

TORIES INCITE VIOLENCE AGAINST RAILMEN

"No defeat this time!" rages the Financial Times (15.4.72), and the Tories and their gutter-press unleash an avalanche of hysterical abuse at the railwaymen. While Barber yells about industrial blackmail, the Daily Express virtually incites middle class commuters to commit assault on drivers and guards —

"Infuriated passengers of the 5.24 from Waterloo to Dorking 'hijack' their train at Epsom when the driver plans to leave them. They insist that he takes them on to their destination. That is the service for which they have paid their money. They have a right to expect that the contract is honoured." In the same issue (15.4.72), it screams: "Jealousy, greed and hunger for power — that's what this fight is really all about."

As a result of this vicious sort of propaganda, hundreds of railwaymen have been jostled, hit and spat upon by sections of the "Bowling Hat Brigade."

Railwaymen are seething with anger. Baring its teeth, the Tory government is once again making workers in a nationalised industry the victims of its attempt to keep down wages and so boost the profits of its big business backers.

They have no interest in the daily lives of the railwaymen and their families, struggling for a decent standard of living. This

is the real issue for the Labour movement, the fight for a living wage.

What is the reality behind this "greedy" claim? A Colchester guard, 43 years on the railways, told *Militant* that he earns a basic of £19-80, reduced to about £15 after stoppages. A Brighton porter, in an interview with June Birchall, of Brighton Pavilion Young Socialists, said: "My weekly rate is £17-20 for 40 hours which leaves me £13 take-

I DON'T think there's a single driver on Southern Region who hasn't been kicked, threatened, or spat on in the last few days. — Train driver Mr John Clack.

home pay after deductions if I can't get overtime.

"I live in a council flat and my rent has already gone up by 50p to £6-50 this year and will go up again in October."

Both these workers stressed that it is only by overtime and rest-day working that a reason-

able wage can be earned. That is also why the present overtime ban has caused such chaos. At Colchester, nearly all the men work their rest-days.

The demand for a 16% increase and a basic of £20-50 have to be seen in this light. They have been offered a 12% rise and the £20-50 next January, but these figures are misleading, as in many cases, the increases in basic would be in place of bonuses earned at present. As the Brighton porter explained: "Take the train drivers; well now they

get a mileage bonus which can amount up to about £3. If the offer had been accepted they would have got about £3 on their flat rate, but according to the terms of the offer they would no longer get the mileage bonus.

In addition to low pay, railwaymen work terrible hours in bad conditions. Hours are based on three shifts, 6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm and 10pm-2am, all extremely inconvenient. At Brigh-

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Rush Hour Crush at Liverpool Street

LABOUR WOMEN- NEW MOOD

A report of the Labour Women's Conference at Dunoon, 11th-13th April, by ANN FROST, Delegate from Brighton Kemp Town CLP

The reluctance I felt at going to a women-only conference was increased when I read through the agenda.

With the exception of one amendment to a resolution on "The Cost of Living", which called for an extension of public ownership and greater worker-participation, which was included in the composite, every resolution on the agenda was reformist and in no way pointed out the way forward to a socialist transformation of society.

But the resolutions in no way reflected the feelings of the delegates, any more than the usual greetings from the Provost, the Chairman of the Argyll CLP or the Secretary of the Scottish Regional Council, none of whom raised the level of the conference above the weather and the long and arduous journey we had made.

NATIONALISE LAND

The debates started with housing, opened by a vicar's wife who said she lived in a "23-roomed tied-cottage" and Cllr. Dorothy Robinson of Stockport, in supporting the resolution, stated that both she and her husband, also a Labour councillor, were prepared to go to prison before implementing the Tories' so-called "Fair Rents" bill. She went on to say that if all Labour-controlled councils refused to implement the bill, there would not be enough prisons to hold them all.

But the conference really came alive, and the hall, with over 500 delegates, rang with cheers when a delegate from the TGWU, while supporting the resolution, said that the first priority was to nationalise the land.

This speech in fact set the tone for the next three days. As each reformist resolution was discussed, conference came alive for the speakers who put the socialist alternative. From the platform, Mrs Lena Jega mourned that the speakers were more radical than the resolutions.

NO FUTURE POLICIES

Because of the welcome resignation of Roy Jenkins and Co. from the Shadow Cabinet, the visit of Harold Wilson and Barbara Castle was delayed until the last morning of the conference. Many of the delegates I spoke to, after Harold Wilson had given his usual anti-Tory knock-about performance for the benefit of the vast number of pressmen who had arrived with him, were annoyed and disgusted that he used the precious time of conference merely for an attack on

CAR WORKERS SIT-IN

By
IAN ISAAC
(Oxford LPYS)

The failure of the leaders of the engineering unions to give a national lead has led to sporadic local action. At the same time the engineering bosses have attempted to have a go at those sections of the workers they think are vulnerable. They are now trying it on at the Oxford BLMC body plant factory.

Today (10.4.72) more than 1300 Pressed Steel-Fisher body plant car workers were told that they were suspended from work, as from 10am. This was the company's provocation towards the work-to-rule and ban on overtime imposed by the men in that particular shop.

More than 2800 assembly workers, myself included, were layed off at 12 noon and the body plant workers in the

The irony of the situation is that the assembly workers accepted an offer of about 5% increase in pay, guaranteed days in case of lay-offs occurring through external disputes along with a step towards equal pay for women and increased holiday pay. The same had been offered to the body plant workers, who are demanding a reasonable increase in pay (taking into account the

One of the arguments put to a mass meeting, financed by the company, was that the senior stewards thought the offer, subsequently accepted, to be a "fair and reasonable offer" and they "would have to recommend it to the meeting, the alternative being industrial action to achieve an 8% rise and a 35 hour week which would mean sacrifices for all." We, at the assembly plant, are now suffering the sacrifices with no constructive step forward on the engineers' claim.

The company recognises Austin Morris and Pressed Steel-Fisher, both BLMC, as one complex, even though they are separated by a road, connected by a covered bridge for the transportation of car bodies to the assembly lines. The unions do not. So in the

guaranteed pay is out.

In the face of the company's intransigent attitude towards the CSEU claim, the shop stewards must consolidate their action within both plants to ensure success for their claim, and, if necessary, to occupy the whole complex. Although the assembly plant have already signed an agreement for the coming year, in the face of the CSEU claim they must unite with their brothers in the body plant. This should be coupled with a call for national action: The return of the CSEU delegation with an ultimatum to the EEF — either to grant this just claim or national action will follow.

In the face of growing unemployment and the rise in the cost of living, the engineers can give

SPANISH WORKERS REJECT FRANCO UNIONS

When discussing the present conflicts in Spain, described in *Militant* No. 100, we must look back to the first months of 1971, when the official trade union elections were held.

The UGT maintained, in accordance with its already known strategy of not utilising the official channels of the regime, a clear and well-founded position which was adopted by other workers' organisations, in order to achieve an effective and united boycott of the regime, all the more so, as these elections were being held a few months after the Burgos court-martial, which had served to unite the working class and to demonstrate the driving force of their unity.

The UGT kept up its contacts and meetings with other workers' organisations to discuss the position to be taken in the face of the imminent elections and fully explained the reasons for not participating in them: *Boycott*, and boycott alone was a revolutionary position, since it is consistent with the building of workers' cadres in the working class without passing through the official channels.

COMISIONES OBRERAS

This is also the only way of weakening the regime's *Sindicato* (CNS), which could claim the support of just 6% of the workers in 1958, but reported an increase in that support to 48% of the workers in 1965 and 1966, as a result of the *Comisiones Obreras'* strategy of working within the established trade union structures.

It was this strategy which then, and particularly in 1968, caused the workers to move away from the *Comisiones*, once they were convinced of the nullity of those organisations, their lack of effective power against the state and their failure to defend the workers' interests before the bosses. They had also had enough of the continued loss of their leaders through arrest, making impossible the accumulation of preparation and experience necessary for the achievement of actions of much greater scope in the future.

The UGT has always believed that to carry out a campaign oriented in the same direction as that of the regime, without the power to combat its enormous propaganda apparatus, is to fall into the worst kind of opportunism, the immediate result of which is the confusion and division of the working class.

Certain trade union and political organisations (*Comisiones Obreras* and the Communist Party) did not want to run the risk of a confrontation with the regime, or a possible heavy setback at the time of the elections.

WORKERS REJECT LEGAL UNIONS

To this attitude we opposed our position: that the utilisation of legal channels led a sector of the working class into an economic race for a few pesetas; and that these elections were going to be a slaughter-house for the workers' leaders who participate in them, since only one third of the trade union posts would be elected, the other two thirds being held by individuals appointed by the regime.

We also saw that the recession from which the Spanish economy was suffering and the rampant inflation in the world economy, increasing throughout 1971, would force the outbreak of collective conflicts on a large scale because of the sharp increase in the prices of basic necessities while wages remained stable or rose only slightly. Given the inflationary state of the Spanish economy, the capitalists could not concede wage increases or improvements in order to absorb these conflicts, and they inevitably ended

to imprison the workers' representatives in the official *Sindicato*.

In summary, we believe that as a result of this situation, the regime and its institutions would be completely discredited before the working class, which would continue to elect its own representatives in assemblies, and totally reject the legal mechanisms, participating in a process that at the same time would create a greater political and revolutionary consciousness.

MASSIVE ABSTENTIONS

Needless to say, these arguments were challenged by some as being infantile. But time has proved us right, demonstrating the reality of an analysis not influenced by political opportunism. And that proof came sooner than expected. As a result of the broad campaign carried out by the UGT, there was massive abstention by the workers in the trade union elections: In Sevilla, only 6% voted; in Bilbao and Asturias, 8%; in San Sebastian and Madrid, 10% and 11%; and in Barcelona, 16%. And these are the largest working-class areas in Spain.

A document issued by the Ministry of Labour to the *Sindicatos* at the



Asturian Miners

end of 1971 reported: "We can see considerable activity on the part of the illegal political organisations, directed at taking advantage of these circumstances in order to increase tension, make the disputes political and increase their effects. The propaganda which is being produced calls for the presentation of high wage demands, the reduction of the working day, the discussion of the collective agreements in assemblies, the non-recognition of their official representatives, and the creation of conflicts even before the agreements are discussed."

ROLE OF UGT

In a later communique, the Ministry noted the high level of abstentions, emphasising the role played by the UGT, together with smaller organisations of a Catholic tendency. Indeed, the Autumn of 1971 and the first months of this year have been filled with events of great importance, in the face of the blatant rise in the cost of living, while wages have risen by too little or not at all, and the renewal of the collective agreements, in a country where the working class is deprived of the most basic rights and freedoms, condemned to ignorance, ostracism and repression.

A SPANISH YOUNG SOCIALIST

The resignation of Jenkins, Thompson and Lever from Labour's "Shadow Cabinet" on the issue of the Common Market referendum has been greeted with an undisguised sigh of relief by the Tories and their kept press.

These men of "principle" and their supporters will now be enabled to throw a lifeline to Heath and Co. in the Commons on the Common Market issue.

Their "consciences", which have hitherto been somewhat restrained by the pressure of the Labour movement and the rich promise of future "high office", can now at last be indulged.

But these "principles" it seems don't take any account of the burning desire in the Labour movement for a fighting lead to bring down the Tory government.

Nor do their "consciences" extend so far as to echo the overwhelming opposition of the mass of the Labour Party and Trade Union activists and the working class to entry into the Common Market, as expressed at the last Labour Party and TUC conferences and in opinion polls showing 70% and more opposing entry.

CLASS HATRED

This opposition of the working class, despite the fact that it has been channelled in a nationalist direction by the Labour leaders, reflects a suspicion and class hatred towards the Tories, not just on the Common Market, but on the whole gamut of their policies.

The working people feel that they will pay for the entry of big business into the Common Market, and their suspicions are confirmed in the financial pages of the "quality" press... "the costs of the Common Market farm policy will to a large extent be extracted from the poorer sections of the community if there are no offsetting changes in taxes and social services." (*Financial Times* 13.3.72)

It is little wonder that the Jenkins wing is lionised by the strategists of capital for his "courageous stand." Thus *The Times* gushed forth on the day following the resignations...

"Mr Jenkins himself is a remarkable and serious statesman... Mr Thompson and Mrs Williams... are as near to being wholly good people, people of serious moral purpose, as

it is decent for a politician to be. Mr Lever is the *Ulysses* of the Labour Party, a man both subtle and wise." (11.4.72)

The failed Tory candidate Rees-Mogg, Editor of *The Times*, recognises his own kind in the Jenkinsite wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Their outlook and "life style" are those of their "liberal" counterparts in the Tory Party.

Harold Lever is a merchant banker with a network of City contacts. George Thompson has already been suggested as a £20,000 member of the Common Market Commission. The majority of the present PLP are of the same stamp - company directors, lawyers, doctors and dons.

They have no conception in real terms of the daily grind of the miner, the railwayman, the docker, and the poverty and misery of millions of British workers. Their ideas were fashioned in the period of the post-war economic upswing and they have absorbed all the myths propounded by the defenders of capitalism - that the system has rendered the ideas of socialism "outdated and obsolete."

Jenkins is the most finished example of this type. In his book *Essays and Speeches* (published in 1967) the Labour movement is looked on as a means of merely rendering the capitalist system more "humane." He says of the great *Clause IV* battle for instance "Gaitskill and those with him tried to move an injured party into a more comfortable position."

Thus the anchor of the British Labour movement, its dedication to the idea of the socialist transformation of society, the Gaitskillite right-wing found "uncomfortable." And they still do!

"FITS AND STARTS"

With the deletion of *Clause IV*, Part 4 from Labour's constitution, these middle-class interlopers into the Labour movement would be freed from the irksome duty to make ritualistic references to "Socialism."

Where "socialism" is spoken of by Jenkins, it is only mentioned as a far-off ideal... "The conclusions are that the advance to socialism, whether we like it or not, will have to be carried out by a process of fits and starts." But even this "snail's pace" perspective, of a succession of Labour governments making gradual encroachments into capitalism,

schools. Because each school is fighting alone, without outside help or co-ordination, this could result in a series of small defeats.

These comrades need and deserve the help of the LPYS, its organisational experience, political maturity and awareness of the wider issues involved. But the YS also needs these people within its ranks, fighting not only on the educational front, but

JENKINS

has not been borne out by the experience of the last twenty five years. A smaller part of the economy is nationalised now than in 1947, a drop from 20% to 14%! The gap between rich and poor actually increased during the last Labour government, according to former Labour social experts.

Prof. Peter Townsend estimated that there was an increase of one million in the poor during the period of the last Labour government.

Nor will the capitalists give up their power, privilege and income without a fight. The experience of the last Labour government on the Corporation Tax legislation, when 133 amendments were introduced, so making the bill acceptable to the CBI, illustrated this. The "utopians" are not the Marxists but the reformists such as Jenkins who expect that the capitalists will quietly go to sleep while Labour governments legislate them out of existence.

NEW MOOD

Far from gradually improving the conditions of the working class, the policies of "piecemeal reform" actually provoke reaction at a certain stage. British capitalism is incapable of meeting even the modest demands outlined in Labour's minimum reform programme. And the present desperate economic situation is nothing compared to what will develop in the future. Far from granting further concessions, the bosses and their representatives will be forced to challenge all the historical conquests of the working class, its living standards, its organisations and democratic rights. They will use the tinkering with the system by the Labour leaders to prepare reaction, to deal blows at the Labour movement.

But Jenkins and Co. represent the past of the Labour movement. The new mood has been reflected in the swing towards the left amongst the advanced elements in the union branches and constituency parties. The ranks of the movement are demanding a return to the basic socialist ideas of the pioneers of the Labour movement. They have begun

- An end to school uniform, arbitrary punishment and religious indoctrination.
- A complete comprehensive system, with no other types of school.
- Control in the hands of the elected representatives of pupils, teachers, parents and the trade unions.
- An adequately financed educational system.
- More pay and shorter hours for



throwing their weight behind the struggle for a socialist society.

It is well known that an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory, and the YS will win the support of youth not only through essays and pamphlets, but through the campaigns fought on the basis of our theories, winning youth by fighting on their behalf.

Thus whilst the National Committee now have the responsibility of drawing up a *Charter for School Students*, detailing a clear Marxist solution to the problem, just as important are the victories which can be won over seemingly minor issues like length of hair, school uniform, etc., which will give school students the confidence to fight on greater issues.

I urge all YS members to lobby their representatives on the NC to ensure that this question is taken up with the utmost urgency. Leaflet your schools, raising the demands for:-

teachers - with less time spent in the classroom, allowing adequate preparation, etc.

-Complete freedom of speech and the right to organise in schools.

and the other demands for a decent educational set-up.

This fight in schools must be the fight of the YS. If we desert these comrades in their struggle, it will be a mistake we will long regret.

ALAN RUNSWICK (Bath LPYS)

READERS' LETTERS
ALWAYS WELCOME.

NSITES RESCUE TORIES

actively to oppose the caste of Parliamentary representatives who pharisaically counterpose themselves to the movement and look on it merely as a vehicle for their own ambitions. Jenkins portrays the outlook of these elements in the most brazen fashion in the above-mentioned book. He writes about the *Clause IV* debate... "Gaitskill found himself on a violently bucking bronco. He responded not just by clinging on and hoping for the best, but by a determined effort to steer the beast in his own direction. The immediate result was a breathtaking contest

By PETER TAAFFE

between horse and rider."

Jenkins reveals more than he intended about his attitude towards the rank and file of the Labour movement!

And this upholder of "constitutional propriety" in relation to the proposed referendum has no hesitation in triumphantly proclaiming that his mentor Gaitskill at the Scarborough conference in 1961 had "struck a great blow against the principle of conference authority"!

The stand of Jenkins and Co. on

the Common Market issue is an indication of his future role. He and his supporters are already in fact carrying out "coalitional" policies, in bolstering up the Tory government. The next Labour government will come to power against an economic and political background far more desperate than in 1964-70. Any tinkering with the system on the pattern of the last Labour government will mean a disaster for the Labour movement. The capitalists will use the Labour leaders' inaction to smear the ideas of socialism in the eyes of the middle class and politically backward workers. At a certain stage, if the economic situation warrants it, they will then attempt to split the Labour movement and form a national government as in 1931.

The difference between then and now is that this right-wing commands far less support than did MacDonald, Snowden and their supporters in 1931.

REAL REPRESENTATIVES

Any split-away of the Right will cause a ripple compared to 1931. It will be similar to that of the "Neo-Socialists" who split away from the French Socialist Party in 1932 because of its shift to the left.

But the rank and file of the Labour movement must now begin to make sure that its representatives correspond to the social composition and outlook of the working-class base of the Labour movement. The suggestion of the TGWU that more manual workers go forward as parliamentary candidates should be adopted by the CLPs.

Every Labour official should receive no more than the average skilled worker.

Above all, a clear socialist and Marxist policy should be adopted by the Labour movement. The proposed campaign against the Common Market has not been organised on class lines. Anthony Wedgwood Benn in *Tribune* (7.4.72) gave as the most important reasons for launching a campaign for a referendum... "the party has found itself campaigning more and more on the constitutional questions involved in entry and rather less on the terms negotiated..

..The government's bill destroys the very heart of our parliamentary system of government by decree, which automatically gives the force of law to EEC decisions and even authorises the Commission to raise taxation without effective control by the House of Commons."

SOCIALIST EUROPE

The majority of the Labour leadership, supported by *Tribune* and the "Communist" Party, oppose the Common Market in the most chauvinistic, flag-waving manner. Their arguments are indistinguishable from those of the right wing of the Tory Party, while those of the pro-Market-ers are the same as those of the CBI and the big monopolies.

But the overwhelming majority of the working class link their opposition to the Common Market with the massive rise in prices, unemployment the proposed Rent act, etc. — ie the overall programme of the Tories.

In any referendum, the struggle against the Common Market must be linked not just to a straight "NO", but for a socialist alternative, for the call for the Socialist United States of Europe. At the same time, a mass campaign should be organised to demand an immediate general election now. If the full power of the Labour movement were used, this government could be forced out of office. The local parties should recall all MPs who assist in maintaining the Tories in power. A bold approach now, on a fighting socialist programme could result in bringing Labour to power on a platform of nationalisation of the 250 major monopolies, banks and finance houses and the introduction of a planned economy, democratically controlled by shop stewards, housewives, the trade unions and the working class as a whole.

BRING BACK CLAUSE IV

GEOFF JONES
(Delegate, Brighton Pavilion CLP)

The Annual Meeting of the Southern Region of the Labour Party, long considered to be the most boring Labour Party function, took its first steps towards playing an important role in the life of the working-class movement, in London on April 8th.

Finally released from the idiotic rule which condemned delegates only to discuss matters relevant to Southern England, the conference discussions achieved new relevance to the whole range of problems facing the working class. The two hundred or so delegates showed themselves aware of the tasks facing them.

In one of the liveliest debates, delegate after delegate praised the work of the Young Socialists. Joe Holmes (NUM) praised their work in the miners' strike: "They brought a breath of fresh air... and gave help which was not always so forthcoming from Labour Parties."

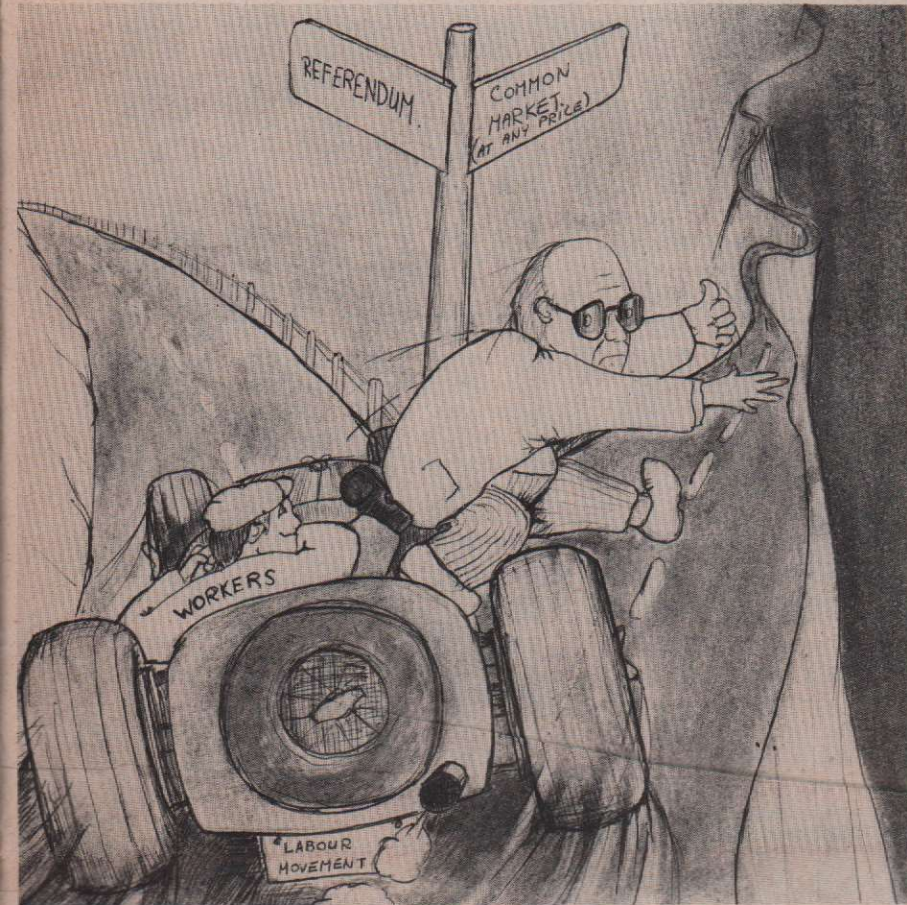
Barbara Castle, the main speaker, who used to be assured of a rapturous reception at such conferences, was very tepidly received, with an address which confined itself to attacking Barber's budget, the observation that the Tories' return to intervention in the affairs of industry was "about time" and the assertion that we should be proud because no Labour government could do as badly as these Tories!

Real applause was reserved for Ron Hayward (General Secretary elect) who made a speech to whiten the hairs of the Labour right-wing. Saluting the fact that "to talk of *Clause IV* is back in fashion," he reminded the meeting that "Given a break between the Labour Party and the organised working class, the party would not last a twelvemonth" and that conference decisions were to be abided by, by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

A clear move to the left was evidenced by the resolutions. Delegate after delegate made a point of mentioning the resolution massively passed at October's annual conference calling for the nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies. A resolution calling for this demand to be included in the next election manifesto was overwhelmingly carried, with the support of the *Executive*.

But the delegates were clear, in the main, that they wanted more than this, and that *Clause IV* was certainly "in fashion." Thus a resolution from New Forest CLP which pointed out correctly that the falling rate of profit has led to the crisis in investment, but went on to call for "backdoor" nationalisation because, as the mover said: "The answer might be to nationalise the 300 monopolies, but the next Labour government won't do that" was decisively defeated.

On the other hand, the resolution from Brighton that "Conference believes that the final solution to the present unemployment and to any capitalist crisis lies in the nationalisation of the giant monopolies, banks and insurance companies and the implementation of a democratic socialist plan of production involving all sections of the working class" was overwhelmingly carried. Supporters of *Militant* pointed out that the present Labour leadership had no policies for dealing with the present economic crisis and the conference agreed with



EQUAL PAY NOW

According to a survey by the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union, covering 500,000 women in industry and commerce, 80% do not receive equal pay and 93% do not get equal opportunities for promotion.

That this situation exists despite the fact that we are now half-way towards the 'legal' deadline for implementation of the Equal Pay Act, by which the last Labour government gave the employers a five-year breathing space, gives rise to a number of questions.

First, what does "equal pay" mean when, with a female workforce of almost nine million, 95% of their jobs are classified as "women's"? This classification is used particularly by employers to perpetuate the myth that women's wages are merely a supplementary to the husband's — hence the fact that in 1964, the average weekly wage of the British male manual worker, at £20.8, was almost double the female wage of £10.5.

The fact that employers plead that it is "impossible" to provide equal wages for women and youth, demonstrates to what extent they rely on these sections to provide a large percentage of their profits.

demonstrates just how utopian it is to try to 'legislate' to 'right a wrong', without attempting to look at the root causes and eradicate them.

This sexual division of labour is a form of the traditional "divide and rule" tactics used by capitalism all over the world — be it under the guise of patriotism, racialism, religion, craft or whatever. While the workers are fighting and bickering among themselves, the employers can heave a sigh of relief as they jealously guard their profits and put off the day of reckoning yet again.

When the "woman question" does rear its head, more often than not it is diverted — firstly, by the prejudices which are fostered in us all at an early age: that women cannot do certain jobs because of physical or mental incapacity; secondly by the understandable fear of many men of the threat to their own "security" of jobs (if they have one); and thirdly, by the traditional lack of militancy on the part of women in industry.

When it suits them, the bosses soon forget these stories they themselves have fostered — as, for example, during the First and Second World Wars, when women were drafted into industry at every

well as commercial; schools, offices and factories are more and more being faced with demands for equal educational opportunities.

The question of equal pay presenting a threat to men's jobs

By LYNNE FAULKES

(CAWU, Holborn TUPS)

is one that is inseparably linked to the whole problem of unemployment and the necessity of a concerted campaign by the Labour movement for Socialist policies. So long as one section of the working class is being super-exploited, the whole position of the movement is undermined.

At the same time, there is an urgent need for a concerted effort by the movement to combat the prejudices and fears which exist amongst men and women and which are re-inforced by the lies and distortions of the capitalist media.

Arguments that women cannot do certain work because of the heavy labour or long hours needed, should be destroyed immediately. If women do want to do these jobs (and nursing is a prime example, involving both heavy labour and shift-working), then they should be free to do so — but what we should be fighting for, is improved conditions for both men and women, so that many of these arduous and tiring jobs are done away with; with, of course, safeguards in pay and no redundancies.

What we should be demanding and fighting for throughout the movement, is equal pay for work of equal value (to be determined by the trade unions and shop

national minimum living wage allied to the cost of living (as worked out by the trade union movement).

Although only 25% of women workers are organised, up and down the country there is evidence that women are becoming more and more militant. The fight begun by the match girls in 1888 was continued by the stand of the Ford women in 1968, the Leeds garment workers last year and in countless episodes of militant action and support for other workers' demands, particularly evident throughout the miners' recent strike.

Because of their position inside the family, women particularly notice the attempts to attack the workers' living standards, as it becomes increasingly difficult to make ends meet; rising prices and rents usually hit the housewife first. Consequently, it is absolutely essential that the trade union and Labour movement campaign actively to draw women into the movement.

Campaigns around demands for 24-hour nurseries, free contraception and abortion on demand, communal cooking and laundry facilities for those who want them, time off with full pay for maternity, are essential in this fight.

These should be linked at the same time to demands for pay and working conditions, as outlined above, to convince men and women that only by fighting together through the trade union and Labour movement, can we ever hope to change the present system, which depends for its survival on cheap labour and the oppression of all workers.

Fifty women and 23 men at Brannan's Thermometer factory in Cleator Moor, West Cumberland are doggedly continuing a struggle to defend their trade-union rights (AUEW) which has lasted nearly a year. The strike, which began on 3rd June last year, is a fight against a typical attack of the employers on the organised workers and must be given active support by the Labour and trade-union movement in the area.

The employers have always cut corners as far as hygiene and

safety are concerned and as a result, the workers have had to work in poor conditions. Twelve cases of mercury-absorption and one case of mercury-poisoning have occurred. As the strikers point out: "Mr Barnes tries to give the impression that he is a philanthropist and only came to Cleator Moor to give employment to the area; surely his prime motive was to make a profit and expand his business."

STRIKE PROVOKED

"This has been accomplished, thanks being largely due to the sweat and toil of the workers... He indicated that these workers were a happy and contented force before they joined a union. Were they? If so, why did they join a union? Was it because they were happy with the poor working conditions or because they were content with the poor wages they were receiving?"

In an attempt to divide and weaken the workers, the management decided last May to give Staff status to seven favoured individuals and give them £10 a

CUMBRIAN STRIKERS

By BRENT KENNEDY (Carlisle LPYS)

NEED ACTIVE SUPPORT

week more than their fellow-workers even though they were doing the same job side by side.

This was a cold calculation of Brannan to deliberately provoke a strike so he could try to smash the union. As one of the favoured seven said: "The offer was too good to be rejected!" When asked for the reasons for the upgrading, Brannan replied: "It could be for something which happened two years ago or for something which might happen in two years time!"

After obstruction by management in negotiations, there was a 100% walk-out, which was given official backing by the AUEW. After the strikers received an ultimatum to return to work or be sacked, and after intimidation by foremen, 26 out of the 130 returned.

In an area where unemployment is 8.5% the firm has been able to recruit scabs, although the labour force is only 50% of the pre-dispute total, and only seven of these are from Cleator Moor itself.

The workers at Brannan's have fought hard to establish a union in the factory. (The first man

who tried to form a union was sacked). No amount of victimisation of militants, arrests of pickets and physical assaults on strikers by police and scabs will make them back down now, as long as they are supported by the AUEW and other workers.

The union has won improvements in working conditions, fought against mercury-poisoning and has taken Brannan's workers from amongst the lowest-paid in the area to amongst the highest. Just as in the Fine Tubes strike in the South West, the living standards of the working class throughout West Cumberland may depend on the success of this strike. A defeat for these workers will be a blow to all organised workers in the area. Therefore they should all give financial and physical support.

The Department of Employment refuse to recognise that a strike exists and say the strikers are unemployed, but if they try to claim Social Security, they have to declare their strike pay!

If the state machine exists to support the employers, then the Labour movement exists to sup-

port the workers. The Carlisle Labour Party Young Socialists are sending a leaflet to all trade unions in Carlisle asking them to send donations (which are greatly needed) and we are taking collections.

But what is needed most is the blacking of all goods to and from Brannan's Thermometers Ltd and the firms which refuse this, eg JT Doves, Porter Engineering and Kentmere's, all of Carlisle. What could really win this strike is mass-picketing of the factory by other workers. On two occasions, demonstrations were held with 300-400 from the area taking part, and on the following days, only half the scabs turned up for work. If the Labour and trade union movement in Cumberland organised mass picketing for one week, Brannan would lose all his scabs and be defeated.

Send donations and messages of support to:-

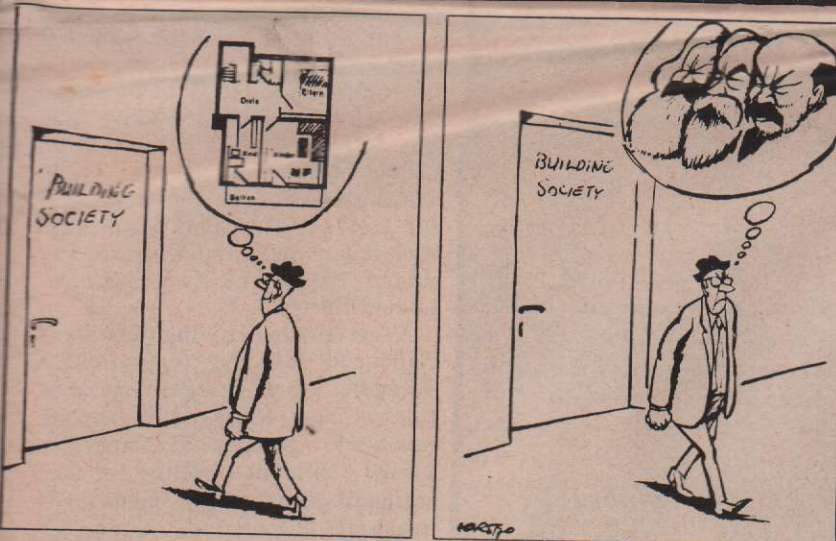
Mrs MURIEL HILLAN,
(AUEW Shop Steward),
34, Greystone Place,
CLEATOR MOOR,
Cumberland

LABOUR WOMEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to discuss future policies of the next Labour government. As one delegate remarked, "He insulted the intelligence of the women here by not discussing the Common Market issue that was uppermost in the minds of many delegates."

It was interesting to note that of the 537 women present, 108 were delegates from unions and 15 from CLPs. It is not necessary to have a women's section to attend as a delegate or to submit resolutions. I believe that if more comrades in the CLPs were to attend this conference, with resolutions posing alternative policies, the women's conference could be transformed. I am sure that many of the delegates from the unions, CLPs, women's sections and councils alike would welcome the change this would bring.



RAILMEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ton "there is no set-down meal break for us in an eight-hour day and no canteen. So we have to cover for each other to get a cup of tea and a sandwich and that at the tip-top railway buffet prices." For work in these conditions, even £20-50 is far less than the decent wage to which every worker is entitled.

We can't afford a penny more, pleads Richard Marsh, who has left the Labour movement to become Chairman of British Rail on a basic of £385 a week. Like all other nationalised industries however, British Rail's finances reflect the way it is used to subsidise the profitable sections of private industry - millions of pounds are paid out in interest to the former owners, and on old debts, and preferential rates are charged for the transport of industrial freight, to bolster the profits of big business.

As Peter Redfern, an NCL clerk in SE London pointed out: "The profitable British Rail Property Board, British Transport Hotels and other successful enterprises have been hived off into subsidiary companies." Ac-

count has to be taken too of the huge savings made by cutting off branch lines and the reduction in the work force from 400,000 in 1964 to 200,000 today.

The three rail unions have united in imposing a ban on overtime and a work-to-rule. "This decision of 12th April" comments Bro. Redfern, "was carried unanimously at a joint meeting of the three union executives, an unprecedented event. My branch of the TSSA endorsed the decision unanimously and I am sure the branches of all three unions throughout the country did the same."

The Tory government is now talking of imposing a ballot, under the Industrial Relations Act. This must be utterly rejected by the unions and boycotted by their members. It is for the unions to decide whether or not to call a ballot, not the bosses' government. In fact, through their branches, members have already voted, and the strength of support for the action is shown by the response. As Percy Coldrick of TSSA remarks: "Considering the government's reluctance to hold

THE SINEW OF WAR

Finances are the sinews of war. To carry on improving the Militant, we need money. We have been able to print some excellent reports of Labour Party meetings all over the country, which really show the way in which our ideas are gaining more ground every day. But this has often been at the expense of other important articles and reports. We cannot conjure up space from thin air. An eight-page paper is absolutely crucial. This means that we must reach and exceed the target of £5,000 by the end of this year. This is not just an arbitrary figure, but a vital necessity if we are to go forward with the Militant.

Every supporter of Militant must treat this as a first priority. A large number of regular donations would enable us to reach the target very quickly. At the Readers' Meeting in London to celebrate the 100th Militant, a reader promised to send us £2 each month for the Fighting Fund. We hope that every reader will consider following this example.

Surely every reader can afford a few bob a week in support of a bigger and better paper. Fill in the form below and send it in without delay. We will send you details of the various possible means of payment.

Once again only a few areas have sent us any money for the Fighting Fund. We will shortly be publishing a chart as a regular feature to show how each area is sending the money in. Send your accumulated donations right away so we can give an accurate picture of the way in which fund-raising activities in your area are going. If any readers have some ideas for raising cash, send them in and we will print them.

Thanks to the following supporters for their very welcome donations: Thanet £3.40; Harlow £3; London social £75.41; miscellaneous £10.75.

MILITANT FIGHTING FUND

I wish to donate £..... per week/month to the Fighting Fund.
Please send me details of how this can be done.

NAME..... ADDRESS.....

By the BUSINESS MANAGER

a ballot on the Common Market issue, it's a bit of an about-turn by them."

Any settlement must of course be voted on by the members, but in full branch meetings, with the issues clearly discussed, not by ballot papers being sent to individuals' homes, where they hear only the government's view from the TV and the press.

Arbitration has rightly been scorned as a means of getting a just settlement of the claim. Any

so-called "cooling-off" period must also be rejected. A fight to the finish must now be undertaken for 16% and £20-50 now, and not a penny less!

But, most of all, other workers must unite behind the railwaymen as they did behind the miners. The NUM themselves have already shown the way, with an offer of whatever support is requested. The Tories believe that "the public" who backed the

men. But "the public" consists overwhelmingly of workers and their families; it is in their interests that the railwaymen win. Their claim is as good as the miners' and their victory just as vital for the Labour Movement.

Instead of trying to conciliate, the TUC should be leading the campaign of solidarity. In fact, however, its leaders are cringing before the Tories: "A political element has been thrust into the dispute," bemoans Vic Feather, "and that is something to be regretted."

But that is the whole point. The railwaymen's fight is now not just for a modest wage increase, but the spearhead of the political confrontation with the Tory government, their Industrial Relations Act and their propaganda machine. The TUC and every trade union at national and branch level, together with Labour Parties and Young Socialist branches, must back the railway workers to the hilt.

The more the Tories drag the gutters for filth to throw at them, the more determined must the Labour movement be that the railwaymen win their full claim. "No defeat this time!" must be the cry hurled back at the Financial Times and the interests it represents, by the organised working class of this country. Another defeat of this Tory government would take us a step nearer its total defeat.

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