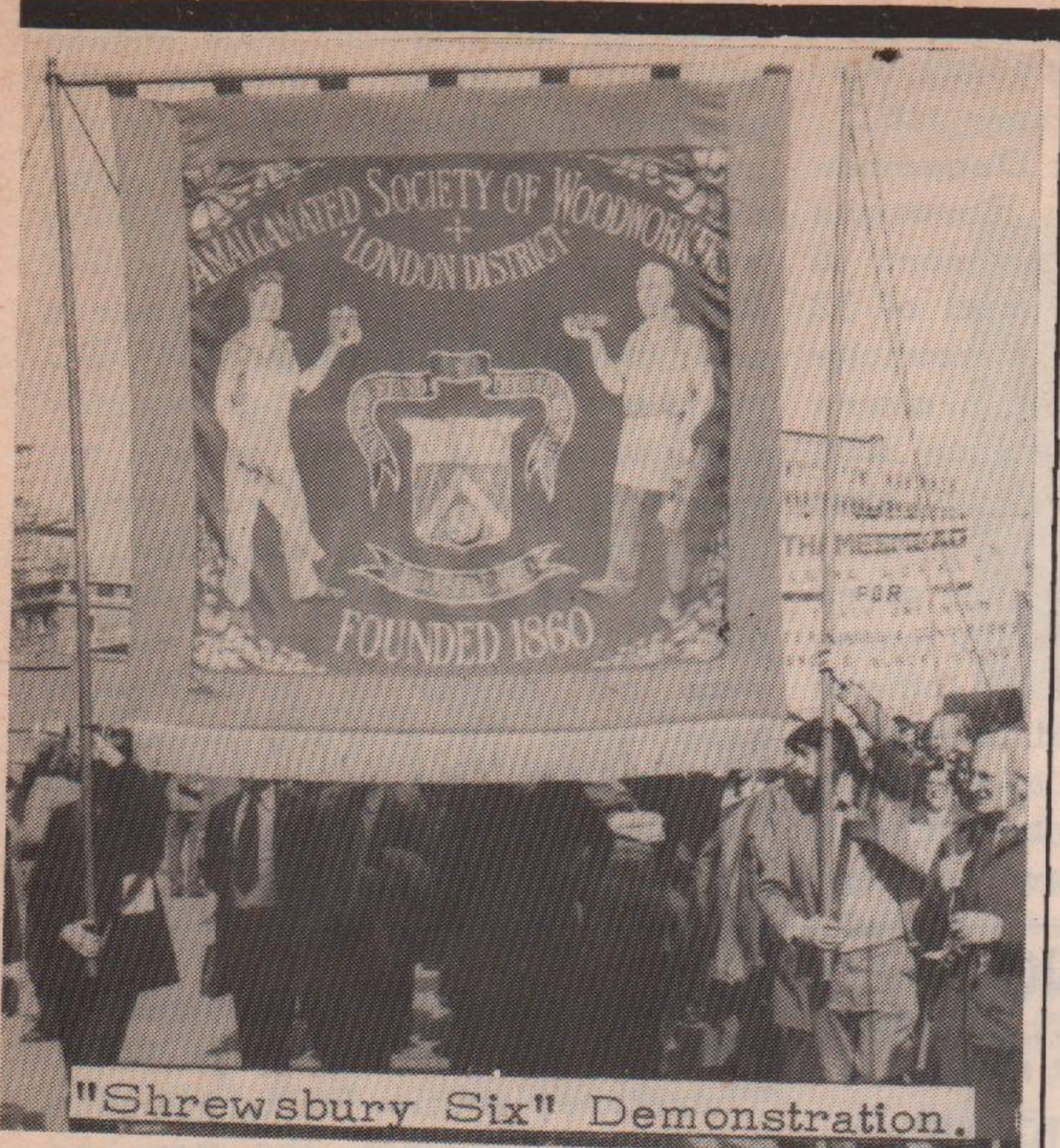
LABOUR'S REVOLUTIONARY VOICE No. 18 APRIL 1974 Price 5p

Prices, Common Market, Budget, Clay Cross, Shrewsbury 6, Nationalization,

STOP THE RETREAT!

LABOUR'S PRETENCE at implementating its programme must be ended. Foreign Secretary Callaghan's "venture" to Europe to discuss terms was nothing but a mockery of the spirit of Labour Party conference decisions. Instead of approaches to European workers' organisations, we have shoulder rubbing with the monopolists and bankers. Instead of immediate withdrawal from the Common Market we have time wasting manoeuverings.

Labour's budget was equally a retreat. The rises in taxation, electricity, rail fares, postal charges, beer, cigarettes and sweets are a serious warning to the working class. Add to this the decision not to reverse Tory cuts in public spending and it amounts to a renewed attack on living standards.



THE TRIAL of the 'Shrewsbury 24' is over. Today, 6 building workers languish in prison on sentences ranging from 4 months to 3 years on charges under the Conspiracy laws. 16 others are under suspended sentences. Their crimes?...exercising the right to picket during the building workers' strike in 1972. These sentences are an attack on the whole trade union movement. In refusing to immediately release the pickets, the Labour Government is backing up this threat, and complying with the class verdict of the court.

Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, and the rest of the Labour Government must be told in no uncertain terms:

- Immediately release the Six!
- Repeal the Conspiracy Laws!

No amount of tax-relief for the low paid can alter this. Nor can the 'penny off milk', food subsidies, or higher pensions. No workers should be fooled by these milk-sop measures. The 18-20% a year rise in prices will erode these anyway. The prospect is one of increasing "stagflation"—more unemployment through cutbacks in investment and galloping inflation.

The Budget marked a major retreat from Labour's election programme. The promised wealth tax that would have the rich squealing in the aisles was nowhere to be seen. Yet, in exchange for this, the trades union movement is being invited by its leaders to dig its own grave and pay for the use of the shovel. "Left-wing" transport leader Jack Jones greeted Labour's policy by saying "workers will be making sacrifices...I believe they will do so willingly." TUC secretary, Len Murray, claimed: "The broad sweep of the Budget has been very much what we are looking for....We'll respond in terms of wage claims, I'm sure."

The much vaunted 'social contract' will hand the working class over bound and gagged, if these right-wing and 'left' leaders get their way. No worker can 'write a blank cheque' for this government which is keeping the wages policy of the late and unlamented Tories. Employment chief, Michael Foot, is clutching Phase 3 and the Pay Board like a set of rosary beads. They must be abolished immediately.

Trades unionists and tenants have the right to expect a lot from the Labour government. Clay Cross councillors have still not been reimbursed neither have their rent rises been scrapped. Similarly, the Industrial Relations Act is still on the statute books and the NIRC has just fined the AUEW another £47,000 for compensation to the anti-

union, Con-Mech Company. It is clear workers would be wrong to wait in hope. Sections with claims in the pipeline must press those claims. The Engineers' leaders, especially, must organise national strike action to win their claim. The wages fight must be broadened with political demands.

The strength and power of the working class, spearheaded by miners, brought down Heath. The labour movement must use that strength to demand that Labour implement its full programme. Despite the terrible weaknesses of this programme any bid to successfully stop price rises and the economic crisis and take over a few profitable enterprises means a challenge to the power of the ruling class. Only the transfer of power to the working class and the nationalising of the entire economy will suffice. A start must be made by taking over the British Aircraft Corporation where thousands of jobs are in danger in the Concorde row. If capitalism cannot guarantee jobs, then capitalism must go. There must be no retreat on the promises for which millions of workers voted.

Labour must carry out its programme and make the employing class pay for the capitalist crisis, breaking its power once and for all by basing itself on the strength of the millions of workers that it represents.

There can be no excuses about Labour's minority position and the need to 'box clever'. If the Tories and Liberals want to force an election to prevent socialist policies, the Labour movement must meet that threat head-on, because if an election was called with Labour seriously attacking the rich it would be returned with a massive mandate to break the power of those who really rule—the bankers and monopolists.

An immediate call must go up from Labour Party members and trade unionists for an emergency recall conference of the Labour Party to ensure Labour's retreat is halted, and plans for the implementation of a socialist programme thrashed out.

THE CHARTIST

Monthly Journal of the Socialist Charter Movement.

Ed.: M. Davis, 82 Loughborough Rd, London SW9. 01-733-8953

The battle for London

ON MAY 2nd, voting takes place in London to elect the councils for all thirty-two London Boroughs. What are the problems which the new Labour authorities will face?

They are immense. In the last few years, the Tories have made enormous cuts in finance to local authorities under the impact of the economic crisis.

The services in London are slowly seizing up due to a lack of staff, an increase in need and the general drying-up of funds necessary to "lubricate" them. London Transport is increasingly finding it can't run buses and tube trains because it has no staff to run them, and the vitally necessary stages II and III of the Fleet tube line have been moth-balled. The number of school-kids being sent home early from school due to teacher shortage has rocketed, and with this goes a severe cut-back in the building of schools.

It is in housing, however, that the social crisis has reached its acutest expression. During 1973, the number of houses completed nationally—293,000—was the lowest for 14 years. For council housing, the figure was the worst since 1947!

This was deliberate Tory policy to boost the profits of the speculators and private construction monopolies like Taylor Woodrow and Laing's, who have waxed

rich out of the human misery of the housing situation. Local authorities have been forced to pay extortionate prices even to sustain the dwindling number of housing "starts". Many London boroughs have been unable to reduce their housing lists by one single tenant over the last year—re-housing solely on the basis of re-development and urgent medical or social cases. An estimated quarter of a million are on London housing waiting lists.

Equally damaging has been the growth of "sub-contracting" in house-building, much of it using the "lump" and un-organized labour.

Office-blocks and other such "speculative" developments have proliferated in the last ten years and councils are often in the invidious position of either granting planning permission to the Harry Hyams of London and seeing whole areas denuded of a residential population, or of refusing permission and slowly starving themselves of rates, letting valuable building sites lie derelict.

These are just some of the problems that will confront the

new councillors on May 3rd.

Is there any way out of this dilemma? Must new Labour representatives inevitably turn into rubber-stamps for the dictates of the prevailing system? We think not. The power is there, even at a municipal level, to break this vicious circle—but it cannot be done by obeying the "rules of the game". A decisive break with the bureaucracy and with passive acceptance of the law is the only way out.

As a matter of fact, no worthwhile reforms have been made by, or in, local government without action in the streets, in the factories or on the council estates. Rent control was only introduced following the Glasgow rent strikes of 1915, which led to massive industrial action and even to mutinies among the troops in the Flanders trenches. Government support for the Housing Revenue Accounts of poorer councils was only brought in during the nineteen twenties after George Lansbury and the entire Poplar Council had refused to balance the books and had been marched off to prison. Only a mini-General

Strike in East London gained the councillors' unconditional release. Even the action of the Clay Cross rebels has been instrumental in forcing the repeal of the Housing Finance Act and the implementation of a temporary rent-freeze.

This is the tradition Labour councillors must follow. A Labour victory in the London Borough elections—consolidating the massive 1971 gains—would add tremendous weight to the Labour-controlled GLC. This in the context of a Labour Government, is potential dynamite to the Tory system.

Labour councillors will have no excuse for inaction. Bold measures are needed. Bold measures must come. With the Tories routed on all fronts, the road will be open to solve all the problems faced by local authorities on the basis of a complete re-organization of society. We need a permanent freeze on rents, municipalization of all housing, nationalization of the land, banks and insurance companies, a crash house, school and hospital building programme and an expansion of public transport with free fares.

No payment of surcharges!
Make the banks pay!

There will be no shortage of working class support for this action.

ENGINEERS: OVERTIME BAN BEGINS

THE ENGINEERS' overtime ban commences on April 15th. Their claim is for £35 a week basic, a 35-hour week and 9 days extra holiday. The last agreement ran out in August. Since then the employers have offered only £2.50 in the skilled rate and £1.80 for women, refusing to offer any more. Since the last negotiations in January, the AUEW leadership has done nothing. Because of this, many engineers are dubious about the claim and feel that 'left' leader Hugh Scanlon's main aim has been to defuse the situation.

The hours claim is especially relevant after the 3-day week experience. On the money side, the Engineering Employers' Federation say there's nothing in the kitty. Scanlon must live up to his words by demanding that the employers open their books to union inspection. Furthermore, the claim is a national one. The AUEW must organize national strike action to fight for it. There can be no repeat of the isolated action of 1972 if the fight is to be won.

Walkout Supports Six

MEMBERS OF A.S.T.M.S. at the Institute of Psychiatry, South London, went on a token strike on March 29th. The action was against the sacking of six union members who had merely complained internally about the handling of research which they have been doing into drug addiction; the staff have been forbidden to publish the results of their work without the director's permission.

NALGO members take strike action

A N.A.L.G.O.
MEMBER

"WE ARE FIGHTING not the employers but the Government", a NALGO spokesman told the press on April 2nd, as Michael Foot insisted on freezing the interim London weighting allowances already agreed with the employers. Now NALGO workers in London are on official strike—the first time in the union's history that it has involved large sections of its membership in this way.

The London Weighting campaign is for a £400 increase. Behind the demand is the drastic London staff shortage (owing to living, and especially, housing, costs) which threatens the collapse of the city's education, transport

and local government services within 12 months at the present rate.

To the surprise of their NEC, NALGO members last December voted in many London Boroughs for official action in support of the claim. In all, a total of 32 Local Government and Electricity Branches are involved in overtime bans, non-co-operation with agency staff, selective or total strikes.

The NALGO NEC has given little encouragement to its members. There has been no official publicity campaign. And in Islington it called off a total strike (forced on the NEC by Branch pressure) at the very moment

when the Employers were weakening. The whole campaign, organized at branch level, is the campaign of the rank and file, much of the pressure coming from the rank-and-file "NALGO Action Group". With this year's pay claim on the way, NALGO members all over the country are looking to London, where the myth that NALGO is a non-striking union is being exploded. In 1965, when NALGO affiliated to the TUC, it recognised that it was no longer a professional association but a trade union. In March 1974, the rank and file in London have shown they are ready to take trade union action.

ON TUESDAY, 19th March the London Trades Council called a Conference in a bid to launch the 'Working Women's Charter' into the trade union and Labour movement.

The Charter, which seemed to be generally accepted, although no vote was taken, consisted of 10 points calling for equal opportunities in relation to jobs, promotion and education. It demanded free abortion be readily available, family allowances be increased—and to include the first child—and free contraception along with various demands relating to maternity leave.

When the Charter was discussed in detail, one speaker disagreed with point one of the draft which stated that rates for the job, regardless of sex, should be negotiated by the trade unions. She pointed out the trade union movement is male dominated and, recognizing this fact, rates should

WORKING WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

NICKY STEPHENS

be negotiated by women's pressure groups. Ethel Chipchase, speaking on behalf of the TUC, replied that women should organize themselves within their trade unions in order to put pressure on male workers—not try to splinter the movement. To adopt this line, she said, would be contradictory to our call for Anti-Discrimination Laws.

Other delegates condemned the implication of the Charter that equality can come through legislation. The Equal Pay Act was not the be all and end all of female discrimination. In fact, the implementation of the Equal Pay Act was one method the capitalist class adopted to set one worker against another—if women receive

ed more money it would have to come from men's pay packets. Therefore, women's fight in society is not against the men—as earlier delegates had implied—but a combined struggle with fellow male workers against the whole capitalist system.

There were differences in the direction conference should take—whether it should discuss the Charter itself, or how to agitate for it in the Labour movement. Two resolutions were discussed, both proposing action committees. Haringey Trades Councils wanted trade union delegates only, whilst the other resolution called for an ad hoc committee with representatives from all women's groups—not only trade union women.

The first resolution was defeated the second was never voted on. Unfortunately the Conference ended in uproar with no definite plans for future action.

CAR INDUSTRY SLUMP - A THREAT TO JOBS!

THROUGHOUT the capitalist world the motor industry is reeling under the impact of economic crisis.

In Japan, Germany, France and Italy, the major producers have been ravaged by the effects of rising fuel costs and the consequent fall-off in demand for new cars. In Japan, Toyota—the world's fourth largest motor company—has cut production by 20 per cent while Nissan has announced the laying-off of several thousand of its workers. The former booming German car industry has hit a brick-wall. Between November and January 170,000 orders for new cars were cancelled and new orders slumped by 40 per cent. In the United States the Ford and General Motors giants are threatening to lay-off over 250,000 workers. Similar reports from Italy and France reveal a picture of massive contraction in demand with an increase in the cost of production brought about by reductions in steel, glass and plastics production.

At present the planning boards of the big monopolies are furtively examining the books of their various national subsidiaries—finding out those areas returning the lowest level of profits and preparing to eliminate them. Speed-up, short-time, lay-offs, plant closures and enormous redundancies threaten millions of car workers throughout the world.

SALES CRASH

Steep increases in the price of fuel, together with the decline of living standards under the impact of world inflation is the source of the declining demand for cars. In Britain, petrol is now 50 pence a gallon. Labour Chancellor Healey has just added another 5 pence in his budget and further increases have still to work their way through the pipeline. Motoring is now in the category of a luxury! In these circumstances many have been deterred from ordering a new car.

Figures issued by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders in March of this year reveal a 30 per cent drop in the registration of new cars for the month. Exports from British companies have also steadily fallen. Vauxhall's exports have crashed from over 100,000 in 1964 to 26,000 in 1973. Ford and Chrysler are in the same plight with only British Leyland claiming any success in the face of a sweeping depression in car sales. The voice of Big Capital, the 'Financial Times', quotes the "success" of BL on the home market as being a DROP of only 16 per cent in new car registrations against this time last year.

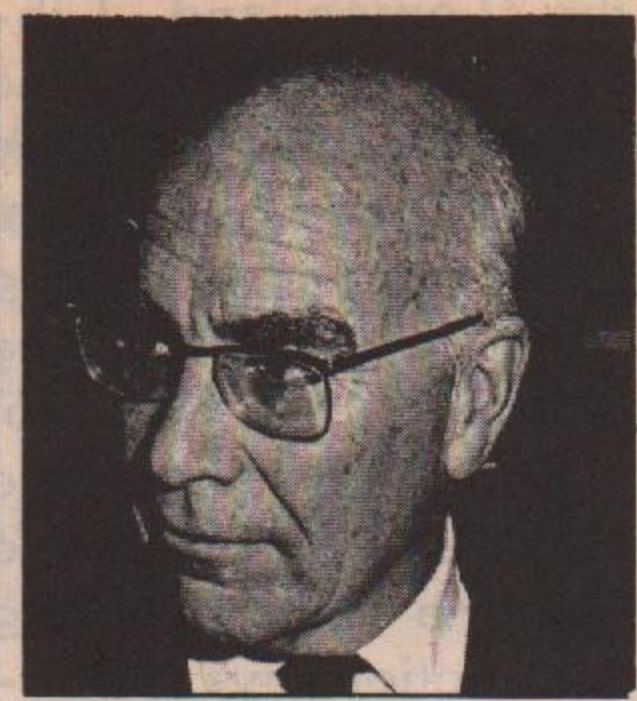
This grim assessment of the state of the British car industry

By Don Flynn (TGWU)



Dagenham: a new slogan to unite the car workers

holds out little hope for the profitability of the big firms. As a high rate of inflation at home decimates car sales the monopolies are finding it difficult to produce cars—in the large number required—and sell them at sufficient profit on the cut-throat conditions of the world market.



Lord Stokes

The only prospect for continued profits lies in the field of increased productivity. As Lord Stokes, Chairman of British Leyland, recently stated, only the fullest possible use of productive capacity within the car industry can prevent the industry from losing money. This means a concerted attack on conditions to drive up the rate of exploitation.

LAY-OFFS

The stark reality of the situation is that Britain's 200,000 production workers are facing speed-up, reduced manning ratios, abandoned lay-off agreements, closures and redundancies.

How prepared are workers in the industry to meet these dangers? Recently the issue of lay-offs has become a central concern of car workers. A lay-off is an attempt by the management to make workers pay for the inefficiencies in the supply of vital components and parts. An example of this action occurred

in Ford's Halewood plant last summer where a shortage of conrods led the management to provoke an internal dispute and use it as an excuse to lay-off Halewood workers without the normal 80 per cent guaranteed lay-off pay.

In Dagenham, Essex, last month, two departments in the Body Plant found themselves laid-off without pay after a return to work of welders from a change-of-process dispute. The men immediately struck for a guaranteed week agreement.

NO LEADERSHIP

In the last year the issue of lay-offs has sparked off major disputes in Ellesmere Port, Dagenham and Halewood, and Austin Cowley. The determination to resist management efforts to casualize the car industry is clearly there. What is lacking is a clear lead from convenors and union officials to take the fight forward. The recent sell-out on the Ford pay-claim which involved a climb-down on the guaranteed week demand, besides the full claim, highlights the bankruptcy of the leadership at a time when the gravest of dangers threaten car workers.

The impending struggles to maintain wages, conditions and above all, jobs within the motor industry must be built up despite the bureaucratic and cowardly behaviour of the union full-timers.

What must be recognized as workers frame their demands for this fight is that the car industry will be only one victim of the carnage about to be wreaked by capitalist recession on a world scale. The hopes of Ford or General Motors, British Leyland or Chryslers in extracting their necessary profits from this sit-

uation are non-existent without the most ruthless onslaught on workers wages and conditions. They must prune plants and jobs in favour of the profitable remains of the old empires.

In the coming months and years the motor monopolies will attempt to move production circuits from British plants out to Valencia in Spain or Cologne and Sarbruchen in Germany. Here labour is either cheap or the advantages of centralised production would reap higher profits. Furthermore these capitalist giants aim to reschedule production for smaller markets with the workers remaining being made to bear the brunt of increased productivity drives and intolerable working conditions. Is the TGWU and AUEW leadership discussing a strategy for struggle in recognition of these facts? It is not. Instead, as at Ford in the recent claim, it links its strategy with the interests of the company. For example, the vain hope that the monopoly may not be taking full advantage of opportunities overseas.

OPEN THE BOOKS!

The leadership must be forced to demand the motor companies "open the books!" The situation before the car worker has been obscured by speculation, dislocation of component supplies, bad-planning and management of all varieties. First we need to know how we really stand. The account ledgers of the whole industry must be opened. The weaknesses and strengths of the industry internationally must be open to the scrutiny of its workers—all business secrets must be abolished!

The decision on what changes and improvements are to be made must be taken by those who work in the industry and who stand to suffer most if wrong decisions are taken.

In reply to the threat of lay-offs and redundancies a sliding scale of hours must be implemented with no loss of pay for a shorter working week.



**WORKERS'
CONTROL**



With millions of car workers willing to build vehicles throughout the world, with the technology and capital equipment invested in the industry there is no reason why vehicles should not continue to be produced and why men should not continue to make their living building them. The time is fast approaching when car workers internationally will prove the only ones interested or capable of carrying out the task.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT BLYTH?

by Keith Veness



EDDIE MILNE



IVOR RICHARD

ONE OF THE BEST RESULTS of the last General Election occurred at Blyth, the "safe" Labour mining seat where Eddie Milne, the sitting member, defeated the right-wing, pro-EEC Ivor Richard. This was the climax of a bitter and protracted struggle for the allegiance of the labour movement in the area between Milne and his supporters and the backs and timeservers in the North East Labour Party and the Northern Group of Labour MPs. Almost alone amongst the Northern MPs, Eddie Milne had pressed strongly for a full Labour Party NEC enquiry into the affairs of local government in the Newcastle area. The tight grip exercised for years on this area by the Labour Party had resulted in a complacent neglect by many councillors and the amassing of considerable power by a few local personalities". The so-called "Poulson affair" brought some of this to light when John G. Poulson, an architect who made his living mainly from municipal and government contracts, was indicted for corruptly offering gifts to a number of people, including T. Dan Smith (a former Mayor of Newcastle) and Alderman Andrew Cunningham (a member of Labour's NEC, full-time Regional Secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union and head of the local Police Authority!).

Milne's insistent probing and demands for a full and open investigation resulted in a number of

attempts to get rid of him as MP — mostly inspired by his agent, one Peter Mortakis, and with the tacit support of Transport House and much of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Contrast this shabby treatment with the "kid-gloves" approach the Labour Party NEC gave to Gordon Bagier, the MP for neighbouring Sunderland, who it was discovered had been doing Public Relations work for the Greek Colonels' regime, or to Alfred Roberts, MP for Normanton, who is a friend of General Franco and was named by the Sunday Times as being involved with Poulson. Apparently these Honourable Members are to be allowed to carry on their business but anyone who demands a frank investigation of elected representatives is to be bundled out as soon as possible!

Things finally came to a head just before the election, when a hastily assembled G.M.C. voted not to re-select Milne and to look for another candidate — finally settling on Ivor Richard, the extreme right-winger who lost his seat at Barans Court in London due to boundary restructuring. The election itself was characterised by a noticeable amount of trades-union support Eddie Milne managed to enlist, in stark contrast to the luke-warm backing Richard managed to drum-up. Instead the "official" candidate relied on vicious and slanted adverts in the local press and a general mouthing of platitudes—

to no avail. Eddie Milne won comfortably by 22,000 to 16,000 votes, with the Tories and Liberals coming in a bad third and fourth. After the election the CHARTIST interviewed Milne at the House of Commons, asking him about his politics and the campaign he fought. (It was not possible to ask much about the "Poulson affair" as most of the central figures are still awaiting trial and the reactionary "sub-judice" law applies to them). We reprint extracts from the interview below.

CHARTIST: On what did you base your election campaign?

MILNE: We fought a wide campaign, supporting Labour's manifesto while pointing out it didn't go far enough. The Common Market issue was central for us—we took the line of outright withdrawal. As for nationalization, that's what the election was all about—the crisis has reached the point where the old system seems no longer valid. The question of the complete reorganization of society is now on the cards. We've got to step up the pressure to made drastic changes along socialist lines.

C: What support did the Labour movement in Blyth give you?

M: The biggest branch of the NUM, Bates Colliery Branch, gave full support. The Chairman

AD
ENTITLED
the
BLYTH
AND

Until now the Blyth Constituency Labour Party has not replied publicly to any of the attacks made upon it by the former M.P. for this constituency, Eddie Milne. So long as he was or might have remained the Labour M.P. for Blyth the Constituency Labour Party decided it would not openly publicise their split with him or the facts leading up to it. Moreover the report of the latest National Executive enquiry into the relations between him and the Blyth CLP had until recently not been published. This enquiry was set up at the specific request of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers who sponsored Eddie Milne. A report from the National Agent on behalf of the National Executive of the Labour Party, dated 15th February, 1974 has now been received and is set out below. The National Executive Committee consists of:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chairman: | Sidney Weighell (NUM) |
| James Callaghan | John Cartwright (Co-op) |
| Vice-Chairman: | General Secretary: |
| Fred Mulley | R. G. Hayward, CBE |
| Harold Wilson | Frank Allaun |
| Ted Short | Anthony Wedgwood Benn |
| Tom Bradley (TSSA) | Michael Foot |
| John Chalmers | Barbara Castle |
| (Boilermakers) | Denis Healey |
| Len Fordham (T&GWU) | Joan Lester |
| John Forrester (AUEW) | Ian Mikardo |
| A. G. Hickling (NUGMW) | Judith Hart |
| Alex Kitson (Scottish | Lena Jeger |
| Commercial Motormen | Joan Maynard |
| Union) | Rene Short |
| Walter Padley (USDAW) | Shirley Williams |
| Bill Simpson (AUEW) | Peter Doyle (Gateshead |
| Bryan Stanley (POEU) | Young Socialist) |
| S. G. Vincent (NUM) | |

The above advert was placed in the local Reg Underhill, the Labour Party's National is cunningly worded so as to give the impression was agreed by every member of the National Executive Committee on careful reading of it, this turns out no

and Secretary signed my nomination papers; 3 NUM lodges endorsed this.

C: What were your reactions to the advertisements published against you on behalf of the L.P. National Executive Committee?

M: This was a shocking thing. It was Transport House treachery. I've talked to 6 or 7 members of the Executive—they were not consulted. There was no meeting called at all.

C: What about the "Tribune" group and your attitude to it?

M: I've been a member of the group now for several years. What prompted me to move in actively was the way in which the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" operated. Earlier I had belonged to the Independent Labour Party. As far as I'm concerned I'm a member of the Tribune group still—but as yet I haven't tested the issue with other members. I haven't been asked to attend any meetings yet!

C: Now you have been re-elected, what moves have you made to regain the Labour Whip?

M: As yet none at all. Our attitude is that we didn't leave the Labour Party in Blyth—300 trade union and L.P. members campaigned for us. It was the L.P. that left us. But there are sev-

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ED TO KNOW

**facts about
LABOUR PARTY
EDDIE MILNE**

Milne has finally chosen to stand as an independent at this election, deliberately turning his back on the Labour Party everything it stands for.

During his 13 years as a Member of Parliament Mr Milne had three agents and five chairmen of his Constituency. With each of them he has quarrelled. With each Executive Committee throughout the years he has disagreed openly in public over matters which these Executive Committees felt were not within his competence as an M.P. These included such men as Arthur Hancock, Bill West, Charlie Ronnie Milburn, Bob Newall, Libby Atkinson, Dave Trell, Dave Stead, Jim Haig, Jack Fulthorpe and Dickie Houghton. He has publicly suggested that there is corruption in local and Party administration in the North East and demanded a series of enquiries into his unspecified 'eyes'.

In the House of Commons he alienated himself from the Northern Group of Labour M.P.s and a statement from them so set out below. Last year he supported a candidate in local elections standing in opposition to the official Labour Party candidate. Now as the culmination of his career with Labour Party he has chosen deliberately to damage it to the greatest extent possible.

And again Mr Milne has been asked to produce any evidence he has as to corruption in the North East. The Parliamentary Labour Party enquiry, presided over by Mr Houghton, the Chairman of the P.L.P., enquired into large that North East Labour M.P.s had tried to thwart a campaign. He found no evidence that members of the Northern Group had interfered with the performance of Mr Milne's Parliamentary duties.

Milne has this week stated, "I believe that Party man-

practice... is an issue which will grow and grow until eventually it reaches Watergate proportions." His allegations have been put before the Attorney General, the local police, Scotland Yard, the Northern Group of Labour M.P.s and the Parliamentary Labour Party. This week Mr Ivor Richard, the official Labour candidate, again challenged him to produce any evidence. This he has totally failed to do.

In all these circumstances the Blyth C.L.P. decided a week last Sunday that relations between themselves and the former Member of Parliament were such that they could not continue. It is unfortunate that this decision coincided with the eve of a General Election, but that timing was Mr Heath's responsibility. The decision was taken democratically by the body authorised to take it at a properly constituted meeting. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party in upholding that decision said, however, that if he wished Mr Milne could re-submit his name, along with any others the Constituency Party wished to consider. Had he wished to, he could have adopted this course. He chose not to.

This represents the culmination of a long history of friction between the Constituency Labour Party and Eddie Milne. It is worth noting that of the 85 Labour councillors in the three districts of this constituency, only three have joined Mr Milne. There has been no mass resignation from the Labour Party and such organisation as Mr Milne has is totally unrepresentative of the Labour Party membership in Blyth. Those who know him have stood by the Party.

The problems of Blyth and of the North East can only be solved by a Labour Government and by a Labour M.P. working within that Government. They cannot be solved by independent M.P.s owing allegiance to no Party and having influence with none.

newspaper by fact some NEC members have denied any prior knowledge of this advert. The stand taken by Joan Maynard in dissociating herself from the advertisement and supporting Milne must be openly taken by "Tribunites" and other "lefts" on the NEC. Below: Milne's reply.

Members of the NEC who support our demand for an end to the affairs of the North East Region of the Labour Party. Joan Maynard, Frank Houghton, Rene Jegar, Rene Short. How far they would go is not sure. But having won the power to

Deal with Milne

ATTENTION has been drawn to a report in Socialist Worker which states that I among other Labour Party National Executive members had a full page advertisement in local Blyth newspapers, which cost about £300, denouncing Eddie Milne and calling for a vote for Ivor Richard. May I say that until I was in this advert by Eddie Milne in the House of Commons last week I did not know anything about it. It has been put in by the Blyth Constituency Labour Party.

In fact the enquiry which was made into the disagreements in the constituency have never been made to the NEC. I shall be raising this at the NEC meeting next week, while I hope you will be good enough to print this letter because I support Milne and certainly do not support Ivor Richard. JOAN MAYNARD, Thirsk.

In Joan Maynard's letter in Socialist Worker', 1st March, 1974.

Transport House decide that what has got to be done. Labour Party membership whatever action the "rump" of Blyth takes doesn't bother me. I will certainly use our appeal to Annual Conference the highest body of our

Eddie Milne Campaign Committee

Why did Blyth Labour Party's expensive advertisements in last week's Whitley Bay Guardian and the Blyth News not include the following item?

"Poulson tells how he met Dan Smith"

The former international architect John Poulson told Leeds Crown Court this week how he met Mr. T. Dan Smith, who was working at the time on a town centre development scheme at Blyth.

He continued to see him because when Mr. Smith was introducing Bovis, with whom he had an agreement, he could introduce Poulson too.

Mr. Smith was nationally known in town centre development for which there was a vogue at the time.

He admired Mr. Smith, who as far as he knew, had done nothing improper on his behalf."

Whitley Bay Guardian, 4th January, 1974

**on 28th February
return Eddie Milne
THE MAN YOU KNOW**

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**LAMBETH TENANTS
GET THE BOOT**

Council tenants are threatened with eviction in a "get tough" policy started by Lambeth council (South London) against people who are in arrears with rent. Housing Committee chairman Charles Dryland is not satisfied with the action taken in the last 14 months (4 people evicted, 766 notices to quit served, 135 possession orders obtained and 14 transfers made), so action is to be stepped up. Tenants are not the only ones to be under fire. Dryland has also made statements using

squatting families as scapegoats for the inadequate fight put up by the council against the previous government's housing policies.

The Lambeth-Norwood Labour Party has opposed these statements and called for the obligation of councils to re-house the homeless to be re-instated, as well as backing the squatters.

We interviewed Chartist Paul Moore, a Labour candidate for the Lambeth Council elections on May 2nd.

**Candidate: Drastic
Action Needed**



PAUL MOORE

Q: Why these evictions by a Labour council?

A: The councillors were scared by the rent arrears building up. They thought they might be surcharged and have to pay the bill: so they just 'cracked down'. It wasn't so surprising for us in the Young Socialists, since when we ran a campaign to get them to defy the Housing Finance Act, they pleaded that they couldn't face being surcharged. What's particularly worth remembering is that the Norwood Labour Party asked them to make a statement saying they wouldn't evict tenants who went on rent strike. They said they agreed with us, but couldn't say so in public. It's now clear it was a pack of lies.

Q: What SHOULD the Council be doing?

PM: There's plenty of positive action needed, particularly now we've got a Labour Government—we can test whether they WILL back a socialist council. Firstly, take over all properties empty over six months. Re-instate the obligation to house the homeless, which has been dropped. Stop evicting council tenants. Surcharges—forget them. Clay Cross did. In the meantime, while the housing committee chairman, Dryland, carries on like this, we have no choice but to back up every squatter. Houses must not stand empty.

Q: Will that solve the problems?

PM: It'll only stop it getting

worse. The issues are much bigger. Similar action has got to be taken by all councils first. Then the GOVERNMENT must act by guaranteeing full requisition powers for empty houses. They must take over the banks and building societies with compensation on the basis of need only. Spiralling interest rates will cripple council building. At the moment, they take out loans to pay interest on loans!

Q: In the meantime, what about people like Dryland? Can you honestly say people should vote for him?

PM: Yes. The job of getting rid of the Tories—in disguise of the Labour-rank-and-file, not to the Tory Party.

In fact, these people are not any different from the new Labour Ministers. Some of them really want to see reforms. But only drastic and revolutionary measures can deal with the housing situation.

£ 500 FIGHTING FUND

We are pleased with the donations we have received so far, which total £134.60. However, we still need another £365 by July 1st if we are to reach our target. With the election of a minority Labour government, the fight to build a revolutionary organisation to carry through the tasks of implementing a Socialist pro-

gramme is urgent.

This money is urgently needed to pay for the premises recently acquired. All donations should be sent to Socialist Charter, 82 Loughborough Road, Brixton S.W.9. Cheques and postal orders should be made out to Chartist Publications.



WORLD ROUNDUP

ARGENTINA

Peron cracks down on workers

by Martin Cook

AT THE END of February, the police in the inland Argentinian city of Cordoba arrested the elected provincial governor and leading ministers. This blatantly illegal coup was legalized afterwards by General Peron's government, though the deposed politicians were left-Peronists. The latter ended up by completely surrendering to the move, which is the most serious part yet of Peron's crackdown on the left and on militant workers.

Cordoba is a key industrial centre, with important car plants, where revolutionary-type general strikes broke out in 1969 and 1971 (the "Cordobazo"). A whole layer of politicised militant workers has grown up outside the control of the official Peronist union bureaucracy (who constitute the extreme reactionary wing



Peron and second wife Isabel.

of the Peronist Justicialista movement). The sacked governor Ricardo Obregon Cano, and his supporters were removed because they refused to use the state machinery to smash a transport workers strike, and had the nerve to investigate terrorist actions by the local police force!

The Peronist right wing thugs who carried out the coup thus denounced the 'lefts' as "Bolsheviks" and "Marxists", which in view of their weak-kneed behaviour and crawling before the "people's general", was nonsense. What is more even non-Peronist militant union leaders like Agustin Tosco and Rene Salamanca, not to mention the Communist Party, actually backed Peron in last year's Presidential Elections and still refuse to publicly denounce him. This has only created confusion among the workers, paving the way for a bureaucratic purge of the left within the Cordoba region CGT (union federation). The events in Cordoba, though not particularly bloody, are a grim warning. If Peron can get away with his action, he will move ahead to crush all independent workers activity whatsoever.

WEST GERMANY

POLLS SHOCK FOR BRANDT

by Jon Pickering

THE SOCIAL Democratic Party (SPD) has suffered a series of defeats in regional and local elections. The worst result for the party—led by Federal premier Willy Brandt—was the loss of its overall majority—for the first time in 17 years—in the regional parliament of Hamburg. The SPD vote there fell by 10 per cent, compared to the 1970 result, while the conservative Christian Democrats gained support.

Brandt described this as a "serious setback", whilst Herbert Wehner, chairman of the SPD Federal parliamentary group, said he had not expected the result, but had been afraid it might happen.

The weekly paper of the DGB (Trade Union Confederation) described the election as "the last warning" for the SPD leadership who govern West Germany in coalition with the liberal Free Democrats. The journal commented that workers are seeing the value of their wages eaten away by inflation, and any hard-won pay increases reduced by taxation.

Clearly, the disillusionment of many workers with the Brandt government, already shown by the heightening of the trade union militancy in recent months, is

now being reflected in electoral terms.

Meanwhile, many middle class voters, stirred up by hysterical comments in West Germany's capitalist press about the "threat to democracy" presented by striking workers, left-wing teachers, petrol-saving speed limits, and especially the recent wages struggle of the public service workers—are looking to the Christian Democrats for an alternative to the policies of the 'social-liberal' coalition government. The SPD, back in the 1950s, set out to become a non-working class party and dropped all commitment to "old fashioned" policies contributing to the class struggle. Now, there are "left" tendencies within the party arguing for a change of line, that there must be a transformation of society. The right wing leadership of the SPD now blames the election losses on these "radical" elements in the rank and file frightening away "moderate" citizens. "The election results were not particularly connected with price increases or the employment situation," says Helmut Schmidt, deputy leader. He is worried by opinion and votes at constituency meetings



Public service workers demonstrate

and conferences conflicting with the policies of the leaders. Left-wing views are thus publicised in the press and the result, says Schmidt, is that many voters are confused, thinking such views are the policy of the party. Evidently he thinks that if only party members keep quiet and let people like him decide what is party policy, then all will be well.

Since the massive victory of the public service workers in February broke through Brandt's wage-restraint policy, there has been a big strike wave in the Ruhr. The ruling class is rapidly losing faith in the ability of the weak and divided Government to hold down trade unionists' living standards any further. Unemployment and a sharp recession (especially in the car industry) now stare German and especially Southern European migrant workers in the face.

There is only one alternative course to the disastrous policies of the Brandt leadership. The SPD must base itself on the new working-class upsurge, break with the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), and unite the Labour Movement in a struggle for real power and a socialist transformation of Germany.

PORTUGAL

military coup quelled

THE ABORTIVE MILITARY coup recently in Portugal was sparked off by the disastrous situation in Mozambique, where widespread massacres of African villagers were reported last year. The latest offensive by the Frelimo liberation forces has penet-

rated far south towards Rhodesia and South Africa, threatening to cut off vital rail links. Ten thousand extra Portuguese troops have been rushed in, to add to the 60,000 already there. Prime Minister Caetano and army chief General Spinoza (fresh from suppressing revolt in Portuguese Guinea) were arguing that the hard line was too costly, and that the time had come to find some moderate "Uncle Tom" African leaders to do a deal with. This view commands wide support among demoralized middle rank

officers, who planned the coup after Spinoza's dismissal from his top job by the ultra-right-wing President, Admiral Thomaz. The 50-year-old Portuguese dictator is being forced to crack down not just on Africa and left-wing workers at home, but on the ideas of 3 feminists who wrote a book condemning the oppression of women. Their trial for "obscenity" shows how the regime cannot stand any moral challenge to the existing order at all.

CHILE CONFERENCE

by Bernard Misrahi

OVER 200 delegates, from trade unions, Labour Parties, student unions etc. gathered in Birmingham on March 23rd for the Chile Solidarity Conference.

Speakers insisted that we could not dictate to the Chilean workers how to conduct their struggle. But, "We solidarise with the Chilean workers, we have the right to criticise and offer advice (which can of course be rejected) as they, in turn, can criticise our actions." Such an insular view calling for 'left unity', is simply a ruse to avoid criticism of Allende and his reformist politics which the Communist Party endorsed. Other speakers implied that given Allende's left policies, a coup was inevitable. But Allende could have appealed to the army

ranks to support him and deal with disloyal officers and could have established workers' militias. John Quirke, from 'The Chartist' (in the workshop on "Lessons of the Coup") pointed out that the upper-class British army officers would not hesitate to conduct a coup, as a last resort to save the capitalist system. It was necessary to appeal to the British troops and unionise the army ranks.

Several forms of solidarity action were discussed, including blacking of goods going to Chile—and arms in particular—the Liverpool dockers and Jarrow shipyard workers have pointed the way here. It was demanded that the Labour government ban all trade with or aid to Chile and to welcome refugees. The confer-



Allende: criticisms avoided.

ence broke up in uproar as the IMG stormed out after the inflexible, undemocratic chairman, Dick Etheridge refused a procedural motion proposed by Tariq Ali.

Part 2 of a series on 'The Struggle for Revolution in Britain' by Graeme Atkinson

THE DAWN

OF CLASS ORGANIZATION

In our last article, we explained how the basis for the development of the trade unions lay within the objective nature of capitalism itself. Through the constant struggle between the classes, the working class was forced to combine to seek a higher price for its labour power, its only 'property'. Struggle against the employer on an individual one-man scale was absolutely impossible. To gain even the slightest respite from the vicious exploitation that characterised the Industrial Revolution, it was necessary for workers to join together in a common defence of their interests. The trade union was the organisational form taken by the struggle.

1789 and after

The genesis of the working class as a mass force and its early organisations co-incided with the great French Revolution of 1789, which had massive repercussions in Britain. In this period, the first successful defensive combinations of workers were formed. Workers saw and understood the struggle of the French masses and, relating this to their own experience, began to organise. The French events precipitated great feelings of solidarity in the British working class. Internationalism, thus, was an integral feature of the first workers' organisations. Jacobinism—the outlook and movement of the French revolutionaries—was transplanted into Britain in the form of radical secret societies. Where these fused, with the rising discontent of the industrial workers, the ruling class tried by every means to crush such developments. Stark horror was the response of the ruling classes to the French Revolution. Drastic action against the working class and radical reformers was their standard practice.

The Combination Laws

The Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800 were the product of this practice, and were aimed at damming the rising tide of working class organisation. All industrial combinations were outlawed as such. Backing up the laws was an extensive network of provocateurs, spies and government agents. For twenty-five years, a counter-revolutionary reign of terror was inflicted upon the working class. Any attempt at organisation, meetings, or any other form of activity was met with violent repression as happened in Manchester in 1819, when armed soldiers killed eleven people and wounded 400 others in an attempt to disperse a mass meeting addressed by 'Orator' Hunt, a radical leader. This was the infamous 'Peterloo' massacre. Yet, despite being forced underground, despite terror, repression and provocation, the working class developed its organisations. Often illegal trade unionism was combined with legal demands for Parliamentary reform.



The massacre of Peterloo, August 1819, where mounted soldiers charged and hacked their way through a peaceful demonstration of Manchester workers on St Peter's Fields.

As the economic crisis after the Napoleonic War ended and trade revived, a new wave of struggle developed. The demands for reform, and growth of unions reached such a level that the Tory Government was forced to repeal the hated Combination Laws. In 1825, an unprecedented period of strikes and industrial activity began.

By 1824, the Lancashire weavers had established a permanent organisation and throughout 1826, Lancashire, the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, was in the grip of strikes which were often violent and in conflict with the Armed Forces of the State. Also, to the fore, were London shipwrights and the miners of Wales and Durham. However, despite the great militancy displayed during strikes, the workers were invariably defeated. Nevertheless, valuable lessons were learned; not least that purely sectional action was inadequate in the face of a highly organised ruling class.

Workers sensed the need to fight as a class. Consequently, the idea of General Unions circulated rapidly amongst the most advanced layers of workers. The conception of mass, united struggle of workers in all trades to defeat the employers was put forward. The fight against the Combination Laws and in the period after their repeal had

brought forward new leaders who were convinced of the need to unite local movements into solid nationwide unions. Horizons began to extend beyond the immediate workshop and factory. Experiences were pooled and lessons drawn. The sharpness of the struggle had wrought changes in outlook.

In 1829, at a gathering of textile workers from England, Ireland and Scotland, a Grand General Union of the United Kingdom was set up. Out of this emerged in 1830, the first trades union, the National Association for the Protection of Labour, aimed at uniting cross sections of workers and eventually embracing 100,000 men. Moreover, it produced the first viable workers' paper, the 'Voice of the People'.

'Grand National'

The need for national unions was sensed especially by new sections like the cotton spinners, who had been virtually herded into the mills, and who were determined to better their living standards. Between 1830 and 1832, the emphasis of the struggle had been towards achievement of the vote. In 1832, the bourgeois leadership, successful in winning an extension of the vote for themselves, withdrew from the fight and abandoned the masses whose struggle they had abused. Once more, the attention of the class turned

towards unions. The ideas of the Utopian socialist, Robert Owen, and the spontaneous movement merged. The outcome was the 'Grand National Consolidated Trades Union' in 1834 with over half-a-million members.

The G.N.C.T.U. was the material expression of the working class's desire for one big union and was the precursor to the Chartist movement. It organised strikes, fought lockouts, resisted victimisation, wage cuts and rising hours, and fought for the right to strike. The quality of the 'Grand National' was reflected in its growth of membership and in the terror with which it struck the ruling class, which saw in it a working class directing its attacks not against 'the instruments of production' but against 'the bourgeois conditions of production!' The G.N.C.T.U. was also active in organising the agricultural workers who bore the brunt of the 1834 Poor Law, which was calculated to drive landless labourers into the factories by abolishing all forms of outdoor assistance. Many farmworkers entered the ranks of the union but remained the weakest link because of their isolated and scattered existence. It was this link which the ruling class snapped — in the tiny village of Tolpuddle in Dorset. How this happened and its repercussions we shall look at in the next article.

young socialist NEWS

CAMPAIGN FOR SOLDIER'S CHARTER

"All right, a military dictatorship is ugly and repressive. But if a minority British Socialist Government ever sought, by cunning, duplicity, corruption, terror and foreign arms, to turn this country into a Communist State, I hope and pray our armed forces would intervene to prevent such a calamity as efficiently as the armed forces did in Chile" Thus spake the influential arch-reactionary Peregrine Worsthorne in a recent issue of the Sunday Telegraph, a paper which he helps to edit. Such extremist statements only serve to underline the dangers facing the workers' movement and the significance of the campaign for servicemen's trade union rights. As the letter appealing for sponsorship of the Soldiers Charter (currently being circulated by Norwood YS) makes clear, whilst the demands in the Soldiers Charter relate in themselves purely to issues of trades-unionism and democratic rights the political importance of such a movement is made only too obvious.

The open letter states: "Now that we have a Labour Government in office, servicemen have the right to expect that legislation will be enacted on their behalf. It should hardly need adding that it is very much in the

interests of the trade union and Labour movement in this period that political influence within the Armed Forces should not be a monopoly of the right..."

Recent army "exercises", both sides of the Irish Sea, emphasise this point too. Sponsorship for the Charter, shortly to appear in revised and reprinted form, has already been received from: a number of trades councils, trade union branches, Labour Parties and individuals. The latest to add their names have been Oldham Trades Council Todmorden Trades Council Norwood Labour Party ASTMS SE London Medical Jack Collins, NUM Executive, (personal capacity).

Get your organization to add its weight: write to Norwood YS for details. And support the resolution from Woolwich YS at this year's YS National Conference.

WE ARE NOT EXPECTING, NOR DO WE WANT soldiers to take steps fruitlessly exposing themselves to disciplinary reprisals. To place the responsibility for action on the soldiers themselves at this stage - when they cannot defy their officers without serious risk to themselves - would be irresponsible, and a disservice to the soldiers' movement.

What the soldiers can do immediately is start discussion-groups and take what powers they can within the existing system. The first need is to win the ranks to the idea of changing the Army structure as and when conditions make this possible in alliance with the broader labour movement

YOUR YS BRANCH

For details of branch activities write to:
Brent East: Sally Humphries, 9 Kingswood Avenue, NW6

Tunbridge Wells: Glenda Ratcliffe, 9 Greggs Wood Rd, Sherwood Estate, Tunbridge Wells.

Wycombe: Ann Snell, c/o 242 West Wycombe Road, Bucks.

Norwood: Paul Moore, 61 Selsdon Road, SE27.

Streatham: Elaine O'Neill, 47 Amesbury Avenue, SW2.

Vauxhall: Kevin Moore, 170 Wandsworth Road, SW8.

Woolwich: Phil Elliott, 82 Woodhill, SE18.

Rotherham: John Connelly, 22 Bradgate Road, Rotherham, Yorks.

Stockport: Dave Barratt, 42 Lisburne Lane, Offerton, Stockport.

New Attacks On Goole YS

Readers of the CHARTIST who have followed the case of Dave Douglass and the attacks on the Goole Young Socialists by Labour Party officials will be pleased to know that having signed a declaration that he was no longer a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party he has been re-admitted to the party. This state of affairs in no way pleases the right wing of Yorkshire Labour Party. They are still patiently digging away for new information to attack the Goole Young Socialists. The latest attempt reaches new depths of deviousness in trying to stifle basic democratic rights. Harold Sims has told the Goole branch that, not only can they not belong to the RWP, but that they cannot "be so associated as to have consultation about resolutions for the YS annual meeting". He has also threatened to try to remove the Goole comrade elected to the YS Yorkshire regional committee.

The Goole YS reply is brief and to the point: "No member of the Goole LPYS is a member of the RWP or any other proscribed organisation.....however, we reserve the absolute right to discuss anything, with anybody, at any time."

These new contemptible manoeuvres on the part of Sims must be answered by the YS

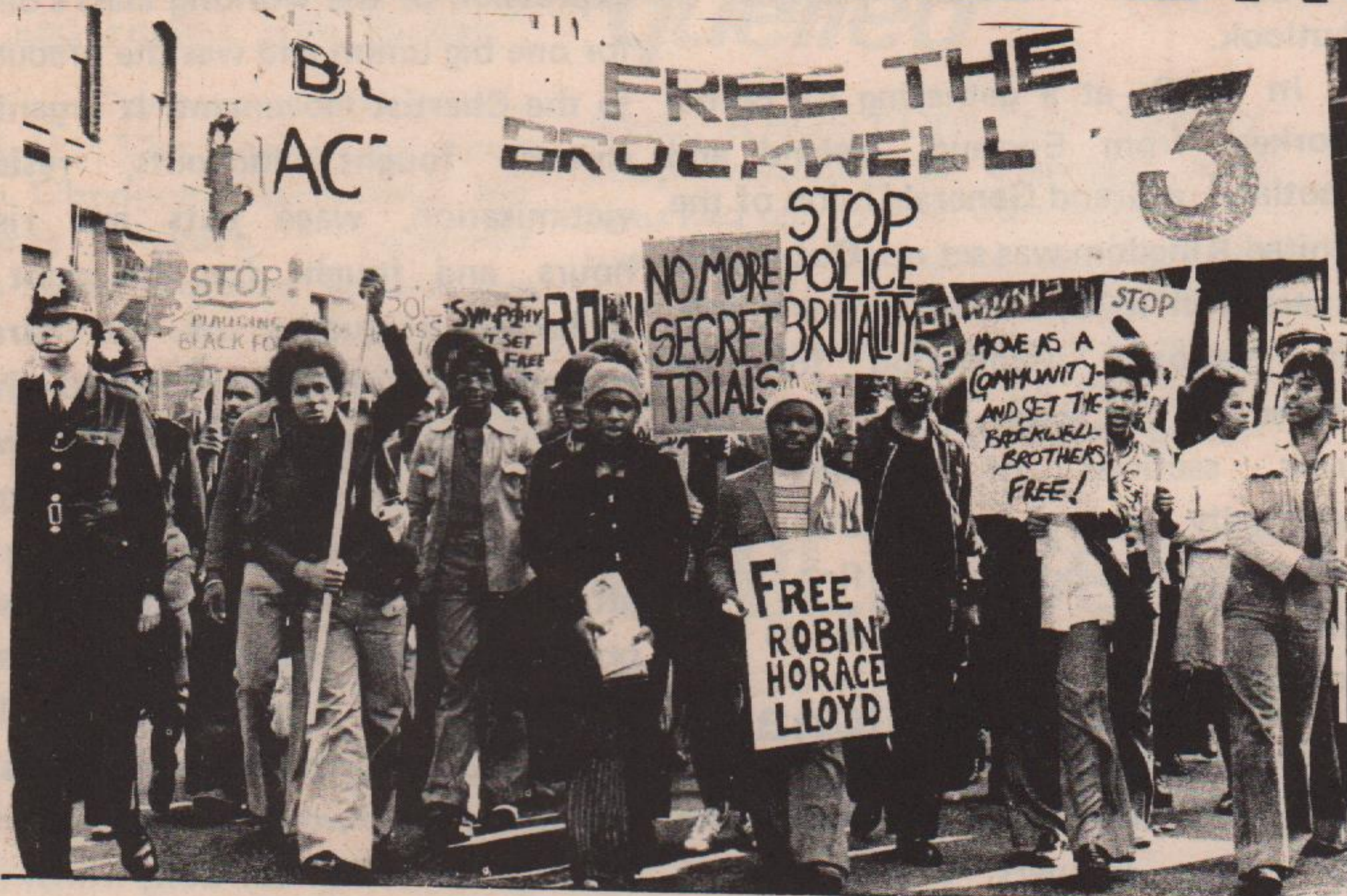


Dave Douglass (left) at the defence lobby in Goole last year.

conference this year by passing the resolution from Vauxhall YS which calls for a campaign against bans and proscriptions "such as the one on Dave Douglass of Goole CLP..."

The General Council of Woolwich Labour Party has adopted a resolution calling for the release of the Shrewsbury 6 and sent a delegate to the London Trades Council Conference on the issue. Arising from the report of the delegate Woolwich Labour Party, the largest in Britain, will be writing to right wing Roy Jenkins, Labour's new Home Secretary, calling for the release of the imprisoned trade unionists.

DEFEND THE BROCKWELL THREE



On the march in Lambeth to free the three.

On Saturday the 30th March, about 250 people, with strong representation from the various black organisations, demonstrated in Lambeth for the release of three black youths imprisoned on charges of police assault after an incident at a fair in Brockwell Park last June.

The demonstration was organised by the Black Student Action collective, not only to protest about the three year sentences given to the youths (one, Robin Stirling being only 15 yrs. old) but to generally demonstrate against the treatment meted out to coloured people by the police in the Brixton area.

Harrassment of the coloured community by special patrol groups has been conducted as a matter

of policy. When the Black Workers book shop was burnt out no attempt was made to find out who was responsible. In fact, the policemen who arrested Robin Stirling (P.C. Tucker and P.C. Castle) had been involved in many incidents with black youths prior to the Brockwell Park incident.

A Black Peoples Defence Committee has been established to further the campaign and telegrams of support, donations etc., should be sent to 1 Mayall Road, London SE24. The defence committee want people to write to Jenkins, Home Secretary, pass resolutions of support through their trade unions etc. in an effort to secure their release.

Subscribe to the Chartist. £1 per year (four dollars USA).

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