

Socialist Worker

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UCS MEN READY FOR SIT IN

'We won't accept sackings'

SW Reporter

GLASGOW:- The fight to save the jobs of 8000 workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders is continuing. On Tuesday it was reported that the management of Connell's yard had suspended work on a Clyde-designed container ship, No 121, even though all the materials were available.

This was discussed on Wednesday at a meeting in Govan of the Shop Stewards' Co-ordinating Committee, where it was decided to have a meeting with the company on Thursday to demand resumption of work on the ship. If this is not agreed to, then 'We will tell the workers to build it themselves,' I was told by John MacIntosh, assistant convenor of the Lint-house division of UCS.

He added: 'We are not going to accept any redundancies, closures or suspensions. If any are declared we will take over and run the yards ourselves. We have made all the necessary arrangements for this.'

Unemployment in Scotland has now reached crisis proportions and if the yards are closed it is extremely unlikely that the majority of workers will find other jobs.



The 25,000-strong march through Glasgow last week. If UCS workers do occupy the yards they will receive massive support from the Scottish labour movement.

MURDER FOR PROFIT IN ASBESTOS PLANTS

by Laurie Flynn

THERE IS A SLAUGHTERHOUSE in the little Yorkshire town of Hebden Bridge. Its victims are human beings, people who have had the misfortune to work for Cape Asbestos since it brought its mill there after the last war.

Thirty-three men in Hebden Bridge have already been found to be suffering from asbestosis, the killer industrial cancer. Another 19 are suspected to have the same disease. Every one of them works for Cape Asbestos.

Reporters on Granada's World in Action team showed this week that Cape Asbestos had brought about this situation by deliberate and flagrant breaches of the industrial safety regulations. The 1931 Asbestos regulations insist that only specially thick sacks should be used for asbestos fibres. The men in Cape's warehouse were using sacks which let the dust through until the 1960s.

Nowhere in the mill were there proper extractor fans to take the dust away. In defiance of the regulations, Cape let their employees breathe it in.

Machines should be used to clean down the mill rollers but Cape Asbestos used the hand method until 1962. When a factory inspector came near the place the men were instructed to cover this up.

Cape Asbestos deliberately sacrificed the lives of their employees in their quest for a cheap product and high profits.

A labour lawyer with some know-



An asbestos worker: higher casualty rate than Vietnam

ledge of the case told Socialist Worker this week that Cape had been committing murder in the cause of profit. What they had done was, he said, just as criminal as bombing people with napalm. In fact the casualty rate at Cape is probably proportionately higher than in Vietnam. There is little chance of escape from asbestosis.

UNTOLD

Already 52 men either have the disease or are suspected of having it. Since the war Cape Asbestos has employed around 300 workers in their mill. So their practices already score a one-in-six rate of disease.

But there are an untold number of others who are likely to have it. The toll could well rise above one in every

three workers who have ever had the pleasure of selling their labour in the Acre Mill.

There was an attempt to unionise the factory after the war. Cape, however, put the dreadful spectre of the General and Municipal Workers' Union firmly in its place. The reluctance of the GMWU and the trade union movement in general to take up the health question made sure there was never any other attempt to take the employers on.

Mr C J Plumbe, Chief Inspector of Factories, is on record as having said: 'The Inspectorate has never aimed at, and has never achieved, a rigorous enforcement of the act such as a Teutonic country might attempt.'

Decisions are taken not to prosecute the employers. They prefer to coax them along for 20 years until men and women are in the mortuary.

Perhaps the most appalling recent example of the Factory Inspectorate's uselessness is to be found in another asbestos factory, this time in Bermondsey, London.

RESISTED

To the knowledge of the Inspectorate, the Central Asbestos Co had been operating its plant in flagrant breach of the regulations since 1953. But there was not one prosecution on any charge before 1964.

The superintending factory inspector even resisted pleas from his field staff to shut down this particular hell-hole altogether. Virtually every person who has ever worked there has contracted asbestosis.

Eventually some legal cases for compensation were brought, and the firm has now been forced to pay up—after 20 years of making superprofits out of its brutality.

Central Asbestos has shut its London plant down now. The bagging and milling operation has been moved back to South Africa where the fibres are mined.

And in South Africa there's no factory inspectorate to ignore the plight of the black workers who will do the bagging and milling . . . and the dying.

Prices jump—and to come worse

FOOD PRICES are continuing to shoot up at a record rate. Over the last 11 months they have gone up by 10.4 per cent.

The head of the Grocers' Federation has estimated that they will rise another 10 per cent in the next year. And if the government is successful in its Common Market efforts, they will rise even more. The Financial Times calculated that this could boost the price of beef and butter 'by as much as 50 per cent'.

Such figures give the lie to the Tories' claim that 'excessive' wage claims are responsible for rising prices. Even the Food Manufacturers' Federation has pointed out that the major cause of rising food prices has been 'dearer raw materials and packing'.

Yet the government is going ahead with its attempt to force down wage rises to an average of less than 8 per cent. Workers who are not successful in defeating the government's norm are going to find themselves forced to eat less. Their families will have to scrimp and save, cutting down on the necessities of life.

IRISH CONFERENCE

Important notice to ALL IS BRANCHES: Irish conference Saturday 3 July, 2pm at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. Open only to IS members. Three sessions including, 'Class and nation in the Irish struggle', 'The left in Ireland', 'Solidarity and the role of IS in Britain'. Please notify national secretary immediately of names of all delegates.

Socialist Worker

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Europe: no bubbly for the workers

THE LEADERS of the Tory Party have resolved their difficulties in Luxembourg. They have at long last reached an agreement with their European equivalents for the integration of British big business into the Common Market. The champagne flowed freely as they celebrated the prospect of a more profitable future.

One hurdle still faces them. They have to manoeuvre to ensure a parliamentary majority for entry. And they believe that they cannot be sure of this unless a section of the Labour Party votes with them.

All this has little to do with 'democracy'. Under the present organisation of society, those who have economic power also have political power. The last Labour government followed the policies of big business, not of the majority of people who voted for it. At present unemployment rises, although the vast majority of the population want it to fall.

But in order to make people believe that they themselves make decisions, big business has to give the pretence that parliament and elections matter. Usually this creates few difficulties for the powers that be. On odd occasions, however, it does. The Common Market issue could be one. A small section of the Tory Party opposes the Common Market—because they fear their own forms of profit making will suffer. And so the survival of the present Tory government might depend upon support from sections of the Labour leadership. Only in such a way can the policies needed to further the rationalisation of British and European capitalism get political enactment.

The attitude that socialists and militants in the Labour movement must take to such a development should be clear. We must oppose completely all attempts by Labour leaders or right wing trade unionists to get the Tory government off the hook.

A defeat for the Tories over the Common Market issue would represent a defeat for the attempt to solve capitalism's problems. It would also mean the defeat of the party that stands unashamedly for the interests of big business. Everyone who seriously stands for the interests of the working class must fight for such an outcome.

But this does not mean any support for the antics of many of the opponents of the Common Market. Within the working-class movement many people speak against the Common Market because it is a 'betrayal of Britain' (Morning Star, 24 June). The Midlands Communist Party has even gone so far as to produce a badge for mass sale with the slogan 'Common Market NO' on a Union Jack background.

Such behaviour by people who claim to have the interests of the international working class at heart is scandalous. The Union Jack is a bosses' flag which has been used to con successive generations of workers to die fighting to defend British big business, a flag that throughout the Third World, from Ireland to India, has stood for exploitation and robbery.

These antics create the illusion that British workers and British employers have more in common than British workers and German workers. It plays into the hands of those (whether 'for' or 'against' the Common Market) who demand wage cuts and productivity bargaining in order to help 'our' industrialists' struggle for markets and profits internationally.

The Common Market is an attempt to bolster up the strength of British big business. We must oppose it. But only as one part of the attempt to fight capitalist policies all along the line—against unemployment, anti-union laws, welfare cuts and the like. The alternative to all of these is the struggle for complete socialist change in this country as part of a Socialist United States of Europe. And that struggle cannot benefit at all from any form of joint campaigns or verbal concessions to flag wavers with reactionary ideas.

A SNIFF FROM THE SEWER

EVERY NOW AND THEN some leak or revelation gives an insight into the real meaning of 'government'. The statesmen and leaders of nations are then shown for a brief moment as the thugs, liars and mafia-men of the ruling class that they really are.

The gaffe has just been blown on some aspects of the US operation in South Vietnam. Even some elements of the conservative American establishment have been sickened by the lies and duplicity of successive administrations. The New York Times and then the Washington Post began to publish some of the secret history of the Vietnam war and now the whole question is before the Supreme Court in the USA.

The revelations aren't that startling. What socialists have been saying for years is shown to have been clearly in the imperialists' minds, even though they denied it in public. For instance in 1964 President Johnson said publicly that the aim of the war was to secure an 'independent, non-Communist South Vietnam'.

By the next year McNamara was agreeing that the real goal was 'not to help friends but to contain China.' His assistant McNaughton put it more crudely. The aim was '70 per cent—to avoid a humiliating US defeat. 20 per cent—to keep South Vietnam territory from Chinese hands. 10 per cent—to permit the people of South Vietnam to enjoy a better, freer way of life'.

The whole history of sordid imperialist aggression has only come into the open—become almost fashionable as it were—because, despite everything, the aggressors have failed totally in their task of 'liberating' Vietnam. Robert Kennedy only came out to campaign on the issue when Senator McCarthy had shown that he could win votes that way.

The heroic fighters of the National Liberation Front have transformed the ordinary American's awareness of the world he lives in and the politicians are in danger of being killed in the scramble to place themselves at the head of this new mood.

Perhaps McNamara should have the last word. He is credited with being worried about 'the likelihood that young people are now just not going to believe in the government, and in their history'. It's our job to make sure he hasn't grasped the half of it.

THEIR WEEK

CHILE's 'socialist' President Salvador Allende was asked to use his 'prestige and influence' with the Tupamaros, Uruguay's urban guerrillas, to secure the release of British Ambassador Jackson. Allende is clearly beginning to make it as an internationally-recognised apostle of law and order: when 40 Brazilian political prisoners were swapped for the German Ambassador last year, Allende kept them under lock and key until the deal was complete.

He has worked hard for recognition by the powers-that-be. He rushed, in a Bill to bring in the death penalty for political crimes after the assassination of Perez Zuloaga, former Vice-President. He is putting increasing pressure on the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) and the VOP (People's Organised Vanguard) for opposing his 'parliamentary socialism'. He has evicted squatters for occupying sites in the shanty towns around Santiago and warned peasants in the south to wait for his Popular Front's agrarian reforms and not take things into their own hands.

He has pressured striking mineworkers at the Chuquibambilla copper mines back to work while announcing to the world at large that he would not allow a 'labour aristocracy' to develop among them. Meanwhile the army and police force have been soothed with higher pay (for officers) and much praise: '... an attack on the Caribineer Corps is tantamount to an attack on the people of Chile' (Allende after a policeman—carib-

ineer—was killed in a bank raid); 'if there is something this government should be credited for it is policy of incorporating the Armed Forces into the economy'.

BONN's bonnie new bomb cradle: The Bundestag Defence Committee said 'yes' to their biggest-ever order for military equipment when they agreed to spending more than four billion marks—well over a billion dollars—on 175 US Phantom jets as a replacement for the Lockheed Starfighters they are using. What is wrong with the Starfighters? Nothing except that they won't fly in Germany—about 175 have dropped dead since becoming the Luftwaffe's major combat aircraft 10 years ago. But how do they manage to keep in the air everywhere else? Simple. It's only in Germany that they have been adapted to act as nuclear-bomb carriers.

Originally designed to operate as a fair-weather interceptor, the Starfighter was 'developed', as they say, into a fighter-bomber at the instigation of the German Ministry of Defence. According to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung's military correspondent, the Pentagon saw in West Germany the 'third strongest atomic power' in the world as long as five years ago—and that without a home-made bomb.

THE permissive society: Greek Prime Minister Papadopoulos, the Colonels' man who took over in 1967 to thwart a 'Communist Plot' is making his first trip

abroad since then—to Rumania. Last week he entertained Yugoslav Foreign Minister Mirk Tepavac on the latter's way back from Peking. But what was one of 'Tito's band of revisionist traitors' doing in the People's Republic? Nothing other than gaining 'the resolute support of the Chinese people in their struggle against aggression from outside' and reporting, incidentally, on the remarkable renewal of friendship with Albania (Ambassadors exchanged; a new trade agreement for quadrupled turnover).

Such unnatural goings-on in Balkan bedrooms are almost wholly due to Russia's invasion of Czechoslovakia 2½ years ago; Yugoslavia and Rumania got the wind up; China seized the chance to put troops on Russia's southwestern borders and the Greek Colonels warmed to neighbours who wanted neighbours and no questions asked.

QUOTES of the Week: 'Looking back as I left the Presidency, I knew not everything I did about Vietnam, every decision I made about it, had been correct' (LBJ).

'Of course it won't be possible to protect every executive of every firm' (Detectives on the latest Angry Brigade bombing case).

'Do something for Ulster—get married and have large families' (The Rev Ian Paisley to his Protestant faithful).

'The [sperm] banks could even be used to place semen in shielded storage to preserve the race in case of nuclear war' (Reporter on the Washington Post).

SELL OUT THREAT AS TORIES TALK WITH RHODESIA

by W.Enda

THE TORIES are preparing to sell out the Africans in Rhodesia. They have embarked on a series of visits to 'talk about talks' with the racist Prime Minister, Ian Smith.

A gaggle of Whitehall diplomats are having secret talks with Smith. They were preceded last month by Patrick Wall MP, member of the extreme right wing Monday Club, who spent many hours reassuring the white Rhodesians that they had the growing support of 40 Tory backbenchers against economic sanctions.

They will try to force Heath not to renew sanctions when they come up for review in November.

URGE

The right-wing Tories have reason to be optimistic. When Heath announced that the Simonstown Agreement with South Africa would be renewed and arms would be sent, it was a shot in the arm to the white regimes in Southern Africa. Vorster, the South African premier, is returning the compliment by urging Smith to be as reasonable as possible with the Tory emissaries.

Vorster is particularly keen on a settlement because the question of Rhodesia is a constant threat to his policy of 'dialogue' with some of the black African countries.

The economic situation in Rhodesia since UDI has perplexed and annoyed Britain. Instead of the economy collapsing in 'weeks rather than months' as Wilson predicted, it has actually grown. But it has been an uneven growth, with mineral exports developing at the expense of agriculture.

The tobacco farmers are the backbone of Smith's Rhodesia Front Party. They were jubilant when UDI was declared. But since then tobacco turnover has been cut by 66 per cent and the selling price reduced by 25 per cent.

BROKE

The reason why sanctions have hit this area is the easy availability of tobacco elsewhere. Why risk prosecution for breaking sanctions for such a common commodity? So the farmers are going broke. In 1968 only 5 per cent of the tobacco growers, with the help of government stock buying, were breaking even.

The mineral sections is a different story. Chrome and nickel are both essential ingredients for the arms race going on between the nuclear powers.

The chrome lobby in the US has persuaded the government to officially break sanctions by shipping out \$2m of chrome. Nickel is also a tempting proposition for sanction busters at £7000 a ton, due to



Vorster and Smith at a rugby match during their talks

a severe world shortage. These minerals account for the majority of the \$200m worth of commodities shipped out of Rhodesia last year.

But the situation even in minerals is not so rosy for the white settlers. Minerals are being sold at rock bottom prices and the profits go to non-Rhodesian firms. This has led to a critical shortage of foreign exchange. It is impossible to maintain stocks and replace worn out machinery.

PANIC

At the same time, the ZAPU and ZANU freedom fighters are having renewed successes around the Zambesi River, which borders on Zambia to the north. This area is guarded by both the South African police and the Rhodesian armed forces.

Fatal car 'accidents' are becoming too frequent for the whites' comfort. The Rhodesian air force equipment is more than 10 years' old and both white states are panicking over the supply of two squadrons of Russian MiG fighters to Tanzania. And so Smith, prodded by Vorster, is anxious to talk with Britain again.

Smith claims that the 1969 Rhodesian constitution contains the principle of unimpeded progress towards majority rule, a principle that official Tory spokesmen have insisted on until now. It is true that qualification for voting, probably on the advice of Tory friends, does not have a specific racial clause, unlike South Africa where non-whites have lost the vote.

The catch lies in the tax qualifications for voting. Seats in the House of Assembly are allocated proportionately to tax paid by sections of the population. The Africans are so poor that they can muster only 19 per cent of the total national tax.

They have been given 16 seats on credit—eight of them to government-appointed

chiefs. The whites have 50. Since the income gap between whites and blacks is widening as the Africans get poorer, the present proportion will exist until the area is liberated by the freedom fighters.

Whether Sir Alec Douglas-Home will accept the constitution and try to hood-wink people into thinking the Africans are getting richer and will eventually get more seats, remains to be seen.

But the Africans' position is getting worse. The Land Tenure Act, which bans Africans from holding land in areas zoned for whites, is the start of full-scale apartheid along South African lines.

The Tribal Trust Lands in which Africans are herded are similar to Bantustans in South Africa. The soil is so poor and there is such overcrowding that the African population will starve.

GAGGED

And the 95 Africans kept in preventive detention will still be politically gagged if they are released as part of a deal with the Tories.

Socialists can only view cynically and bitterly the manoeuvres of the Tories. At the same time we must encourage and support the freedom fighters of Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique.

It is a slow battle, but they are winning. Every blow frightens the white racials in Southern Africa and the Tories in Britain.

SORRY . . .

. . . but we have not been able to include a number of letters sent for publication because they arrived too late. We will print a selection next week.

Mike Gonzalez reports on the crackdown by government-supported gangs of thugs

ON 10 JUNE a student demonstration on its way from the Polytechnic Institute in Mexico City was savagely attacked. Gangs of youths armed with submachine guns, rifles and bamboo spears killed and injured hundreds of people. Later the gangs broke into the hospital where the students were receiving attention, stopped operations, raped nurses and finished off several severely injured students. Their final score was some 40 dead and nearly 2000 injured. The police and the army, who were present, stood by and did nothing.

Behind the incident lies a far wider political issue. It was an answer to the question: how would the new government react to the rebirth of the student movement previously decimated after the murder of nearly 400 people in October 1968.

The thugs are not merely street gangs, but organised groups of civilian shock troops who have been undergoing military training for over a year now at No 1 Military Camp in Mexico City. They are recruited from among the poor, the uneducated, the peasants recently arrived in the city and who live in the shanty towns that ring the metropolis.

It has been common for politicians in Mexico to make use of such ragged armies, but they have become almost a permanent feature of post-1968 Mexico. In 1970, for example, five school children died in the High Schools as a result of a sustained reign of terror in the schools and universities.

The *porras*, as they are called, are gangs of thugs, often armed, some of whom have been at school for more than a decade. Their role seems to be that of dividing and terrorising school children and students, to stop them organising themselves either politically or for simple self-defence purposes.

The gangs were originally organised by the Director of the High School system himself as a strong-arm support for his own political empire. And they have been used time and again for directly political purposes. In 1966, for example, armed thugs were responsible for forcing the resignation of the liberal Rector of the University.

Power in Mexico is held by a single party, the PRI—Revolutionary Institutional Party. The opposition parties are puppet organisations, maintained in order to preserve the appearance of democracy.

Mexico has become a model for ordered development along the Western model in Latin America. A middle class that makes up some 10 per cent of the population, enjoys around 75 per cent of the national income. A top layer of less than 2 per cent holds more than 50 per cent of that sum and runs government and country according to its will.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910, far from destroying the old ruling class, simply amalgamated it with an emerging middle class, and out of that alliance have come today's rulers. The PRI is more than a party. It is a national organisation that functions in every sphere of life to maintain oppression.



Repression in Mexico—to please American big business

Ruthless

Whatever the gestures towards parliament and democracy, Mexico is run along totalitarian lines. The trade unions are controlled by the government, led by its appointees and controlled at every level by party members. Grass roots activity is quickly and ruthlessly smashed (the railwaymen's movement of 1958, the doctors' movement of 1965, the Ayotla textile strike of 1970).

The system has no legality since corruption is not only rife but systematically organised. All public activity is tightly controlled, all dissent absorbed or crushed.

What was significant about the 1968 movement was that the children of the middle class, the future administrators of the system itself (and for that reason not so quickly crushed as the workers) challenged the system in its own terms. They went no further in their political programme than demanding the implementation of the Constitution but they did it at a time when Mexico's democratic image was being sold to the world.

Links

By September, the student movement had begun to form links outside its own class—among workers, the very poor, the street sellers, the petrol workers, even the bureaucrats who, when they were forced to march in support of the government, chanted their dissent through the streets.

Conventional methods of police repression had not worked, and what had started as a student rumpus was becoming a national political movement. And it had to be crushed.

On 2 October nearly 400 people were systematically massacred. The leadership was almost all dead or in jail.

The political prisoners remained in jail awaiting their sentences, until the beginning of this year. They were all charged with long lists of crimes ranging from sabotage to sedition.

At the very end of last year, however, massive fines and sentences were announced, clearly exaggerated



Top: *porras* brutally attacking a demonstrator in Mexico City this month. Above: Troops on the rampage in 1968.

in order that the incoming dictator, Luis Echeverria, should be able to display his magnanimity by releasing them on assuming power.

In fact, they were released in dribs and drabs, during the first five months of this year. Most were sent into exile, though the best known were freed unconditionally in order to placate international public opinion.

The new president, Echeverria's strength lies in his control over the sprawling bureaucracy responsible for administering power. Although the membership of the party is by no means unanimously behind him, his control over the actual machinery of power permits him to adopt a totally uncompromising attitude.

He has now embarked on a systematic elimination of the opposition.

Yet only a few months ago liberal intellectuals were insisting that Mexico was about to enter into a new phase of democracy when it might be possible to found a meaningful opposition. This view is a reflection of the intellectuals' own lack of any political tradition and position of compromise within the system.

With the leadership dead, in hiding or in jail, and those who had partici-

pated demoralised and afraid, the movement of 1968 collapsed and the people were silent for more than two years.

1970 ended the presidential term of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. During that year, Echeverria toured the country, promising agricultural progress, greater democratisation, anti-imperialism and a permanent public dialogue.

When he assumed power, a number of young professionals were given posts in the new regime, absorbing into the power structure a sector which might, had its ambitions been frustrated, proved to be troublesome in the future.

Stability

The middle class, always anxious to be convinced, saw here the signs it was looking for. Octavio Paz, for example, poet and one time opponent of the system, recanted and led his personal following into the government camp. The middle class followed suit: after all, all they were interested in was a guarantee of stability and orderly progress.

Nevertheless, it was still necessary

for Echeverria to ruthlessly put down any sign of opposition in order to prove his toughness and reliability to the United States.

Despite the fact that Mexican law forbids foreigners to hold majority shares in any key industry, United States' investors in fact control the Mexican economy. While agriculture is in native hands, for example, the distribution of agricultural products is an Anderson Clayton monopoly.

The links between the two governments are very close. Now, faced with the threat from the nationalist military regimes of Peru and Bolivia, as well as from Chile, the United States has seen the urgent need for an anti-communist alliance in Latin America to counteract their influence.

This alliance, based on the repressive militarist dictatorships of Central America, will, I believe, be led by Mexico.

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Merseyside trade unionists will march on Saturday from Kirkby to Liverpool

ON 17 JUNE, redundancy notices were sent out to half the labour force at Fisher-Bendix, manufacturers of domestic appliances, on the Kirkby Industrial Estate. 505 workers' jobs have been threatened. This follows the loss of 175 jobs earlier in the year.

Initially the factory was built by BMC to manufacture Bendix washing machines and other appliances and was designed to employ 3500 people, although it never took on more than 2500. In February the company decided to discontinue production of sink-tops and 175 workers were made redundant.

In May, the company was taken over by Thorne Electric. One week later they announced that they would stop manufacturing washing machines. A company statement said: 'The Bendix business continues to lose money, but we think it is capable of paying its way providing the necessary skills and efforts are put into it.'

It is now known that the company has signed an agreement with a Spanish firm to manufacture 20,000 tumble driers a year. A statement from the shop stewards' committee says: 'The company has been negotiating since last August to have the products manufactured abroad. At the same time the company has negotiated with the shop floor to increase the production of the Bendix appliances to 150 per cent of the day-work measurement figure.'

The Tory government can't provide the Fisher-Bendix management with a cheap and docile labour force quick enough to guarantee big profits, and so they turn to Franco's police state.

A spokesman for the shop stewards' committee pointed out that redundancies are a direct threat to trade unionism and shop floor militancy. Of the 14 stewards on the negotiating committee representing the white-collar workers—ASTMS, DATA, CAWU—12 have

been given notices of redundancy. The majority of shop stewards — AEF, TGWU, ETU — among the manual workers are similarly threatened.

The workers have taken action to defend their jobs. They returned their redundancy notices to the management en bloc, and walked out for the day. Half-day stoppages have also taken place.

On 11 June more than 400 of them, led by the shop stewards' committee, marched through the pouring rain to petition Harold Wilson, their local MP.

They have been given support by Kirkby Trades Council: 'The actions taken and likely to be taken by the workers at Fisher-Bendix needs the support of all trade unionists on Merseyside, and in Kirkby in particular. We believe we have a UCS-type situation in Kirkby, and many companies up here will be watching the situation at Fisher-Bendix hoping to learn some lessons for themselves.'

The Fisher-Bendix redundancies were the climax to a whole spate of redundancies on Merseyside which have



KIRKBY: THE FIGHT

by Gerry Cordon Unemployed Kirkby worker

hit Kirkby workers hard. Among the cuts announced by firms are: Fisher-Bendix 680, Lybro (complete closure) 288, Birds Eye 240, British Trailers (complete closure) 50, Dubilier Condensers 65, William Harvey 40.

The situation is just as bad elsewhere on Merseyside. Among the most dramatic redundancies announced in the area recently are Joseph Lucas 900, Cammell-Laird 400, Silcock and Lever 450, Cadbury-Schweppes 1200, Electro Hydraulics 400, Bear Brand 560.

As a result the unemployment rate on Merseyside now stands at 5.7 per cent compared with the national average of 3.4 per cent. Kirkby itself is now said to have an unemployment rate surpassed only by Belfast.

More than 3000 men, women and school-leavers are now on the dole in Kirkby. The total work force on the industrial estate is around 27,000 and a high proportion of these are women who often don't register when they become unemployed. Estimates put the rate at approximately 12 per cent.

Stopped developing

Between April 1969 and April 1971 the number of unfilled vacancies in Kirkby fell from 388 to 110 and the number of people placed in employment by the Department of Employment over the same period fell by 230 to 120. The problem is particularly acute for school-leavers—more than 15 per cent of the total number of jobless are between 15-18.

This is all happening in a development area designated after the war to receive government aid to industry with the object of alleviating the problems of unemployment and job shortages, following the decline of the older industries.

In fact one of the truest things that has been said about these places is that a development area is one which has stopped developing. If the spectre of the 1930s now hangs over Kirkby, its present status as part of a development area stems from the capitalist reaction to the crisis of those very years.

Help to firms

In 1936 Liverpool Corporation received parliamentary powers to build factories and assist industrialists with loans. The factories were to be built on industrial estates at Aintree, Speke and Kirkby.

In 1949 Merseyside was designated a development area under a scheme that provided substantial government financial and other assistance to firms settling in places like Kirkby. To solve the problem of regional unemployment, the state offers large handouts to industry to encourage them to move to areas where otherwise they would not go.

Kirkby in 1947 was a small village on the site of a war-time ordinance factory. Now it has developed into a town of some 70,000 people. The town's growth has resulted from two crises affecting the Merseyside economy immediately after the war: the decline of the area's staple industries and the resulting high level of unemployment, and the fantastic demand for housing generated by war-damage, increased population, and slum clearance.

There was certainly no shortage of government money ready to bribe those businessmen who might feel a bit wary about moving into Kirkby. Perhaps they'd heard about the Merseyside workers' reputation for militancy and solidarity. A report to the Liverpool City Council in March this year concluded that 'the main incentives to any industrialist to establish or expand a unit on Merseyside are the considerable financial inducements offered by the government.'

One of the biggest bribes was the

investment grant amounting to 40 per cent of the total capital cost of installing new plant and machinery in a firm's new factory. Provision of these grants was not even made conditional on providing 50 new jobs in the area, as are the other grants.



Wilson: petitioned by workers

But the Tory government brought the system of investment grants to a halt in October, 1970, and replaced them with tax allowances on profits. Firms are now forced to offset investment from profit. This means that firms with low and falling rates of profits who need to invest to remain competitive and keep in business will more readily go into voluntary liquidation.

In the case of the Kirkby Industrial Estate, firms may be able to rent or purchase purpose-designed factories built by the Board of Trade. In all cases the rent and purchasing price is considerably lower than the market rate. Would any private landlord be so generous?

And this isn't the whole story. Private industry in Kirkby has benefited from 35 per cent building grants, loans for machinery, removal expenses, free travel and accommodation for bosses during preliminary visits to the area, and assistance in training workers for the new jobs.

It has been estimated that firms moving into development areas such as Merseyside have as much as half of their capital outlay paid for by state grants and loans—some even more. In other words, the improvement in Merseyside's employment situation in the 50s and 60s, marginal as it was, came about by transferring massive sums of

Government

by Mike Wood

Kirkby school teacher

THE YOUTH in Kirkby, a township with the highest population of under 21s in Europe, are particularly hard hit. The prospects for school children leaving this summer are, according to one Youth Employment Service spokesman, extremely bleak and there are still 120 Easter school-leavers without jobs.

Youth unemployment has doubled since April 1970 and there are now 500 young people jobless—a rate of 30 per cent—while the number of vacancies has dropped by 33 per cent. 82 per cent of the unemployed youth left school before the age of 16. In Kirkby, as nationally, it is those with minimal qualifications that find it increasingly hard to get a job of any kind.

The unqualified are by no means a minority. Of all those who left school in England and Wales two years ago, 219,000 out of 615,000 have no qualifications at all. But the number of apprentices being taken on has also decreased. Qualifications do not guarantee a job, and staying on at school

WHAT WE STAND FOR



THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations.

We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations through-

out the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

Against productivity deals and job evaluation and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards' committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the

demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restrictions. For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is no use just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen/Dundee/Edinburgh/Fife/
Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling

NORTH EAST
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/
Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar).

NORTH
Barnsley/Bradford/Derby/Doncaster/
Grimsby/Huddersfield/Hull/Leeds
York/Selby/Sheffield

NORTH WEST
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham
Bolton/Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan/

Potteries

MIDLANDS
Birmingham/Coventry/Leamington/
Leicester/Oxford/Nottingham/
Northampton/Redditch/Telford

WALES and SOUTH WEST
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/
Gloucester/Mid-Devon/Plymouth/
Swansea

SOUTH
Ashford/Brighton/Canterbury/
Crawley/Folkestone/Guildford/
Portsmouth/Southampton

EAST

Basildon/Cambridge/Harlow/Ipswich/
Lowestoft/Norwich/Colchester

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Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/
Fulham/Greenford/Havering/Harrow/
Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/
Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/
Lewisham/Merton/Newham/Notting
Hill/Reading/Richmond/Stoke
Newington/Slough/South Ealing/
Tottenham/Walthamstow/
Wandsworth/Watford/Victoria

I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name

Address

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

pool to protest at unemployment in the area



STARTS HERE...

the pockets of workers of businessmen re-bedding of private in- been successful in solv- els and Kirkby's acute problem. The crucial 1960s when Ford and ed north, providing al- of the new jobs in the

from these two giants, the these handouts has not in providing jobs. The new firms opened in en 1948 and 1968 are additional units to already and still have their head on. This means that they closed as part of a ration-

blem has not yet aroused ed response from the ent that occurred in the Unemployment was rec- 1930s because of the sud- crisis. Today that is not on appears only to be orsening. Today, we face employment.

There are more than ¼ er dole, the bargaining nised workers has not affected. On 13 May es admitted that despite nment's willingness to ment as a political weap- failed to prevent wage e paper went on to say es would have to create a employed of between two hions if its policy was to ashing shop floor militan-

Wage freeze

Financial Times of 23 April, in titled 'Employment figures back', predicted that this unemployment rising to 10 million, the Industrial Rela- available and productivity pushed through with a ven- Tories will introduce an icy. The Economist sug- this would mean a wage eriod of two years. es, the Financial Times, and rist are not printed for and reading on the shop id as cheap labour and their es are not recognised by other s.

nt policy hits hardest at the young

delaying taking a place in ue. umber of apprentices on e has actually fallen in the years. Closures at English as meant a drop of 15 per engineering apprenticeships. has seen a drop in the num- ancies being offered from 50—there were 4000 appli- r these places.

ubsidies from the industrial oards of £100 for each app- es not induce the employers on more of them. Many of rtunate enough to get an eship find; they are merely id as cheap labour and their es are not recognised by other s.

Cynical

vey conducted on Mersay- 1968 found that the average e first-year apprentices eagre £4.50, and in the last e training, when most are ctively the same job as a skilled e wage was only £10. Come t birthday, many will find es on the dole rather than id the full-rate for the job.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

A CAMPAIGN against unemploy- ment must attempt to re-integrate unemployed workers back into the ranks of the organised. Many un- skilled and semi-skilled workers tend to let their union membership lapse and become isolated in their struggle against the system.

While some of the skilled unions do have an unemployment benefit fund for their jobless members, very few unions control the allocation of new jobs in industry.

The growing number of Claim- ants' Unions have been able to fight on behalf of the unemployed and ensure that full benefits are paid. Yet the weakness of these claimants' unions is that they have failed so far to gain the support of the trade unions. In Liverpool, the Trade Council has set up a Social Security Committee that will inform all of its members of their rightful benefits.

But the muscle of any unemploy- ment campaign will be inside the factories. The responsibility for the unemployed getting employment is in the hands of those militants who still have jobs. The fight against productivity dealing and speed-up is crucial. To sell one job today is a crime committed against the unemployed.

The demand for a shorter working week—35 hours—is already being advanced. A DATA branch proposed a 35-hour week and a ban on over- time at the North Staffs Trades Council in June. Militants in the power supply industry have called for a 35-hour week and a £40 basic wage. Militant postmen in Liverpool have similarly called for a 35-hour week without loss of pay and at their annual conference in York, the Fed- eration of Trades Councils made the same call.

What is needed is a real fight back from the organised trade union movement now. A campaign should be launched to bring together employed and unemployed workers. Demands must include:

No more productivity deals that involve a reduction in the work force.

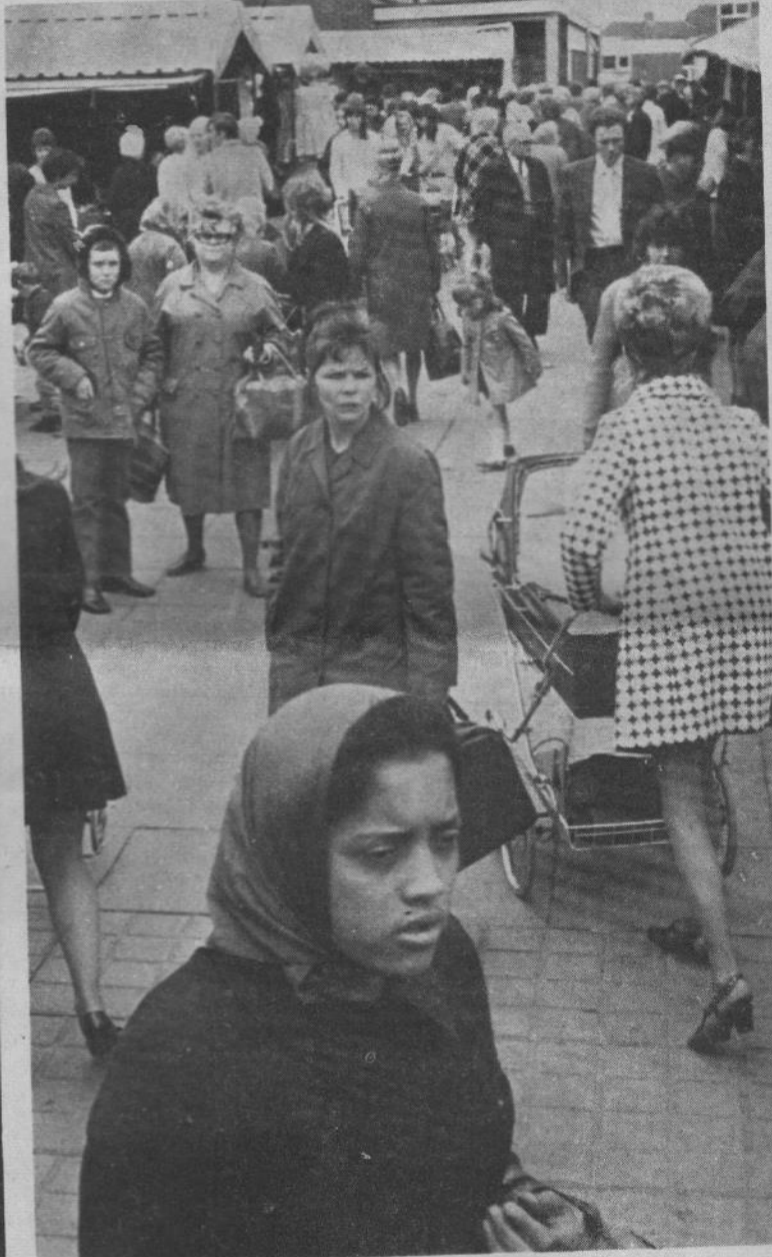
Reduce the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay.

Five days' work of five days' pay.

Work sharing instead of redundan- cies.

A complete overtime ban in any company that declares redundancies in any one factory.

Nationalisation under workers' control and without compensation of any firm that shuts any of its factories.



Kirkby market place: workers face highest level of unemployment in Britain, Belfast excepted. Above, Fisher-Bendix and Lybro factories on the Industrial Estate.

people. Many of these attacks are aimed at those unable to fight back—the old-age pensioners and youth.

Rapidly rising prices have the greatest effect on the lower-income group, where a large percentage of the weekly wage goes on food. In the last 12 months the cost of living has risen by 9.8 per cent, and the prices have risen particularly rapidly of meat and fresh products—the more nutritious foods needed by growing children.

Shutting

The government has also raised the price of school meals and abolished free school milk for the over-sevens. The number taking school meals has dropped dramatically.

In Kirkby one of the large compre- hensive schools is already shutting two out of its four kitchens. Last week the Financial Times reported that due to the Tories' measure to cut school milk, sales are expected to drop by 2½ to 3 per cent on school days and this in turn will lead to redundancies.

The high level of unemployment, the dole queues, the lack of money to spend on the children, exaggerated

by the social service cuts makes Kirkby a grim place to live in. Unem- ployment cannot be fought by wait- ing another four years to elect Wilson back to power. The Labour leader, in his election campaign of 1964 said: 'It is a grave condemnation of our system that today, in the midst of the boom in which we have so much, so many of our school-leavers have still not found work, so many juveniles are drifting between blind-alley jobs and the employment exchange.'

But it was Wilson and Co who were returned after the 1964 election, who started the policy of 'redeployment and shakeout' in industry, a policy the Tories are now following through to the bitter end.

Today many of those 'blind-alley' jobs have gone, the boom is over, and we now face a return to the 1930s. The fight against unemployment must start now in the trade union move- ment, and the young unemployed people must be a part of that fight.

But as socialists we must remember that the cause of unemployment lies in the system that demands produc- tion for profit rather than fulfilling the needs of workers.

'A powerful and challenging marxist book'

The following review of *World Crisis*, a book by members of the Inter- national Socialists, first appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 4 June.

'FOR CAPITALISM in its latest phase is again creating the conditions for a convergence of working class protest and revolutionary politics that could change the world.' This conclusion by an Oxford econo- mist is the main theme of a new selection of marxist essays on the contemporary order. 'New' because there has been nothing as good since E P Thompson edited *Out of Apathy* back in 1960. 'New' also because *World Crisis* contains by far the most original and challenging applications of the marxist method at present available.

Since it is the work of many hands, an overall view is hard to give; suffice it to say that it represents the political perspectives of the International Socialists. Eight essays appear on a variety of subjects, from Paul Foot on parliamentary socialism to Nigel Harris on imper- ialism today, but the unifying themes are essentially the same.

They are: a firm belief in the impossibility of progress under capitalism; opposition to the Stalinist and Social Democratic conceptions of socialism; the fruitlessness of scouring the world for romantic Guevarist alterna- tives; and a relentless focus on the working class as the decisive agency of social change. In addition there is a reluctance to take marxist orthodoxy at its face value.

The latter is especially notable because what strikes one most about *World Crisis* is that unlike so much socialist argument it is actually well written. There are no slogans, no hectoring.

POVERTY

Peter Sedgwick, in a remark- able opening essay, manages to derive almost every salient fact about the poverty of the postwar British left from an account of a single demonstration against Ger- man rearmament in 1955.

The sections concerned with imperialism and the Eastern block reveal an impatience with all those whose minds stopped work- ing at the same time as Lenin's and Trotsky's; and, having taken this plunge, the authors succeed in breaking a deal of fresh ground.

Nigel Harris shows how the internationalist links between the rich and poor workers of the world have been broken, and argues that, however painful the task, that solidarity must be rebuilt.

Chris Harman insists that no marxist can attach any loyalty whatever to the rulers of Eastern Europe and Russia, whom he des- ignates as 'state capitalist'; of great interest here is the material about Left Opposition in the Eastern block, and the case for regarding the ruling elite of the area as a class in the marxian sense.

DEPARTURE

It should be obvious by now that the International Socialists take their point of departure from the movements and ideas which originated with Trotsky's fight against Stalinism. But they do this with very little of the deadly sectarian energy often associated with such politics.

A healthy contempt for the 'mini-Popes of Marxism' is to be found here, coupled with a conviction that the working class is ultimately resourceful enough to dispense with all the miasma of small group intrigue and to begin the real struggle for a new world.

No one could accuse the con- tributors of over-optimism. The slightly millennial sentence quoted at the beginning of this review comes at the end of a chapter which argues grimly that capital- ism is now fuelled mainly by war or the preparation for war; that the intensification of internation- al competition on that level and others spells destitution and possi- ble death for millions, and that

WORLD CRISIS

EDITED BY Nigel Harris AND John Palmer
contributors include Tony Cliff Paul Foot Michael Kidron Jim Kincaid

the urgency of building a socialist alternative depends at the moment on a handful of militants in the advanced industrial countries of the globe. Not a hopeful picture.

Or a correct one? It is hard to say. A great deal of space would be required to analyse all the theses of this symposium in detail and in any case some of the material is useful only to those who are already involved in the struggle or who share the views of the contributors.

A brief review can only stress the intelligibility of the book to sympathiser and non-sympathiser alike.

There are obvious criticisms: for a book which lays such em- phasis on the politicisation of workers it is perhaps odd that only two of the contributors are trade unionists. More is required to demonstrate proletarian support for the Bolsheviks than a quotation from Martov to that effect, even if he did oppose them.

Allowing then, for the limita- tions of space which give the appearance of slightness to some contributions, this is a challeng- ing and powerful book, more use- ful than a thousand academic or journalistic probes for gaining an understanding of the new revolu- tionaries, and more cogent in its arguments and analysis than any socialist project of the recent past.

World Crisis: Essays in revolution- ary socialism. Edited by Nigel Harris and John Palmer. Hutchinson, £2.25.

World Crisis

can be ordered from IS Books £2.25 plus 5p post IS BOOKS 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

NO FIGHT FROM 'CONFED' LEADERS

Union president's cuppa more important than Tory anti-union legislation

by ROGER ROSEWELL

Socialist Worker Industrial Correspondent

TORQUAY Town Hall is a dreary place, a suitable venue last week for the leaders of the powerful Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to hold their annual Conference. For four days they discussed the most vital problems facing three and a half million engineering workers.

They talked about wages, conditions, the Industrial Relations Bill, a new procedure agreement and the hardship of unemployment. They passed resolutions on these major problems and yet it was clear throughout that, with one or two exceptions, they had no serious intention of doing anything about them.

Confederation conferences are a special treat for these assorted union leaders. The sessions do not start until 10 in the morning and the lunchbreak lasts for two hours. The speeches are usually read from notes and some years ago one right wing and confused speaker read out the wrong speech in a discussion on the aircraft industry. It was several minutes before he and a few of the delegates woke up to the fact that regional unemployment was not referred to in the motion.

For some delegates the undoubted highlight of the week was the Mayor's reception. Three coaches were provided to take them to the event but, just to confirm that equality hasn't yet penetrated the union tops, one was exclusively reserved for members of the executive.

The reception was held at Oldway Mansion, the former home of the Singer Sewing machine family dynasty. A whim of Mr Paris Eugene Singer, the third son of the founder, led to the Mansion being altered in 1904 to the style of the Palace of Versailles in France.

The heavy bronze statues and imperial and imperial marble staircases were fitting surroundings as the delegates queued at the entrance of the gilt panelled ballroom to be announced, then receive a handshake from the Mayor and finally dance to the music of a local Palm Court quartet.

But the finest example of the priorities attached to conference by some of the union dignitaries came after the fifth speaker in a debate on the Industrial Relations Bill. The chairman of the conference, Jack Youngs of the Woodworkers, peered over the top table and said: 'Let's get this finished in order that we can go and have a cup of tea.'

Resolution

The fact that the Tory Bill is the most reactionary anti-trade union legislation for over a century paled into insignificance compared to the president's desire for a cuppa!

On Wednesday morning, Hugh Scanlon the Engineers' President moved the main resolution on pay and conditions. It was an impressive motion and was carried unanimously. It demanded that a national claim be lodged with the Engineering Employers by at least September and that this should be for:

A substantial rise.

Equal pay.

Four weeks' holiday.

No penalty clauses on holiday pay and proper pay for night shift workers.

No productivity strings and back dating if not settled by December.

The debate did not last very long. Not one speaker mentioned the Tories' determination to hold down wages or the growing menace of unemployment. The Industrial Relations Bill was briefly referred to by Scanlon when he said that the next agreement should not be made legally binding. But that was all.

The fact that this justified claim will be desperately resisted by the employers and the businessmen's government was never even hinted at. The reason was candidly explained to me later on. One senior engineers official admitted that the Confederation was 'not really serious' about the claim.

Absent

Throughout the conference total agreement on many resolutions was expressed. Calls for a 35-hour week, more shift pay, guaranteed pay during lay-offs and higher overtime rates were all carried. While this means that the Confederation has the correct policies the willingness and determination to fight for them was noticeably absent.

The other major engineering debate was on the present procedure agreement. Ever since 1922 an agreement known as the York Memorandum has operated in the industry.

It lays down the method by which workers' grievances can be raised and is biased in favour of the employers. For the last couple of years the unions have been

trying to change it by introducing a 'status quo' clause.

This has been bitterly opposed by the bosses. All they have offered, said Hugh Scanlon, is not to break agreements without having first properly discussed them. What the unions wanted, he insisted, was a guarantee that employers would not implement changes that workers opposed without first exhausting procedure.

Due to the refusal of the employers to do this, he moved a successful resolution, with only the Patternmakers voting against and the Vehicle Builders abstaining, that the present agreement should be terminated 'forthwith'.

Jack Service, the Confederation General Secretary, later told me that the employers would probably be officially told of this decision after the next Confederation Executive meeting on 8 July.

While this decision should be welcomed as long overdue there is no doubt that part of the strategy proposed by Scanlon has grave dangers. He recommended that, when the agreement ends, shop

stewards should attempt to sign local procedure agreements with their employers incorporating the approved 'status quo' condition. It was pointed out that the 'status quo' clauses existed, among others, in British Transport Docks, the biscuit industry, gold and jewellery and in surgical instruments.

He neglected to say, however, that the Bill will shortly be law and that, in these circumstances, some of the local agreements might well become legally enforceable. It might also be difficult for weak and poorly organised factories to operate the proposals.

Industrial action

The only way that this dangerous fragmentation can be avoided is by shop stewards' committees refusing to negotiate local agreements. The result of this would mean that if any grievance occurred only industrial action could be taken. Faced with this kind of situation there is little

doubt that the employers, who announced last week that a poll of 80 per cent of their members showed a 99 per cent opposition to the engineers' demands, could be forced to retreat.

An additional cause for concern is that the unions have accepted that the first statement in any new agreement will continue to arrogantly assert that 'management has the right to manage'.

The best speech of the whole conference was made during the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill. It came from Mike Cooley, President of the Supervisory and Technical section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (formerly DATA).

Cooley called on the Confederation to use its industrial strength to defeat the Bill and specifically demanded that no union register. He also denounced those unions that intended to register and the 'fake left' leaders that condemned the Bill but refused to actually fight it.

Two speakers opposed the motion. Ken Baker from the General and Municipal did

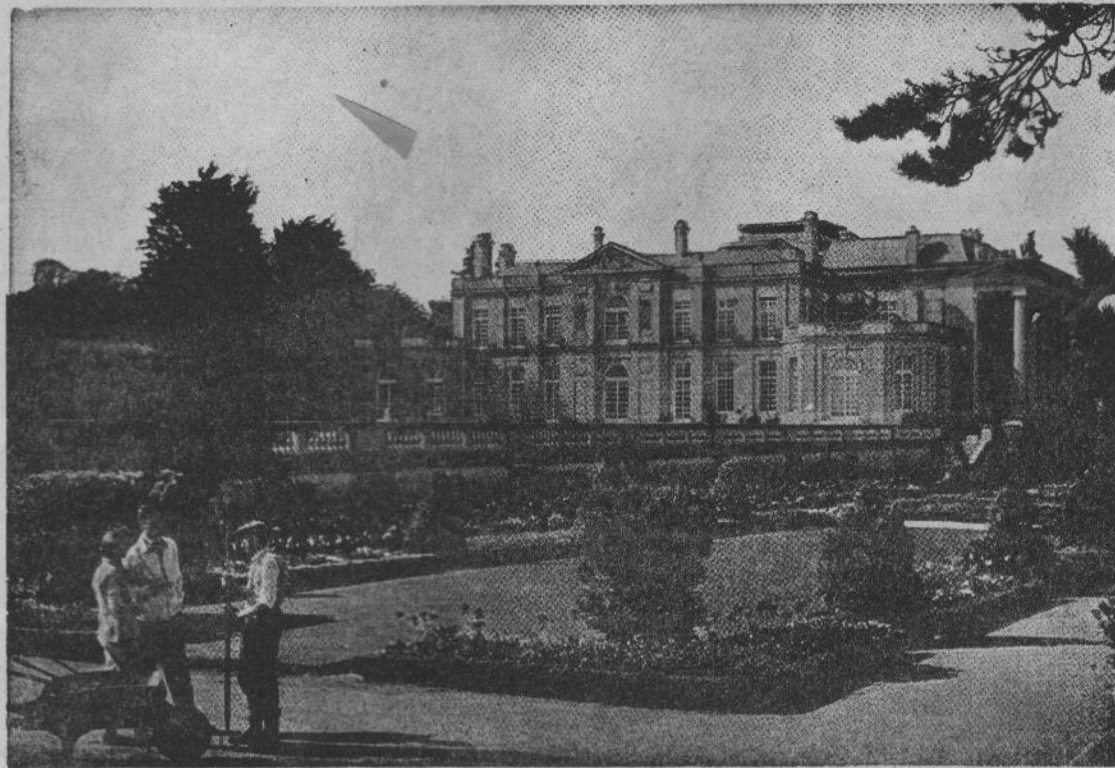
not explain why, but did surprise the conference by stating that his union intended to call a special conference to consider whether or not to register. Everyone present expects that they will decide to do so.

Scandalous

Roy Grantham from the Clerical and Administrative Workers was the other opponent. He made a scandalous contribution. One of his more remarkable comments was: 'Since we stopped having those strikes we've won some by-elections'.

The motion was finally carried with the Metal Mechanics and Patternmakers joining the other two unions in voting against. The Electricians and Boilermakers both abstained.

No fighting leadership came from the Confed conference. That, as always, will and must be supplied by the militants on the shop floor.



Oldway Mansion: Singer song of luxury for busy union leaders

IDEAS IN SOCIETY

by
DUNCAN
HALLAS

Democratic rights don't add up to real democracy

THE Greek philosopher Aristotle classified governments according to which class effectively ruled. There was aristocracy, the rule of land-owning nobles; oligarchy, the rule of the town rich (merchants, moneylenders etc.) and there was democracy, the rule of 'the people' (by which he meant the free citizens of a city state) over and against the other classes.

A modern social scientist, M Albrow, sums up the view of conservative, liberal and labour educationalists, writers and propagandists, that Aristotle's ideas are 'ill adapted to modern social scientific requirements. It is the modern wish to view democracy not in terms of the rule of a class but as rule for the good of the whole people.'

For 'modern social scientific' read 'ruling class' and you have the matter in a nutshell. In any society divided into classes there is necessarily a ruling class, that controls the means of production—the means that is of keeping the society going, land, factories and so on—and one or more exploited classes that actually produce the wealth that is shared, very unequally, between the classes. And in 'modern social scientific Britain' 5 per cent of the population own 75 per cent of the wealth, 10 per cent own 80 per cent of the wealth and the overwhelming majority—90 per cent—own between them only 20 per cent of the wealth (Income Distribution and Property Ownership by Professor J E Meade).

These figures actually understate the position because of various tax dodging devices. The really key indicator is the fact that 1 per cent of the population owns 80 per cent of all share capital. That 1 per cent is the core of the ruling class.

Now 'rule for the good of the whole people' is out of the question when there are conflicting class interests. There are no benevolent gentlemen standing outside society who are above the struggle and able to rule in the common interest. Nor is there a common interest. In short we do not have democracy in Britain. We have what Aristotle called oligarchy.

Yet most people believe that Britain is a dem-

ocracy and it is not simple ignorance that makes them think so. Compare Britain with Spain or Russia.

Here we have trade unions that are not simply part of the state machine, we have a considerable degree of free speech. Papers like Socialist Worker can attack the system week in and week out with only very occasional prosecutions. We can even cast votes, six or seven times in a lifetime, that can actually turn out a government. Not one of these things is true of Spain or Russia or indeed of the majority of countries in the world.

Fought for

We have in fact some very important democratic rights. They have not been handed to us on a plate. Each and every one of them has had to be fought for by working people. And they are continually eroded whenever they look like becoming a threat to our rulers. They have to be defended—they are our conquests. But they do not add up to democracy.

The whole propaganda machine of the ruling class—TV, radio, press, schools, churches and universities—spends a great part of its efforts trying to hide this fact. Aristotle wrote in a society in which most people could not read. He could afford to tell the truth. His modern counterparts are not in this position. They have to lie and to erect their lies into a whole system of hypocrisy and misrepresentation.

It is possible for the rulers of countries like Britain to use 'democracy' as an ideology because

they have been able in various ways to minimise the effects of democratic rights and to use the forms of democratic rule against democratic policies.

Our 'free press' is a good example. When newspapers first appeared they were subject to government licence. Then a heavy tax—a stamp duty—was put on each copy so that the price of a paper was far beyond the means of working men.

Working men produced illegal, unstamped newspapers. One of the most famous was Hetherington's 'Poor Man's Guardian'. It proudly advertised itself as a paper 'Established contrary to law, which will contain news, intelligence, occurrences and remarks and observations thereon, tending decidedly to excite hatred and contempt of the government and constitution of the tyranny of this country as by law established . . . and will be published for the sum of ONE PENNY' (the stamp duty was sixpence).

More than five hundred men and women went to prison in less than four years for selling the 'Guardian'. In the end they won. The stamp duty was reduced and eventually, in the second half of the century, abolished. The free press had arrived. It did not last long.

Today the owners of the whole mass circulation press and practically all periodicals and magazines—not to mention commercial television—could comfortably assemble in a small room. They are practically all millionaires. The power of money, of capital, has been able to take the democratic form and put into it the most undemocratic content. 'Democracy' under these conditions means capitalist class rule.

NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN!



CINEMA

IT HAS at last become possible for those of us who do not live in the West End of London to see Visconti's much-praised film *Death in Venice* (some North London ABCs). It is easy to see why this adaptation of Thomas Mann's short story received such ecstatic applause from reviewers (the *Sunday Times* called it 'one of the greatest films since the war').

As always in a Visconti film the photography is quite stunning and absolutely central to the film's overall impact. So much is this the case that the dialogue of the film occupies only 5-10 minutes out of the 130 minutes of the whole.

Again, sensitive and intelligent use is made of Mahler's Third and Fifth symphonies to result in a magnificent visual and aural experience.

But this is not enough in a film and *Death in Venice* is fatally flawed by Visconti's failure with the central, indeed the only, relationship in the film. This is between Gustave von Aschenbach, an ageing and distinguished German composer and a beautiful Polish youth whom he meets on a recuperative holiday in Venice.

While bringing out the inevitably obsessive nature of such a relationship, Visconti fails to provide the viewer with the essential background to the character of Aschenbach which is imperative for an understanding of his late and tragic passion.

Part of the problem is that in Mann's story, Aschenbach is a writer not a composer and is a man who has struggled all his life with the temptations of the flesh, of laxity and levity, and has highlighted in his novels just these stern, moral problems.

The blossoming of his desire for this perfect youth attains a truly tragic dimension by way of its rebuttal of all he has ever written about and lived for. By his love, he contradicts all his own deeply-held moral beliefs—that is his immense and private tragedy.

In the film this is hinted at but never made clear. We do see the composer arguing over the principles of artistic creation with a friend but the discussions are abstract and unrelated and fail to illuminate the film's central dilemma.

For Mann, *Death in Venice* was an illustration of his life-long concern with the tension between art and reality, between the unfettered realms of imagination and the stern discipline of work. In Visconti's hands this complex and specific problem is reduced to a moving but fairly commonplace illustration of the sadness of growing old.

As such, *Death in Venice* is an object lesson of the dangers of adapting novels or short stories for the screen. Mann's story is a deep and wholly serious attempt to come to terms with the problems of artistic creation.

In the final analysis, Visconti is only able to trivialise this theme, although he uses all of his many talents in so doing. The film is a tremendous visual success.

Dirk Bogarde gives the performance of his life as the ageing, infinitely pitiful figure of a middle-aged man overcome for the first time in his life by an obsessive passion. And Mahler's music makes a fascinating contrast to the ancient beauty of the city of Venice.

But this is not enough. Films are more than pretty views and evocative music. Sadly I can only advise readers to read Mann's short story and to see the film almost solely for its photography and haunting music.

Martin Tomkinson



COTTONS COLUMN

THE gritty, white-hot memoirs of Harold Wilson that reinforced the *Sunday slumbers* of newspaper readers last month are now reaching a new and unexpected audience. The boring old drivel that represents the diluted wisdom, wit and political courage of the Labour leader is now being dished up in the *Rhodesia Herald*.

The serialisation rights were sold to the *Herald* for a considerable sum. It is illegal to trade with Rhodesia—a measure introduced by the self-same H Wilson at the time of Smith's UDI.

Having failed ludicrously to bring down Smith's regime in 'weeks rather than months', Wilson is now flouting his own trade embargo. But as they say in Harold's Yorkshire, 'Where there's muck there's brass'.

STRANGE goes on in the *Methodist Church*. The *Methodist Conference* last week expelled the Rev Raymond Billington because parts of a book he has written were held to be inconsistent with church doctrine.

Mr Billington's book, *The Christian Outsider*, was published by the official Methodist book house and was described by them as 'a vivid contribution to the debate about the future of the "Christian presence" in human society.'

Said Mr Billington: 'This has hardly come as a surprise... I have said in public that I am an atheist. The word "god" has never been used in a service I have conducted over the past three years and yet I gather I am more in demand to conduct



JOSEPH: New York points the way

services than the regular circuit preachers.'

To the pulpits, comrades.

Maxwell's house

EMPLOYEES at Pergamon Press in Oxford suffer harsh working conditions. They get no sick pay until they work for the firm for six months, if they are 15 minutes late for work they lose an hour's pay, half an hour late and they are docked half a day.

They need permission to visit the lavatory and four times a day a voice barks over the Tannoy system: 'Good morning/afternoon...it is now time to start work/go to lunch/start work/go home.' Boss of this Orwell-style nightmare? None other than 'left' Labourite Robert Maxwell.

Ryding high

MAGAZINE journalists at the International Publishing Corporation who have just been sold a miserable £220 basic salary increase by their

less than adventurous union negotiators will be interested to know that their small-beer rise is not matched at the top of the giant combine.

The annual report of Reed International, the parent company, shows that chairman Don 'Soapy' Ryder awarded himself a £10,288 increase last year. His salary goes up from £30,491 to £40,679.

Another fortunate fellow is Leslie Rowan, chairman of Vickers. He had a £100 a week pay rise last year. Not bad, especially as Vickers' profits dropped from £10 million to £4,200,000.

No pity city

MEMO to Sir Keith Joseph, government overlord of the social services. The great nightmare that haunts his waking hours is the number of shameless work-shy individuals living off the state.

Hard-hearts in New York City have come up with a solution that will no doubt appeal to Joseph. Under new state welfare legislation, the city has sent notices to some 50,000 of its 1,200,000 welfare cases advising them that they will have to work for the city to continue receiving public assistance.

The corporation is finding it difficult to staff some of its essential services so it has hit on the bright idea of using people on welfare to work in hospitals, schools and parks. 'What do you mean, you've only got one leg? A broom is as good as a crutch, isn't it?'



WITH Bernard Braden having 'Storked' off to the commercial side, the late-night Saturday talk show on BBC1 has passed to Michael Parkinson, a familiar small screen face but best known for his *Sunday Times* column where he has mercilessly poked fun at the deadbeats who run sport and, in particular, the MCC bigots anxious to play 'non-political' cricket with South Africa.

As an incurable optimist, I hoped that Parkinson's 'leftish' reputation might enliven the meandering boredom of weekend television. But the medium has a depressing ability to squeeze the life out of radicals, to turn them into smooth spokesmen for the prejudices of the 'average' middle-class viewer.

Kenneth Alsop of 24 Hours is another example of a writer who has often shown sympathies for the oppressed and exploited but who on television frequently acts like a tetchy schoolmaster confronted by rebellious pupils. What turns a verbal radical into a visual conformer? There may be open pressure on them from the television bosses, but I suspect the truth is that they themselves feel they must conform and not be too outspoken if they are to survive in the lucrative telly personality market.

In his first programme, Parkinson produced the self-confessed 'socialist', Ray Bellessario, who makes a living from taking intimate photographs of the Royal Family and proceeded to harangue him indignantly, with the aid of a spokesman from the Monarchist League, for his intrusion into 'people's' private lives. I do not feel much admiration for Mr Bellessario's chosen profession but with trade unionists, black people and pop festival supporters being tried and abused daily by the millionaire press and television, there are people more worthy of Parkinson's defence than the assorted half-wits and rich parasites who constitute the Royal Family.

In spite of Parkinson, the second show last Saturday came to life thanks to the appearance of American film actress Shelley Winters. Here is a real fighter who speaks her mind without fear or favour in every quarter. Virtually brushing aside the slobbering, 'I'm a great fan of yours', interviewer, Miss Winters took over the show and told of her pre-Hollywood activities as an unofficial union organiser in Woolworth's in New York.

For a few minutes the thin whine of the telly pundits dried up as a real, warm-hearted lover of humanity came booming and bouncing out of the screen. Great television.

Humour has many sides to it. It can be a weapon used by intellectuals and satirists to poke fun at existing society. It can be a method used by the establishment to allow people to work off their anger and frustration. Or, within working-class culture, it can be a collective defence against a mean and vicious society. The development of the music hall, with its gallery of great 'artistes' drawn from working-class backgrounds, provided a refuge for working people before the growth of the television dream factory.

Some of the bawdy humour of the Carry On films and television's *Up Pompeii* may have their roots in that tradition. *Up Pompeii* (BBC1, Saturday) is an outrageous mixture of dreadful corn and appalling 'double meaning' jokes.

But it is worth seeing because of the performance of a genuine genius—Frankie Howerd. That shocked, randy old horse face, tuttering and oh-dearing like an affronted seaside landlady, has long been one of the few real delights on television.

David East

Socialist Worker

Tough demands from white collar workers

SW Reporter

DEMANDS for price curb laws, expanded social services, improvements in the real standard of living for working people and attacks on the Tory government's cuts in welfare services featured prominently at the conference of NALGO, the local government officers' union, last week.

The main debate centred on the Industrial Relations Bill. Although a motion calling for the union to apply to become a registered union was overwhelmingly defeated, the executive were successful in having the issue remitted to them. This will mean a fight in the branches in the next few weeks to explain the political issues behind the Bill.

Delegates took a very militant line, against the advice of the platform, in favour of strike action if any service covered by NALGO—such as electricity, water, gas—was hived off by the government and given to private enterprise. An attempt to hock the union's strike fund for a new building to house headquarters' staff was also defeated against platform advice.

A notable feature at the conference was the NALGO Action Group. Originally based in London and Manchester, the group is now setting up in other parts of the country and in Scotland, where the first Scottish meeting was recently held. Evidence of their activity was reflected in the daily newsletter distributed to the 2000 delegates that commented on the previous day's business and pointed out the main issue of the day in question.

Shouts of 'rubbish'

Guest speaker Ted Heath received a cool reception. When he suggested that the Industrial Relations Bill was the product of four years of careful research into the problems there was derisive laughter and shouts of 'rubbish'.

Prior to his visit conference had voted a qualified 'no' to Common Market entry.

Many delegates feared that a sell-out was on the way over the current 14 per cent pay claim, judging by the dismal performance by the chairman of the local government committee. He said that 'no mention of militant action would be made to the employers' despite the fact that they have made no offer to the union.

The conference showed that trade union militancy was certainly stirring in NALGO—previously noted for its conservative and reactionary views—and there is no doubt that the Action Group has contributed in this. The immediate tasks are now clearly set out—no sell-out on the pay claim, no registration under the Tory IRB.

Steel call for plant takeover

SW Reporter

SHEFFIELD: Shop stewards are threatening to occupy local steel plants if employers go ahead with plans to 'rationalise' and make some 6000 workers redundant.

The stewards' announcement followed a statement this week that the British Steel Corporation is entering into a deal with the private firm of Firth Brown. BSC and Firth Brown each have a 50 per cent control of Firth Vickers, manufacturers

of stainless steel.

Firth Brown will hand over their share of the firm to BSC and in return the nationalised combine will give them their drop forging and machine shop works at the River Don.

Heavy loss

The catch is that those sections of the River Don works that cannot be integrated into Firth Brown will be closed down—and the works made a heavy financial loss last year. 7000 workers are

employed at River Don, but only about 1000 are expected to be taken on by the new private company.

Ken Lewis, divisional director of BSC, welcomed the acquisition of the stainless steel plant but said ominously: 'River Don is the price we have to pay for it.'

Backing the stand by the steel shop stewards, Sheffield Trades Council president Bill Owen said this week: 'The unions will fight to guarantee employment to their members.'

MILITANTS' BLACKLIST IN CRACKDOWN BY EMPLOYERS

THREE THOUSAND engineering employers are to draw up a 'blacklist' of militants who cause 'disruptive activity' in their factories. It is an attempt to crack down on members of DATA, the technical and supervisory section of the Engineering Union—the AUEW.

The call for a blacklist has come in a secret circular from the powerful Engineering Employers' Federation. It has been sent out following the breakdown of national wage negotiations between DATA and the EEF in March.

The union executive unanimously rejected the employers' offer of between £2 and £3, a decision ratified by their annual conference. Since then DATA members have been taking action at factory level to force the employers to cough up. Substantial increases have been won and the union's national claim has been achieved in a number of large factories that are part of the EEF.

The employers' circular asks firms if DATA members are pursuing a wage claim and if 'disruptive activity' is taking place. The EEF asks the firms to name those thought to be leading the 'disruption'.

ATTACK

At the DATA conference in May, general secretary George Doughty reported that a previous EEF circular had come into the union's hands and showed that the employers were planning an all-out attack on the union.

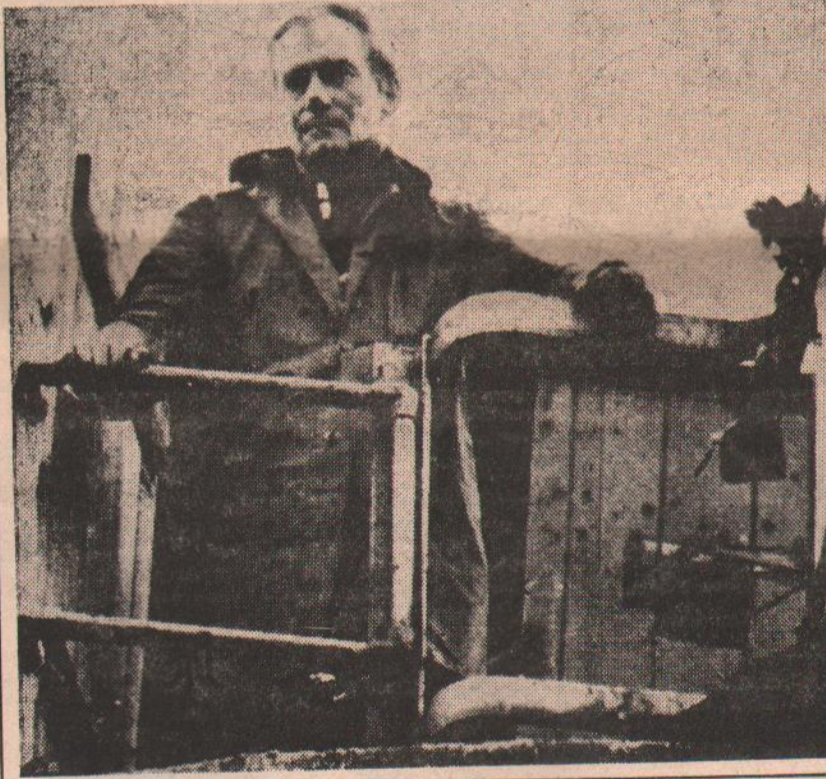
The latest circular means that militants face the chop if the bosses get their way. Such opportunities will arise when the Industrial Relations Bill becomes law, backed by chronic unemployment in some areas.

The AUEW conference opposed registration when the Industrial Relations Bill becomes law. It committed the amalgamated union to organise solidarity action if legal steps are taken against any members.

The EEF circular shows the way the employers are thinking and planning. If their steps are to be defeated, strong factory organisation and support from all sections of the AUEW will be crucial.

STAY-UP PROTEST BY VICTIMISED STRIKER

HARRY HITCHINGS, 57-years old convenor at the GKN plant in Cardiff, has staged a one-man protest against victimisation this week on top of a 70ft water tower. After a three-month strike, without support from their union, the AUEW, workers went back to find their wages cut by £1.50 a week. And Mr Hitchings was moved from the day shift to the night shift, making it impossible for him to carry out his union duties.



Politics vital in jobs fight

THE serious unemployment situation can mobilise large numbers of trade unionists: this was clear from last Thursday's inter-union meeting at Friends' Meeting House in London, sponsored by Camden No. 3 AUEW Branch.

More than 100 people from the Camden area, including a solid core of shop stewards and lay officials, attended the meeting. The most striking aspect of the discussion was the readiness of trade unionists to talk about the current situation in political terms—not the politics of parliament, but the politics of working people.

John Hannington, convenor at Hilger and Watts which faces closure, explained that growing unemployment was a political decision by the Tories. They wanted not only to discipline workers nationally but in London they were aiming to undermine strong factory organisation by closures and selective redundancies.

Speaker after speaker stressed the need for a political response to the Tory offensive. The need for national action was underlined in a discussion of the UCS crisis.

A meeting will be held shortly to discuss the future organisation of the campaign and to draw up a programme of demands and activities. For further information of the proposed campaign, contact: Secretary, AUEW (Camden No. 3), Camden Labour Centre, Bayham St., NW1.

CALL FOR BIG DRIVE IN UNIONS ON EQUAL PAY

SW Reporter

A MORE POSITIVE attitude towards working-class women formed the basis of a programme proposed by the International Socialists' Conference on women last weekend, attended by more than 200 delegates. Re-stating the IS position that the achievement of socialism is bound up with the liberation of women, the conference formulated demands around which women—and the whole labour movement—could organise.

The main emphasis of the programme was the necessity for organisation within trade unions to push the demands of women workers. At the same time, the conference recognised that the basis of the super-exploitation of women at work lies in their position in the home. A programme of demands for the liberation of women from the confines of the home was drawn up.

EMPHASISED

The fight for the demands of women workers involves a fight for union democracy. May Hobbs of the Night Cleaners' Campaign, and speakers from USDAW and NATSOPA emphasised this point. They reported considerable success in organising women to fight for better pay and conditions.

But these successes had been achieved

only by challenging the union leaders as well as fighting the bosses. Despite noises made about equal pay by trade union leaders, women workers have been repeatedly sold out in negotiations. As a result, the gap between the earnings of men and women has been increasing.

Equal pay deals have been bought with productivity deals and increased shift working and cancelled out by job evaluation and 'regarding'. The conference therefore proposed the creation of rank and file action groups within trade unions to fight for a programme of demands for women workers. This programme included:

1. Equal pay now.
2. No job evaluation.
3. A decent living wage without overtime or productivity measures.
4. Free local authority nurseries and nursery schools.
5. Sick leave for parents if a child is sick.
6. Maternity leave for full term of pregnancy.
7. Equal education and training opportunities for women.
8. 35-hour working week and a minimum wage of £25.
9. Adequate family allowances.

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Journalists take £220

1800 magazine journalists employed by the International Publishing Corporation agreed at a mass meeting on Monday to accept a revised pay offer of £220 on the minimum rate and to withdraw strike notices due to expire this week. A move to go ahead with the strike and fight for an improved offer was heavily defeated, but many journalists expressed their anger at the attitude of the negotiators who two weeks previously had urged them to strike for £364 but on Monday pushed £220 as a 'realistic' settlement.

NOTICES

IS TEACHERS' meeting this Sunday, 11am 2 Albany Terrace, NW1.

JUST OUT—new issue of ADVANCE, rank and file power workers' paper, 3p plus post from 68 Fountains Rd, Stretford, Lancs.

MARXISM and Freedom: speakers Olga Domanski (secretary to Raya Dunayevskaya) and Andy Phillips (editor of News and Letters). 2.30pm, Sunday 4 July, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

CROYDON IS public meeting: Tony Cliff on Unemployment and the Tory Offensive. Ruskin House, 8pm, Tuesday 13 July.

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST REVIEW No 1. For revolutionary self-management—draft manifesto. Where is American imperialism heading? Poland since December, J Steven. Britain 1971, John Walters. The Political Organisation of the Vanguard, Michel Pablo, etc. Price 22½p from IMR Publications, 16a Holmdale Rd, London NW6 1BS.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION: London and Home Counties Branch mtg on Housing and Health. Spkrs Stanley Clinton Davis MP and Mrs Joan Ruddock, Field Director, SHELTER. Thursday 8 July 7.30pm at House of Commons (room booked in name of Stanley Clinton Davis).

GLASGOW IS public meeting: Unemployment and the UCS occupation: 11am Sat 3 July, Iona House, Clyde St.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Martin from all who have been given coffee at No 90.

NE REGION IS conference: The Fight against Unemployment. For all members. Londonderry Hotel, High St, Sunderland. 2.30-6 Sunday 18 July. Social in evening.

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