

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

186 12 SEPTEMBER 1970 4d

DAILY Mirror

OUR ADVICE TO THE ANTI-UNION CLOWNS OF HOLBORN CIRCUS

BELT UP!

'WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?' screamed the Daily Mirror on Monday. It went on to tell us, on page one and most of page two as well, in several thousand words of ignorant hysteria against strikers, trade unions and workers in general.

The question should be: Who the hell does the editor of the Daily Mirror think he is? What gives him the right, from his plush office in Holborn Circus to slander ordinary working people trying to keep abreast of roaring price increases.

The Mirror pretends to be the paper of the working man. It has made a vast fortune from its working class readers.

But all they get in return is the old bosses' message (dressed up in racy language)—'Stay in your place. It's not for you to question the way society is run. Just go on pumping out the profits for the parasites who live on your backs.'

NO RIGHT TO DECIDE

Listen to what the Mirror thinks about you: 'The strike by a thousand workers at two Dunlop plants at Skelmersdale, who would not agree to have tea breaks at set times, is the zaniest in months.' In other words, workers have no right to decide when they can have a tea break. That right belongs solely to the bosses and the editor of the Daily Mirror.

The Mirror is yelling abuse at strikers. It is telling the TUC that unless it puts its house in order then the Tories will bring in anti-union laws. It is yelling and giving orders because the economy is in a mess.

Just like every other little anti-union guttersnipe, the Mirror's editor lashes out at the usual scapegoat — the working man. The Mirror doesn't use its enormous resources to wage an enquiry into why the economy is in a mess, because it knows what the answer would be: that the tiny group (less than 5 per cent) who own all the country's wealth, are interested only in making bigger and bigger profits at the expense of the great mass of the people.

It is the profiteers, the financiers and the ruling class wide-boys who are solely responsible for the country's economic mess.

There is no campaign in the Mirror against the festering slums that disfigure our towns. No campaign against the run-down schools and badly staffed hospitals. No campaign against the crime of 600,000 people forced onto the dole as a direct result of government policy.

SLIPPING INTO POVERTY

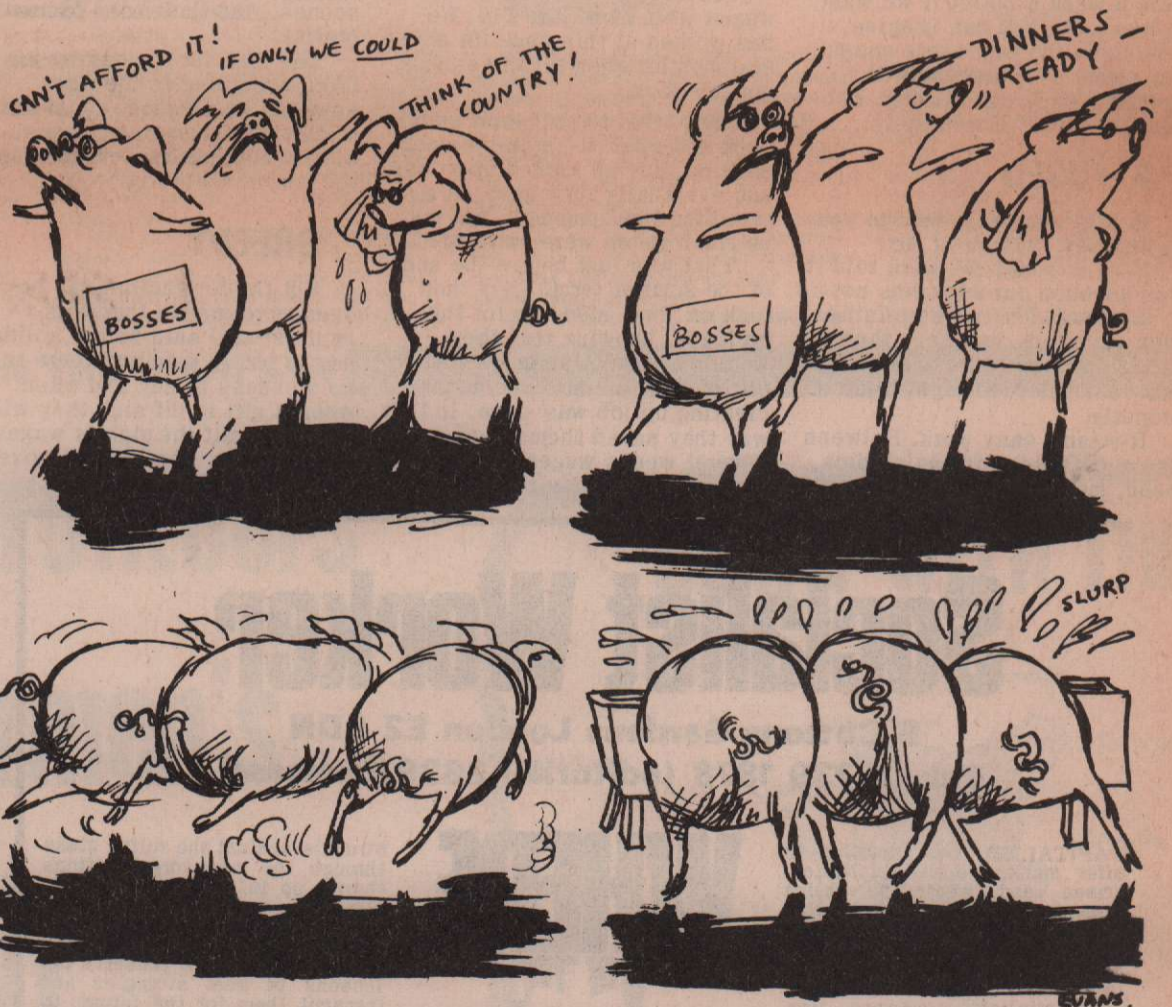
There was no mention at all in Monday's Mirror (they were too busy attacking strikers) of a conference held last week-end on housing and poverty at which respectable professors and sociologists—not reds or zanies—said that millions of workers in Britain on low incomes were slipping further and further into poverty because they couldn't keep pace with inflation.

The conference discussed figures produced by Incomes Data Services which showed that 3½ million workers covered by wages councils had fallen far behind the cost of living in the last five years.

No, Mr Hugh Cudlipp, £33,000 a year editorial whizz-kid of the Mirror, you didn't report that. Your job, as a mouthpiece of the bosses, is to attack and demoralise working people in order to stop them from taking what is rightfully theirs.

We are glad to report that fewer and fewer workers are taking any notice of you — your declining circulation shows that. We have had a bellyful of strikes, says the Mirror. And strikers have had a bellyful of the Mirror.

Our advice to the Mirror, in its own short, sharp and pithy language is: BELT UP. The workers are on the move, fighting now for higher wages, tomorrow for a new, socialist society. They will need a paper to help them in that struggle. And we'll lay five bob to the whole of Holborn Circus that it won't be the Daily Mirror.



Release Palestine prisoners

THE MILLIONAIRE PRESS has frothed at the mouth with anger over the latest crop of plane hi-jackings. Words such as 'illegal', 'piracy', and 'law and order' leap from front pages every day.

While all socialists will be concerned at the fate of the hostages, we must not be swayed by the barrage of lies and distortion from Fleet Street.

The Palestine guerrillas have seized the planes of the giant air corporations in order to draw attention to the plight of their people in the Middle East and also as a bargaining measure to demand the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The hypocrites of Fleet Street have never been concerned about the

illegal, piratical way in which tens of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homeland with scant regard for 'law and order'. Now they rot and wait in the refugee camps and their plight goes unrecorded in the western press.

Socialist Worker repeats its unconditional support for the struggle of the Palestinian people. We demand the immediate release of Leila Khaled and all the other courageous guerrillas struggling for a Middle East free from imperialist control.

Socialists in the Seventies

Speakers from USA and Western Europe
Saturday 12 Sept 2.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq WC1.

WOMEN CLEANERS FIGHT FOR UNION RIGHTS

Militant May doesn't mind a dust-up with the bosses

MAY HOBBS is a militant who has tried to organise women office and factory workers in North London for several years. May has been given the sack several times as a result of her attempts to defend workers' rights and conditions. Her last job, cleaning at Hornsey College of Art, ended in the same way.

What sort of wages and conditions do women cleaners have to put up with?

The largest group of cleaners and the most exploited, are the night cleaners. Typical pay is 5s6d an hour, about £10 to £12 10s for a 40 hour week worked between 10pm and 6am.

For this a woman is expected to clean 40-50 offices including stairs, corridors and toilets. Most of the work is done in office blocks, government establishments, embassies and airports.

Each job is in the charge of a supervisor — one of the cleaners who is given an extra 6d or so an hour to organise the others. Rates are higher for morning and evening cleaners, but the hours are shorter.

On top of the measly wages, there are no fringe benefits. No one is entitled to holiday pay until they have been in the same job for at least a year, and you often get the sack before the year is up.

You can be given the sack on the spot — the supervisor just tells you that you won't be needed next night, and no wages in lieu. Maybe she doesn't like your face.

Of course we have to give them a week's notice if we want to leave. As you can imagine, this gives the employers enormous power over unorganised workers. They can dismiss whoever they want immediately.

REFUSED

Is this what happened to you at Hornsey College of Art?

Yes, although we were told it was because our work was not up to standard. It's not surprising they gave this excuse — there had been three of us doing a job that really needed eight to do it properly.

It wasn't easy work. Between us we covered painting studios, wood, metal, weaving and needle-

work rooms, besides the administration block, the canteen and all the stairs and toilets.

We refused to do the pottery room. Cleaning up all that clay and dust was a job in itself.

For all this we were paid about £12 10s a week, and that only after a fight.

When I first went there the wages were more like £10. We had worked at this pace for several months when all three of us got the sack.

They tried to pull their usual trick and make it an on-the-spot sacking, but we kicked up a fuss and eventually they gave us a small 'in lieu' payment, but not as much as we were entitled to.

That was just before the end of the summer term. They then took on some students for the holidays, knowing that they wouldn't have to keep more than one of them on once the major clearing up job was done. In that way they saved themselves several weeks wages and, of course, our holiday pay.

Interviewed by Margaret Renn

Were you employed directly by the college?

No, nearly all night cleaners are employed by contractors like Acme or General Cleaning Contractors, who then contract the workers out.

Although there are hundreds of these cleaning contractors, they are all linked up behind the scenes. And they make fantastic profits.

The rate for a cleaning job is fixed according to the floor space to be cleaned—about half of this will then go to wages, almost nothing in overheads, and the rest is all profit!

GREEDY

But the contractors can be even more greedy than this implies—as I said before, holiday pay is rarely paid, and there is no sickness money and often when a girl is off sick they will only pay half the night's wages to the others who have to cover for her.



May Hobbs: we must get organised

From what you have said it seems that the wages are low, the conditions bad and there is absolutely no security. Have you tried to organise the women?

A few years ago we began organising groups of cleaners into the Transport and General Workers Union. But as a result of an unofficial strike I and eight others got the sack, as there was no support from the union and its officials were nowhere to be seen.

Presumably the contractors could easily outbid our 9d a week subs. After that the whole thing gradually collapsed.

We militants were blacked by the contractors. It was years before I could get another cleaning job, even though there is usually a shortage of cleaners.

This is the difficulty with organising against the large contractors—the moment they hear of a union being formed there will be sackings, they will pick off the known militants.

Next time we must be prepared, with other organised workers ready to back us up—as the Post Office Workers' Union have supported us in the past over the sacking of one of our women.

Have you any plans to organise cleaners again?

It's not easy to do it, but there are many women who are already prepared to join, and many others would follow I'm sure, if they know that they will have control over the union.

What we need to do initially is to get one group fully organised and ready to take on the employers if necessary.

What sort of demands do you think a union should make of the employers?

Well, firstly we want a guaranteed minimum wage of £16 a week plus holiday pay equivalent to one night's pay for each month worked. Then we also want some security of our jobs. No on-the-

spot sackings and the minimum of one week's notice from the employers.

We also want full cover money for women off sick — if we are expected to do this extra work we should be paid in full for it.

Finally, we want one male cleaner on every building. Women cleaners shouldn't be expected to clean out men's toilets, for instance, but men cleaners are paid more than women so that you often get a job without a man on it.

SUPPORT

How can other workers and organisations like IS help you?

First, anyone already in a trade union should get their branches to commit themselves to support the night cleaners in their place of work. Where possible they should demand that the night cleaners should be unionised.

In parts of the print industry the cleaners are organised due to the insistence of the existing unions that non-union labour would not be allowed.

Second, all university and college students at places like Hornsey College of Art must black holiday office cleaning because, without realising it, they are being used to undermine the cleaners' jobs. They should also back the unionisation of their cleaners.

Third, IS can help us in putting over our case to a wider audience and helping us out in the problems that arise in our struggle.

Finally, will readers of Socialist Worker who have contacts with cleaners, or are cleaners themselves, or can help us organise against the employers to better our standard of living, please contact: May Hobbs at 01-348 2817.

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world — a tiny minority — subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power — the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a state of workers' councils and workers' control of

WHERE WE STAND

production. Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes. The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by constant

struggle against the ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois. International Socialists therefore fight for:

Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations. Workers' control over production and a workers' state. Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation. Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the paper.

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THE TORIES**

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MOTOR MILITANTS: carrying the can for management inefficiency

Government and governors to blame for car industry 'anarchy'

MILITANTS in the motor industry have been attacked hysterically in recent weeks. The press has condemned strikes at Lucas, Dunlop and GKN Sankey.

The papers have taken their cue from Lord Stokes, chairman of British Leyland. Last February he made a bitter attack on the militancy of motor workers.

He said that strikes were creating a 'state of anarchy' and called for anti-union legislation.

Since then, Stokes has again attacked strikers. At a special shareholders' meeting on 4 August, he blamed them for the low profitability of British Leyland.

Motor workers have been accused of preventing production and causing huge lay-offs. They are alleged to be responsible for the rising number of foreign cars imported into Britain and of creating financial losses for the motor owners.

But the fundamental problems of the motor industry are not caused by militancy. For some years now the British economy has been in trouble.

It has run a deficit on the balance of payments. It has devalued the pound and it has run up huge debts to the world's bankers.

These difficulties have been caused basically by:

The loss of the former 'safe' colonial markets.

The emergence of competitors such as Japan and Germany.

The wasteful spending of over £2000 million a year on defence.

And the investing of money abroad.

Britain's role as a world banker has also contributed to the problems.

CRISIS IN MOTORS: 1

A four-part series by John Setters

So much so, in fact, that when rumours flew round international banking circles in December 1968 that Wilson had resigned as Prime Minister, there was massive selling of the pound as a panic reaction.

The effect of this was so severe that Wilson later stated: 'The losses on that one day were greater than the loss of exports as a result of all the strikes we have had in the motor industry in the last six months.'

In an effort to solve this economic crisis, the government carried out a series of deflationary home policies. The deliberate intention of this was to cut the value of wage packets in order to prevent people from buying goods and force manufacturers to export.

DEVALUED

To help in this process, the Labour government devalued the pound.

The effect of these deflationary policies, together with higher petrol costs, increased road taxes and

tougher hire purchase restrictions, led directly to a reduction of demand for motor vehicles.

This has shown itself in full car showrooms and the repeated warnings from the Motor Dealers Association that many of their members' firms are threatened with closure due to lack of sales.

The Sunday Times of 30 August explained the position as follows: 'The plain fact is that to meet the low level of demand, the British motor industry, even with total industrial peace, is running at about 80 per cent capacity.'

Although Lord Stokes shouts constantly about the damage of strikes, his company is appealing for voluntary redundancies and preventing the employment of new labour. If there were as many cars to be produced as Stokes and his supporters claim, no redundancies would ever occur and more labour, not less, would be employed.

The effect of these deflationary policies, together with its serious under-capitalisation (lack of modern machinery, etc) has meant that the British car industry is less compet-

itive than its major international rivals.

According to Lord Stokes, 59 per cent of the machine tools in the British motor industry are more than 10 years old, compared to 42 per cent in West Germany and 36 per cent in Japan.

The only way this problem of under-capitalisation can be resolved is by the massive accumulation of huge profits - and yet, owing to the present deflationary situation, these are unobtainable.

The Financial Times of 13 October 1969 described the dilemma as follows: 'It is no accident that Fiat, BMW and Mercedes, which are the companies that have shown the most impressive increases in exports in the last five years, have also enjoyed strong and fairly consistently expansionary home markets.'

PROFITS

'Profits earned on the home market and a steadily increasing demand enable a company to invest more money in new models and in new manufacturing plants than would otherwise be possible. This in turn makes the companies' products more competitive...'

The key task for the motor bosses is to try to achieve bigger profits. This is why they regularly demand that the government ease deflationary policies.

But most of all, they know they



STOKES: Gave press their cue

must attack the wages and conditions of the car workers. In this they have the full support of the government.

In order to build a smokescreen around their offensive, the motor owners are leading the lying campaign on the militants. Unable to solve their problems of low profits, under-capitalisation and reduced competitiveness, the employers are determined to make the workers shoulder the burden.

NEXT WEEK: BOSSES ON THE WARPATH

Big business profiteers put Irish fishermen's jobs in jeopardy

by **Damian Duffy**
Armagh branch,
People's Democracy

FOR HUNDREDS, possibly thousands of years, the people who live around Lough Neagh and the River Bann in the North of Ireland, have eaked out a miserable existence by fishing.

As recently as 1911, 700 fishermen could scrape some kind of livelihood on Lough Neagh. Today there are only 300 left.

This tough existence is not made easier by the exploitation of the fishermen by the London-run big business interests that now control all the fishing rights on the lake.

Unless they hold a company licence from Toome Eel Fisheries, the fishermen are denied access to the lake. The men are forced to fish as the company instructs and accept the company's price without question. At present the businessmen

pay the fishermen 2s 10d a pound for eels and sell them to the public in London for 8s to 9s a pound.

Even allowing for transport the company must be making about a 300 per cent profit. In addition the company refuse to let the local men fish for the most profitable eels, reserving them for their baited traps.

Not surprisingly there has been growing conflict between the fishermen and the racketeering companies who regard themselves as masters of Lough Neagh.

People's Democracy, the militant socialist movement, has organised a series of actions in support of the fishermen. PD has raised the demand for the fishing to be run on Lough Neagh by a fishermen's co-operative.

Unless the fishermen win, they and their families will join the already disgracefully long emigration queues to London, Birmingham and New York. These men and their families have a right to live and work in their own country.

Solidarity

People's Democracy is asking the International Socialists and other left wing organisations to mount solidarity demonstrations against the faceless business interests who manipulate

DOWN WITH THE



ROBBER BARON!!

DEATH TO THE ROBBER BARONS!
LOUGH NEAGH FOR THE FISHERMEN!

A PD leaflet given out at Lough Neagh

the lives of the Lough Neagh people, through their control of Toome Eel Fisheries.

The full story of the shameless exploitation and the men responsible is told in a new PD pamphlet *The Greet Eel Robbery* by Michael Farrell

The Great Eel Robbery

2s6d including post from: IS BOOKS
6 Cottons Gardens London E28DN.

A THEORY spread in the 1950s that widespread poverty no longer existed in Britain. So convincing was this story that all the rich people decided to tell it to all the not so rich people.

A campaign was started to convince us all that we had 'never had it so good' and that we were privileged to live in the 'affluent society'.

But unfortunately for those involved in spreading the story - bosses refusing wage increases, politicians seeking votes, the rich in general - the facts don't quite fit the rosy picture they paint.

Ken Coates and Richard Silburn in their book **Poverty: the Forgotten Englishmen** (Penguin, 6s) have produced a shattering counter-blow to the lies told by the press and television. They make even more disgusting the bloated self-satisfaction of all those who would deny that want and poverty exist in this country.

In 1960 7½ million people were living in poverty in Britain. In 1969, 2½ million men were forced to support themselves and their families on less than £15 a week.

In 1970, the distribution of the national wealth far from being spread more evenly, has been concentrated increasingly into the hands of the rich.

But to the poor, poverty cannot be represented by 'statistics'. Coates and Silburn talked to the residents of St Ann's, a slum district of Nottingham, an area of deprivation and squalor, conditions to be found in every large city or town.

Their town is sad but predictable. There is an endless list of bad housing, underpaid jobs, overcrowded schools and hospitals.

In St Ann's, it is an asset to have your floor laid directly onto the earth since you cannot cripple yourself by falling through a rotten floorboard. The damp and the mould are minor inconveniences in comparison with the threat of a broken neck. TB takes time to kill, a broken neck is immediate.

'Just large mice'

In St Ann's you invariably keep a pet. A large dog is the best protection against rats.

One council official is legendary in the area for his description of extremely large and aggressive rats as 'just large mice'. The sewers and, at nights, the streets, are full of just such 'large mice'. And there are always the minor irritants such as cockroaches and the smaller breed of mice.

Coates and Silburn claim that the housing conditions have substantially deteriorated over the last few years and are getting

worse. One tenant with an outside toilet suggested that Ministers of Housing should be com-

elled to live in such conditions for a while in order that 'they would come to learn the health-giving values of fresh air, or for that matter, of cold fog as they scuttled up and down the yard in the middle of the night.'

Areas like St Ann's don't sport a local boutique, a new trendy shop, or Carnaby St in miniature. They have 'Club Row' - the bottom end of the market where you can pick up a three-piece suite for £3, a fine pair of shoes for 5s or perhaps a battered fridge for a couple of quid.

Pay more for everything

A good handyman can furnish an entire house from down the market at less than a tenth of shop prices. Whether or not the equipment lasts a tenth of the normal time is another question.

One word describes poverty: hand-me-down. Second-hand clothes, second-hand furniture, second-hand life.

To be poor is to pay more for everything. Food costs more at the corner shop, but the corner shop gives credit! In any case, without a fridge or pantry, you can't buy in bulk.

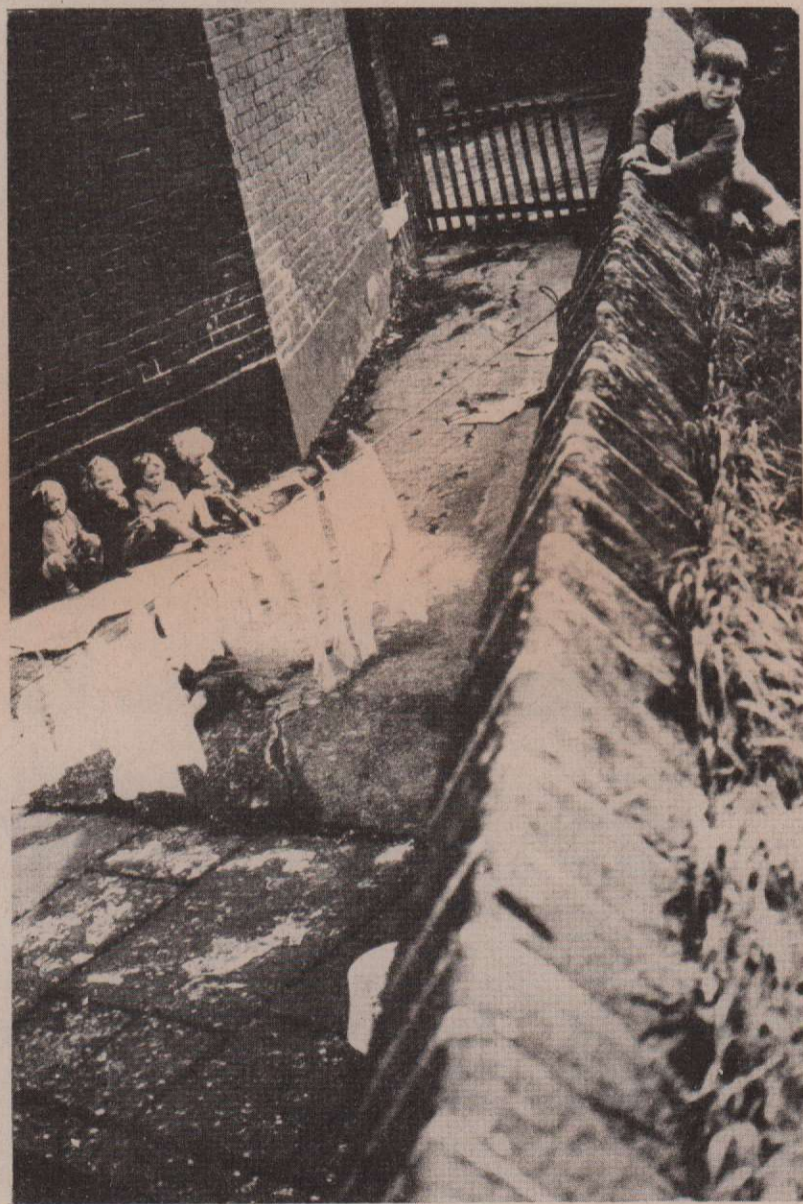
Old, draughty houses cost more to heat than brand new suburban semis. Cheaply repaired roofs and floors need constant work. Constant work means constant cost.

In the depressed area, poverty is not confined to the individual and his house. Poverty is all around.

Poverty is in the overcrowded school, the children playing on the streets and rubbish dumps



The hand-me-down world of Britain's forgotten poor



England's green and pleasant land: mean streets, a backyard playground

through lack of any garden or green space and the resulting high accident rate.

Poverty is the dirt and the smog, the high rate of TB and bronchitis. Poverty is a boring, low-paid job with no union organisation.

Coates and Silburn write not as sociologists but as socialists. To them, poverty is the direct and inevitable result of capitalism.

When profit is the most important aspect of society then working class people suffer. This book is an indictment of the money-grabbing society.

For 7½ million people living in poverty in Britain, the criminality of capitalism and the necessity of fighting to change it could not be more apparent.

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Review: Barry Hugill Pictures: Phil Evans

Big cash handouts for the landlady of Penge

'POOR ELSIE' IS

ALL THE LANDLORDS in Britain fell a-sighing and a-sobbing when they heard of the plight of poor Mrs Elsie Raum of Penge. Mrs Raum spent two and a half days in Holloway Jail for breaking the Rent Act.

As a result, she has received £100 from the Fair Rent Association to cover her legal costs and several hundred pounds from the Daily Sketch and the Daily Express. Her house, which she is now going to sell, has gone up in value by some £2500.

The terrible misery suffered by Mrs Raum, has to be compared with the behaviour of her 'evil, money-grubbing' tenant, Mr Charles McCready.

Mr McCready and his family had lived in Mrs Raum's house much longer than Mrs Raum. They had never caused anyone any trouble. They had paid out in rent for a five room flat some £1,500 over 16 years.

Last month Mr McCready went to work. His family were on holiday.

Mrs Raum broke into his flat and seized all his furniture, including the light fittings, which she put in her cellar. She changed the locks on her front door and phoned Mr McCready at the restaurant where he works with the news that he had been evicted.

His crime, she explained to the hungry press, was that he was a 'controlled' tenant, paying 'only' £3 a week. He was, she also told the press, 'arrogant'.

But the real trouble was that his presence in the flat, protected by the law, brought down the value of her large house, which she wanted to sell at a vast profit.

Refused to obey

Naturally enough, Mr McCready applied for an injunction to get back into his home, which he was granted. But Mrs Raum refused to obey the injunction. She would, she said, rather go to prison than let the man back into his home.

At once, she became the press barons' martyr of 1970. All the newspapers, which had been attacking students and demonstrators for breaking dubious common laws about demonstrations, started to encourage and promote the breaking of the Rent Act by Mrs Raum.

Hardly a day went by without the features of 'our Elsie' staring at us out of the newspapers' front pages.

The press campaign was an instant success. Mr McCready, hounded and bullied by the press, gave up his attempts to get back his home.

The Bromley Borough Council, dropped their criminal proceedings



Charles McCready: harried and bullied

against Mrs Raum under the Rent Act. A flagrant breach of the law had been left almost without punishment. Meanwhile the Fair Rent Association, the organisation for landlords who find it difficult to run more than two cars on controlled rents, had been cashing in on the publicity.

Mr Philip Goodheart, Tory MP for Beckenham, went to see Housing Minister Peter Walker, who had earlier in the same week refused to see a Labour MP, Ron Brown, about 250 slums in Shoreditch. Goodheart got a promise from Walker that rent control would soon be removed.

The press had proved that people like Mrs Raum, with the right kind of support, could not only break the law but change it.

Most laws, of course, are made to keep working people in order. These, according to the press, must be obeyed.

Some laws, won by working people in struggle, protect them from the more vicious attacks of landlords, bosses and governments.

Ruling class orgy

One such law is the Rent Act, which dates back to 1919. Assisted by an orgy of ruling class propaganda from the newspapers, the landlords are hoping to sweep this protection away.

It looks as though they might succeed without opposition. The most tragic aspect of the Raum/McCready fiasco has been the desertion of the official labour movement.

Elsie Raum: cheers and cheques



Mr McCready has been completely undefended, especially by the local Labour parties which have remained conspicuously silent throughout the controversy.

Nor has the Labour Party nationally, which raised such hell in 1963 and 1964 at the spread of Rachmanism in London, made one official

statement about the prospect of Fair Play for Rachmans now proposed by Mr Peter Walker and his friends in the Fair Rent Association.

Rachman was fought hard by combined tenants committees and the Labour Party. Mrs Raum escapes with a cheer and a cheque signed by Lord Rothermere.

COTTONS COLUMN

PERHAPS the saddest thing about the Labour 'left' today is the dreadful shallowness of their arguments, the pitiful lack of understanding of how capitalist society works and how it can be changed.

Norman Atkinson's article in last week's Tribune was a glaring example. Calling for maximum unity between the Labour Party and the TUC to fight the Tories, he calls for a reappraisal of what went wrong with the last Labour government.

Such an analysis, says Atkinson, the MP for Tottenham, is necessary if Harold Wilson is to 're-establish his credibility as a socialist'. What the movement needs to know, he says, is who sabotaged the 'high-wage, fast-growth, full-employment policies which literally oozed from Transport House prior to 1964'.

Who was it? Atkinson demands - the gnomes, the Treasury or the City?

Can we whisper something in your ear, Norman, if you can stand the shock? The saboteur was none other than H Wilson himself.

Casting around for convenient scapegoats in Geneva, Threadneedle Street and Whitehall will not obscure the fact, which every militant worker knows, that the Labour government consciously set out to hammer the working class through wage restraint and inflation during the six miserable years of its office.

And they were sustained in power by Norman Atkinson and his Tribuneite colleagues who refused on every occasion to vote against Wilson's anti-union policies.

The one glaring lesson from the Labour fiasco is that while 'socialist politics' are defined solely in terms of winning elections there can be no advance for ordinary working people. Harold Wilson was once thought to be 'very left-wing' - and look what happened to him.

Get back

DOWN MEMORY LANE: 1 A Welsh socialist miner tells how he was sacked for his militancy when the

mines were privately owned.

Came nationalisation after the war and he walked up to his old pit which proudly flew the banner 'This pit belongs to the people'.

But who should he see sitting behind the manager's desk but the same man who had sacked him years before. When the miner asked for his job back, he was told to clear off: 'We don't want troublemakers like you in the industry'.

On the boil

DOWN MEMORY LANE: 2. A Glasgow shipyard worker was reminiscing about the Boilermakers' Society and produced his membership card from the 1940s. Inside was a reproduction of an old union enrolment form.

The words were printed in Old English script and a triumphal arch was surrounded by cherubs, angels and harps. He produced a magnifying glass and pointed to some tiny lettering inscribed around the arch. The message was: 'The Lord helps those who help themselves.'

As the militant pointed out, some traditions are worth preserving.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT spends just over £10 million a year on its accounts with various advertising agencies. This sum represents a quarter of the entire yearly food bill for all patients and staff in all the hospitals in Britain and would have paid for one-quarter of Crawley New Town or two superbly equipped new hospitals like the Lister in Stevenage.

Boering tale

ALFRED McALPINE, chairman of McAlpine's, a well-known construction firm with some juicy long-term contracts in South Africa, was appalled at Neil Wates' denunciation of investment in South Africa last week. He sharpened his pencil and wrote a long letter to the trade newspaper Construction News.

What really jarred him was Wates' comparison of the treatment of Africans in South Africa to Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

Summoning the full power of his massive intellect, Alfred wrote: 'Whatever the Afrikaner's opinion of the African's capabilities, his attitude is one of genuine liking for the African, and not the intense hatred that motivated Hitler.'

Perhaps Alfred could help us

with the distinction between opinion and attitude.

NATIONAL INTEREST DEPARTMENT: The fifth Earl of Durham, who died in February, aged 85, saved a £1m death duty bill by handing over his 26,000 acre North Country estates to trustees well before his death. If he had retained the land it would have been broken up after his death and used for new houses.

Black in Britain
Don't miss this important article next week

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Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the International Socialists to:

Name _____

Address _____

Send to IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Socialist Worker

Government out to crush revolt of lower-paid workers

by Chris Davison

THE GOVERNMENT is determined to pick a fight with lower paid workers. The only criticism that can be made of the unions' claim for a £16 10s minimum basic rate for council workers is that it is too timid.

The same goes for the demand being put forward by the railwaymen

and provincial busmen. This adds up to more than a million of Britain's lowest paid workers who are being refused even a modest rise in their standard of living.

Ministers, employers and their faithful echoes in the daily press

have denounced these 'inflationary' wage claims. It is about time these gentlemen were made to live on £14 or £15 a week, as many lower paid workers have to do. We might hear a little less nonsense about unreasonable strike action then.

But the government is not interested in reason. It knows very well that the plight of millions of lower paid workers is getting worse.

It knows that £16 10s is a pittance with today's prices but that does not worry Heath and co. As the employers' bully boys, they are determined to teach workers a lesson. The government is taking on weaker groups of workers. It is banking on being able to break the dustmen, roadmen or busmen with a long strike which will save local councils money and do no more than disturb the lives of millions of ordinary people.

Starvation wages

In the last few years there has been a growing revolt against starvation wages in Britain's more backward industries. Dustmen themselves led the way with their strike last year.

Attempts are being made to turn people against local authority workers by talk of '6d on the rates' and 'even higher bus fares', but there is likely to be widespread sympathy with any strike action these workers are forced to take.

In spite of all the talk by trade union leaders and the TUC of their determination to fight the government on this issue, a successful outcome of the struggle of the lower paid for some justice will largely depend on local rank and file action.

The General and Municipal Workers Union may talk militantly now for fear of losing even more members. But few workers need have many doubts, that, given the chance, it will go back to its old ways of letting the membership rot on £10 a week while leaders take knighthoods and cushy jobs in industry.

The Transport Workers Union, also caught napping over the dustmen's 'fiver' strike last year, is now showing a determination to keep control of any strike action. Jack Jones cannot afford to repeat his fiasco in the dock strike.

Public support

The greatest pressure has to be put on employers and their government backers with guerrilla and 'rolling' strikes and overtime bans.

At the same time, the rest of the trade union movement must not stand on the sidelines. A campaign must be launched to win public support for council workers.

Labour controlled councils must be pressed to give the increases demanded immediately and, if necessary, to break with the present employers' organisation.

The government hopes to take on groups of workers in isolation. Never was the old trade union principle more important: 'Unity is strength'.

Supply workers want action on pay

SEVERAL HUNDRED Manchester electricity supply workers attended their first area meeting last Saturday to discuss action on their claim for a £10 no-strings rise and a 35-hour week.

The rank and file committees are also demanding ratification by them of all future agreements in this immensely profitable industry.

Speakers at the Manchester meeting—to be followed this weekend by a national stewards' conference—emphasised the need for rank and file activity in support of the demands.

The Manchester area shop stewards have produced a paper for power workers. Copies (6d each plus postage) can be obtained from ADVANCE, 68 Fountains Road, Stretford, Lancs

GKN STRIKERS STICK OUT FOR £8 10 AND NO STRINGS

by John Setters

WELLINGTON:- 5000 GKN-Sankey workers have been on strike for five weeks, fighting for parity of earnings with Midlands car workers. The small Shropshire town is dominated by the GKN works and, as a result, wages are extremely low.

Many workers earn less than £25 a week and complain that the company pays them 'agricultural' wages. The GKN management argue repeatedly that Wellington is a rural area.

But as one striker in the General and Municipal Workers Union told me: 'We are not rural workers and even if we were we should still get more money'.

The GKN management are desperately trying to hold down wages and introduce a new productivity deal. This deal includes proposals for job evaluation, gradings and a new piecework structure.

Refused to pay

It is clearly aimed at attacking wages and working conditions.

The strike is still unofficial and all the unions involved (GMWU, Engineers, Electricians and Transport Workers) have refused to pay any benefit to the strikers.

The full-time officials are not helping the strike. Mr J Diaz, the local AEF district secretary, without the strikers' permission, has turned down offers of financial help from Midlands car workers.

The management's 'peace offer' would have meant a bigger increase for the skilled workers than for those on production. Its aim was to split the strike.

Full-time officials, along with some shop stewards, have supported the offer. But they have been shouted down and overwhelmingly opposed by mass meetings.

The strike is tremendously important. It is a fight for parity and against productivity strings.

Every worker should give the GKN strikers his fullest support.

The main demands of the strike are:

1. £8 10s now. No productivity strings and parity of earnings with the Midlands motor industry.
2. Declare the strike official. Pay strike benefit. No secret meetings between employers and union officials.
3. For the right of workers to speak at mass meetings. For all decisions to be taken at mass meetings. For the election of a strike committee.

NOTICES

CROYDON IS: How to Fight the Tories. Spkr Paul Foot, Rusk'n House, Coombe Rd, 8pm, Thurs 17 Sept.

HARROW IS public meeting: Productivity deals - the employers' offensive. Speaker JIM HIGGINS, Post Office Engineering Union, Wealdstone Labour Hall. Tuesday 15 September, 8pm.

HORNSEY Fight the Tories meeting. Hornsey Town Hall, Wed 16 Sept, 7.30pm. Spkrs from IS, CP and local organisations.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY WORKERS. national recall conference of shop stewards. Co-op Saturday 12 Sept, 2.30pm. From Bath Bldgs (behind Henly's Gge) to Queens Square. Spkrs from Peoples Democracy.

LAMBETH IS public meeting: liberation movements in Southern Africa. Spkrs Basker Vachee and Josiah Maluleke, former sec-gen S Rhodesia TUC. Friday 11 Sept, 8pm, The Library, Jeffreys Rd, SW4 (nr Stockwell tube).

BRISTOL IS: Bristol campaign for social justice in Ireland. Civil Rights in Ireland now. March Saturday 12 Sept, 2.30pm. From Bath Bldgs (behind Henly's Gge) to Queens Square. Spkrs from Peoples Democracy.

BRISTOL IS: Public mtg on Ireland. Jimmy Greely, Sunday 13 Sept, 8pm. Olds England pub, Bath Buildings.



GKN strikers: 'We're not country bumpkins'

Alcoa strikers solid against 'faceless moguls'

by Jill Branston

SWANSEA: 250 Alcoa metal works maintenance men on strike for five weeks are still faced by what they call the 'faceless moguls' of American business who refuse to honour a 1966 agreement giving mates 80 per cent of craftsmen's rates.

Before the strike was provoked, stewards met the personnel director. He asked one of his officers, who had been present at the 1966 pay negotiations, what his interpretation of the agreement was.

The officer agreed that the workers' version was the correct one. So far only Socialist Worker has reported this, even though the stewards have repeatedly stressed it in press conferences to local reporters, who seem strangely unwilling to find out who the personnel officer is, and if he will confirm the report.

But the same reporters have been busily searching out right-wing trade union officers for their comments on the strike. Meanwhile the national press stays silent.

The men are solid in their opposition to the wildcat bosses. Strikers were pledged unanimous support at a meeting of all AEF stewards in Swansea last week and the national executive is being urged to 'get things going'.

1500 leaflets have been sent out to trade unionists all over Britain and mass leafletting in Swansea is being undertaken. Members of the strike committee are visiting other Alcoa plants to publicise and co-ordinate the dispute.

They have discovered that at least two of the other six plants—at Barking and Bridgend—are barely

unionised as a result of various pressures from the Alcoa bosses. No wonder their profits are so colossal.

So far the EETU has not given official backing to the 50-60 members involved so the AEF strikers are sharing with them any money that comes in. Income tax benefit will soon end for the men and dispute benefits have not yet come in.

Please send donations and messages to: Bro H W Jenvey, 55 Mynydd-Newydd Rd, Caereithin, Swansea.

Young teachers demand fight for all-round rise

by Tony Clark

Southwark NUT

MILITANT RESOLUTIONS on salaries, class size, nursery education, school working conditions and teacher participation were carried at the Young Teachers' conference last weekend. Main influence at the conference were supporters of the left-wing paper Rank and File.

The salaries motion reinforced the Rank and File position of no negotiations on above-scale payments until the basic scale of £1250-£2200 over 10 years is agreed upon. The motion called for a special conference to decide on necessary action, including strikes, if the demands are not met by the government.

A militant line was adopted on class size. It called on the execut-

Masked sparks slate attack on militants

SW Reporter

GLASGOW:- Nearly 800 plumbers and electricians, some masked and carrying two coffins signifying the death of democracy in the Electricians and Plumbers Union, marched through the city streets last week. They were supporting five members threatened with disciplinary action by the union executive for their alleged part in the organisation of a demonstration against the Joint Industry Board.

The demonstrators met earlier in a city hall, where they heard the threatened plumbers and electricians state their case. The meeting agreed to support any further action required if the five were victimised by the union executive.

Threw out

The meeting also threw out overwhelmingly a suggestion that EETU cards should be torn up. One spark said: 'This is our union, Cannon and co only have it on loan, and we are about to take it back'.

At the union area office the two coffins were laid at the door while the demonstrators filed past shouting 'JIB out, democracy in'.

The success of the demonstration may make the union think again. But previous expulsions and suspensions from office make this unlikely. News that the executive is using a former militant as an informer makes it appear that they intend to smash all opposition in the West of Scotland.

But the electricians and plumbers concerned realise that this is just a beginning. Only by putting the union in the hands of the members can a real change be made and they are prepared to continue the fight until this objective is reached.

ive of the National Union of Teachers to implement union policy of striking in areas where class sizes are large and authorities are doing nothing to improve the situation. The resolution on teacher participation, although limited in its political perspectives, marks an important stage in the development of a trade union consciousness by teachers. They are calling for a say in the running of the schools (at present run by headteachers) which

must be reinforced by a similar demand from parents and students.

But a clear line on action to pursue the salary claim was not decided upon. Many delegates felt that this was due to the success of the last pay claim.

The majority of delegates are again putting their trust in the NUT executive (mainly composed of headteachers). They have yet to realise that only rank and file control of the union can achieve clear-cut, uncompromising action.

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