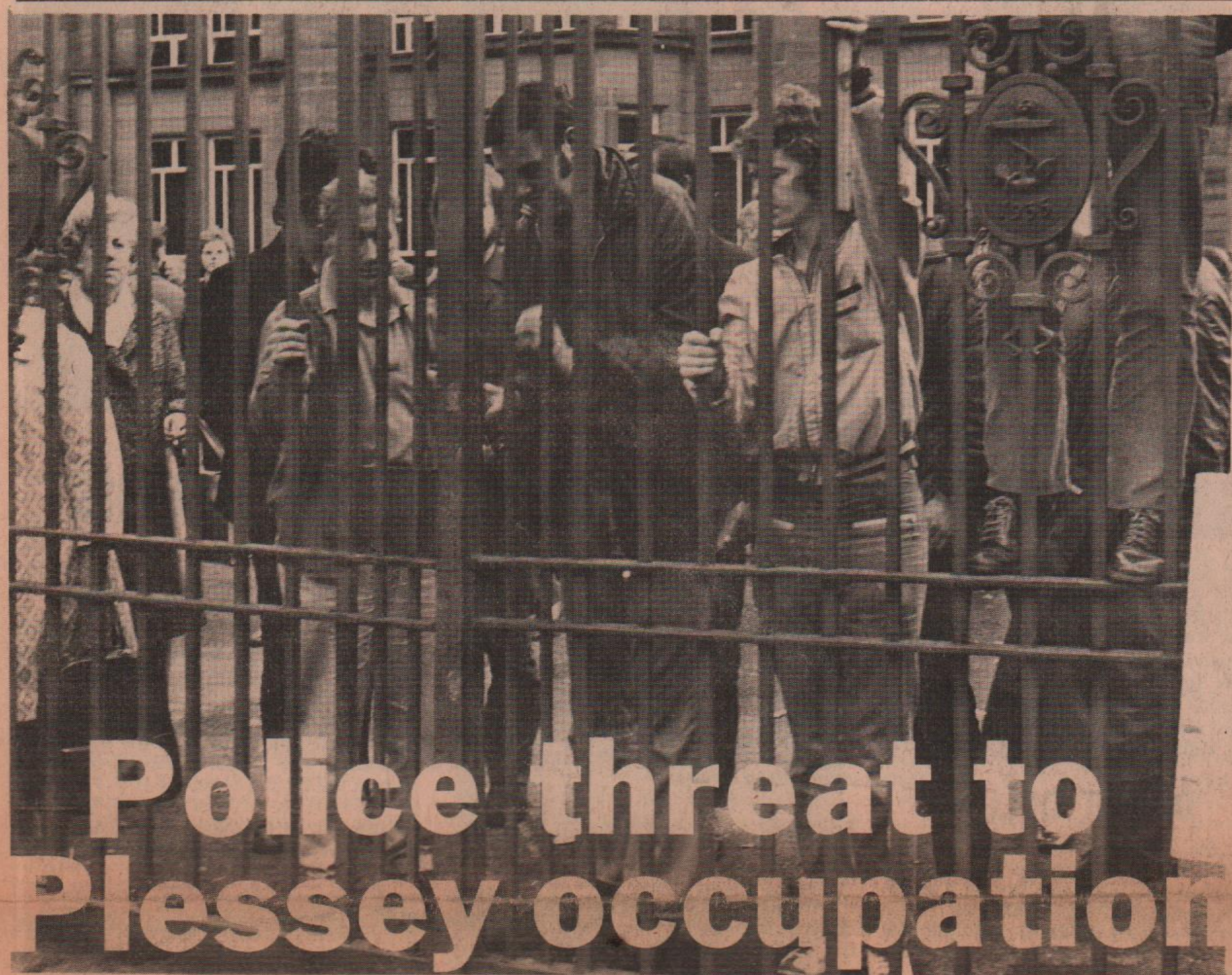


Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 238 18 SEPTEMBER 1971 2½p

FREE MILK: FORCE LABOUR

COUNCILS TO DEFY TORY BAN



Police threat to Plessey occupation

The gates are locked, the workers stay inside at Plessey's factory

ALEXANDRIA:—Police have threatened workers occupying the Plessey's factory that they will come 'in droves' to evict them. On Tuesday, police claimed that a bomb had been planted in the works and demanded entry.

As the occupation—which is against the closure of the factory—moves into its third week, the chance of an attack on the Plessey men increases every day.

But so does support for their stand. Workers at Burroughs', Dumbarton, are backing the occupation. The UCS Shop Stewards' Co-ordinating Committee has given the Plessey men £250 and offered to help on the picket line.

Last Friday, workers from the British Silk Dyeing Co's Balloch factory turned

by SW Reporter

up outside the gates of Plessey's in a demonstration of support. Men at General Time in Strathleven have pledged '100 per cent' solidarity.

The local Vale of Leven District Council has passed a motion 'abhorring the decision of Plessey management in closing the Argyll works' and supporting the occupation. The motion also calls on the government to 'stop the robbery of machinery and jobs' from Alexandria and to take back the former government-owned torpedo works into public ownership 'without recompense to Plessey'.

On Tuesday, Eddie McLafferty, the

Alexandria convenor, and Jack Green, chairman of the shop stewards committee, travelled to Ilford, Essex, to meet stewards and management representatives from the company's plants there. Plessey's claim that the meeting was called to 'establish certain facts—there is a misunderstanding between Ilford stewards and "former employees" at Alexandria'.

After the meeting, Ilford convenor Kath Kelly said: 'We want Plesseys to be more truthful to the Ilford shop stewards'. A delegation from Ilford went to Alexandria on Thursday to take part in a demonstration there and see the occupation for themselves.

Messages and donations to: Eddie McLafferty, Plessey Works, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire, Scotland.

Bernadette Devlin, MP, says:

HEATH, Faulkner and Lynch combined have the integrity of an adder. Any deal they make at their 'tripartite talks' will not be binding on the people who have been fighting against oppression in Northern Ireland for the past three years.

Lynch is trying to represent himself as 'the voice of the Catholic minority'. At a rally in Belfast last Sunday 10,000 of that minority made it clear that they will never accept him as such.

We reject Lynch because his party and his class in no way represent our interests. Lynch is the premier of the 26 Counties, where capitalism has run riot for the past half century. Massive emigration still bleeds from the land, social services—where they exist at all—are at the most abysmal level, housing output is among the lowest in Europe and tens of thousands live in festering slums.

Repressive

Lynch is a Tory to the place where his backbone used to be, and we will not have him talking for us.

Moreover, if Lynch were genuinely opposed to internment without trial he would rescind the Offences Against the State Act, a law every bit as repressive as the North's. Far from doing this, his gov-



Lynch: ready for internment

ernment has prepared for use the Curragh Camp where internees were held in the 1950s.

Lynch, Heath and Faulkner are capable of doing a deal. Behind the public postures of intransigence each is willing to come to terms.

We reject any terms they might make. Not because we are against peace. But because we want a lasting peace based on a real transformation of society, which would remove the inequalities and exploitation which are at the root of all our ills.

Despite the propaganda stories and the distortions of the national press we, the ordinary people of the Bogside, the Falls, and the Ardoyne are more in favour of peace than anyone else. After all, it is we who suffer. Nobody dies and nobody is gassed in the nice neighbour-

hoods where Mr Faulkner and his friends live.

When we look to the South of Ireland or to Britain for friends, for people who will help to solve our problems, we do not look to Lynch or to Heath (or to Wilson for that matter). We look to those who are fighting the same fight against what is ultimately the same class power.

We look to the strikers and squatters in the South, fighting for recognition of their unions and for the right to live in decent homes.

In Britain we look to those who are fighting against the Tory government, who are fighting the Industrial Relations Act, the Immigration Act, the redundancies and the rent rises. They are the people who, whether or not they see it clearly, are speaking for us and fighting alongside us.

No right

The Scottish worker who said that 'they may have to withdraw the army from Bogside and put it in Clydeside' may yet discover just how true his words were.

Just as Heath has no right to speak for the British workers, Faulkner and Lynch have no right to speak for the Irish workers. We can speak for ourselves. The rent strike, the sit-in, the squat are splendidly articulate examples.

SCHOOLCHILDREN are the latest victims of the Tory government. Children over seven years are no longer entitled to free milk.

This is a serious loss at a time when unemployment is rising and real wages are falling. It is likely that malnutritional diseases such as rickets—already making a comeback in Glasgow and parts of London—will return on a large scale.

The Labour government started the attack by abolishing milk for children over 11. But now it is the Labour councils that are beginning to fight back.

Several councils are looking for loopholes in the new law. Milk is being provided by Glasgow and Fife while medical examinations are made on all their schoolchildren.

Doctors can exempt some children from the ban at their own discretion. In areas of Glasgow that discretion depends on the political views of the doctors.

In the London Borough of Camden the medical officer has declared that all the authority's pupils are medically in need of milk.

Other councils have decided to challenge the government. These include Midlothian, Ayrshire and Dunbartonshire in Scotland and Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil in Wales.

Councillor Bryn Watkins, a former mayor of Merthyr, told me he was 'quite aware of the fact that we are breaking the law'.

WORRIED

The council, he added, had used all possible constitutional methods against the milk ban. They had prepared for it by setting aside £5000 in last year's estimates. He was worried by the selective side of the new law. He thought it could do serious psychological damage to the children.

Cllr Watkins said that, together with 8 per cent unemployment in Merthyr and the recent rise in school meal prices, the milk ban was extremely worrying. He criticised councils searching for loopholes in the law as 'looking for a way round'.

'The council's action is a challenge—every child has the right to enjoy free school milk'. Merthyr's Labour Mayor, Gerald Donovan, says he is prepared to go to jail rather than stop the milk.

The ban will 'save' a puny £9 million. What it will cost in future sickness is impossible to tell.

Education Minister Mrs Thatcher says

RESISTANCE

COUNCILS resisting government: Clay Cross, Derbyshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Midlothian, Ayrshire, Dunbartonshire are continuing to supply milk contrary to law:

Glasgow and Fife: Waiting for results of medical examinations before stopping milk.

Dundee: supplying milk with meals. Birmingham: all children declared medically in need of milk.

Manchester, Salford: looking for loopholes.

Camden: issuing health certificates to all children.

Benfleet, Essex: petition containing 3,200 signatures given to local Labour councillors, supported by Ford shop stewards.

the money is needed for the modernisation of slum schools, but £9 million will make little difference to the meagre plans for school modernisation.

And the idea that money for modernising schools should come from this source must be resisted. £1 million is wasted every week on Concorde and £40m a week on armaments.

Labour councils and the entire labour movement should remember Poplar's stand against the government 50 years ago. In July, 1921, George Lansbury led the entire Poplar council in London to court and into jail rather than cut unemployment pay.

Every Labour council must be forced to defy the government ban. Trades Councils and trade union branches should organise demonstrations and petitions calling on councils to supply milk to every child with certificates from medical officers.

Nationwide, united action can defeat the Tories on this critical issue. Legal threats against councils could spark off massive resistance from the labour movement.

PUBLIC MEETING Labour Committee Against Internment

Speakers will include

Bernadette Devlin, MP, William Molloy, MP, Eamonn McCann, Bowes Egan, John Palmer, Sean Geraghty (chairman)

FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 8pm
Camden Town Hall, assembly rooms
(near Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston stations)

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E28DN
Tel: 01 739 9043 (editorial) 2639 (business)

Registration: union members must speak

THE MILLIONAIRE PRESS was alarmed last week at the decision of the TUC to instruct its member unions not to register under the Industrial Relations Act. The Economist, in particular, was near to hysteria, ranting that Jones and Scanlon now dominated and determined the policies of the TUC and the Labour Party.

On the face of it, the Blackpool vote was an important victory for the left. It doesn't seem to square with Socialist Worker's analysis that the registration debate was a sham. The reason is that the press doesn't do its homework, is so concerned with personality clashes that it cannot untangle reality from rostrum rhetoric.

The truth of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of union leaders want to register under the Tories' law. Some because they are openly committed to the capitalist system, others because they prefer a quiet, well-paid life and the rest—the 'left' union leaders—because to refuse to register means planning and organising a massive campaign of industrial action against the government.

But much as Jones and Scanlon would like to get themselves off the registration hook, they find they are prisoners of their verbal militancy.

They have breathed fire and damnation against the Industrial Relations Bill, but did little to stop it becoming law—just as they did little to mount solidarity action with the power workers and the postmen when they were isolated and defeated. But they cannot shake off their past, their promises of radical change.

The result is a compromise 'composite' resolution that instructs all unions not to register but, like a bulldog with rubber teeth, has no power to discipline those unions that break the Congress decision. And once the General and Municipal and the Local Government Officers have signed on the dotted line to accept all the vicious, swingeing implications of the Tories' law, the Pontius Pilates of the TGWU and the AUEW will sadly wash their hands and say 'Sorry brothers, but because of the threat of agency shops and losing our tax concessions, we will reluctantly have to follow suit.'

But that doesn't mean the fight against the Act is over. Not by a long chalk. One reason that forces Jones and Scanlon to move left-sounding resolutions is the knowledge of the growing determination to fight of the rank and file. The decision to 'instruct' unions rather than 'advise' them not to register gives the rank and file a loophole as well as the union leaders. It gives us a lever to force the hands of all those middle-of-the-road union officials who have pleaded with their members not to demand a clear-cut decision on registration but to go along with the TUC line.

Excellent. We are 100 per cent for the new TUC line. We are in favour of trade unionists moving resolutions in their branches that instruct their executives to refuse to register and to use their industrial strength to oppose the Act all along the line.

The registration issue is vital. Once the ranks of the major unions are broken on this issue, it will be that much easier for the Tories to press home the rest of their aims embodied in the Industrial Relations Act. Jones and Scanlon have to decide whether or not they are prepared to really fight the Act or merely reserve their militancy for conference platforms while their members take a hammering outside.

We have always stressed that there is a difference between the right and left union leaders. Jones is not Deakin, Scanlon is not Carron. They owe their positions to the rising struggle of the workers, just as their predecessors owed theirs to the relative industrial peace of the post-war years.

Now we face a new war—open and unbridled class war as the employers try to solve their problems at the expense of working people. Resolute and determined leadership is required to beat back that offensive and lay the basis for a real socialist movement that will fight to end the present system. The registration issue will determine whether or not the left union officials have any role to play in moulding the leadership and building the organisation necessary for that struggle.

WHICH EUROPE?

THE BIG MAJORITY at the TUC for the resolution opposing entry to the Common Market makes the result of the Labour Party conference next month a foregone conclusion.

Lord George Brown will give another music hall turn at the big business-financed 'Labour Committee for Europe' rally. Inside conference, Roy Jenkins and others will trundle out their phoney 'internationalist' line. But the result is not in doubt. Nor is the fact that a good deal of 'patriotic' codswallop will be spouted by the opponents of entry.

The International Socialists are opposed to entry. Our members in the unions have voted and will vote against entry. We are against entry because the Common Market is a big-business dominated institution set up in an attempt to solve the problem of European capitalism at the expense of the working class.

British big business and its government want entry. They believe it will help them in their attack on the wages and conditions of British working people.

We are internationalists. We are for the Europe of the workers and against the Europe of big business. We stand for a United Socialist States of Europe. We have nothing in common with the reactionary nationalism of Enoch Powell and the Daily Express. We reject with contempt the exploitation of nationalist prejudices by Ian Mikardo and the Morning Star.

And what if the Tories win the vote in parliament?

That is only the beginning. The basic job is to develop real links between workers in the various European countries, between car workers in Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Belgium for example. A fight against the Europe of big business needs international working class unity. It is a big job and a hard job. It is a job that must be done.

KHRUSHCHEV

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV's death this week has met with quite different assessments in the western press and in Russia itself. Western journalists have gone out of the way to stress what an important figure he was, with some quite lovable qualities. According to The Times he had 'elements of greatness' and was 'bluff and jovial'.

Yet in Russia itself his death has been hardly noticed. Those who now rule have not thought him worthy of any large official tribute. Nor have the mass of ordinary people expressed much interest.

This can only be explained by clearing a way through all the mythology of the East and the West to see what Khrushchev really stood for. The story of his early rise to power was far from 'bluff and jovial'. Khrushchev is perhaps most remembered for his open criticism of the methods of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956.

Yet Khrushchev himself was one of the keenest employers of such methods. As Secretary of the Moscow region of the party in 1936 he praised Stalin repeatedly as 'the genius of humanity', 'the great vozhd of all toiling people'. When in January 1937 13 old Bolsheviks, including well-known leaders of the 1917 revolution like Radek, Sokolnikov and Piatakov, were sentenced to either death or long prison sentences (from which none returned) Khrushchev declared:

'Before the workers of the whole world we approve this sentence . . . The Trotskyite clique was nothing but a gang of spies and mercenary murderers. The sentence passed on these Trotskyite murderers, diversionists and agents of fascists is a warning to all the enemies of the people.'

Nor was this just talk. Khrushchev showed in practice that he meant every word of it, whether he believed it true or not. His real rise to eminence began when he was appointed first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party by Stalin.

This followed the sacking, and later execution, of his two predecessors in the job, the old Bolsheviks, Postyshev and Kosior, within a few months of each other.

DEATH CELL

But the party press in the Ukraine soon made it clear that the purge really began there in earnest 'after the Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party sent the unswerving Bolshevik and Stalinist, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, to the Ukraine.'

Within a year 70 per cent of the members of the Ukrainian Central Committee had been removed—an unknown number ending up in the death cell or the concentration camp. In a speech before a hundred thousand people, Khrushchev glorified his work.

'This has been a distinctive year as far as the crushing of the enemies of the people is concerned.' He proclaimed: 'Our work is holy. He whose hand will shake or falter half way—the person whose knees give way beneath him when he has to kill 10 or 100 enemies—that person exposes the revolution to danger.'

Khrushchev's climb to power was over a pile of corpses. Such was the bloody past of a ruler so beloved of western statesmen.

Yet soon after Stalin's death, Khrushchev was denouncing his and Beria's crimes (not, of course, those of Khrushchev). The reason did not lie in any strong feelings of humanity in Khrushchev's heart, but in the enormous problems bequeathed by Stalin to his heirs.

Stalin had built up Russian heavy industry with his brutal methods. But in most other fields when he died things were as bad if not worse than when he took full power in 1929.

For instance, although the population had grown by 30 per cent, the total grain crop was hardly greater in 1953 than in 1916. And the total meat production was even less. The housing shortage was worse in 1951 than 30 years earlier.

Under a regime of fear, people did not



Why no one mourns

by CHRIS HARMAN

feel like putting any effort into their work. Even within the privileged sectors of the ruling bureaucracy there was enormous resentment against Stalin's methods. This was still more widespread among the masses of ordinary people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Khrushchev sought to improve the performance of the economy and to provide a firmer and more secure basis for his rule. He could not do so without carrying through certain reforms from above.

He set about making the middle layers of Russian society feel more secure by offering them more bureaucratic privileges and by reducing the threats of physical terror. For the workers and collective farmers he offered marginal improvements in living standards. In Eastern Europe he offered to the local Communist rulers an increased degree of autonomous power.

But the one thing he was not interested in changing was the monopoly of power held by those at the top of society. Russian workers were allowed no greater say in politics or in the running of the factories than they had been under Stalin.

BIG RIOTS

Yet the very act of reforming the old organisation of society encouraged demands for much greater change from below.

In East Germany in 1953 a general strike broke out which rapidly grew into an insurrection. In the depths of Siberia the giant slave labour camps like Vorkuta saw massive strikes by prisoners demanding freedom.

The summer of 1956 saw large scale riots in the Polish industrial city of Poznan. And finally, in October of that year, the people of Hungary rose in armed revolt against their local Stalinist rulers and Russian domination. Exactly the same sort of organs of revolutionary power that had been built by Russia's workers in 1917, workers' councils, now appeared in the factories of Budapest.

Khrushchev showed what a good disciple he was of Stalin. 20,000 people were killed in putting down the Hungarian

uprising and tens of thousands more deported to Siberia.

The dangers of talk of reforms had been illustrated to Russia's rulers. From this point on they were to be more careful in their behaviour.

But without thoroughgoing reforms they could not begin to solve their basic problems. The USSR's rate of economic growth fell from an average of 9.2 per cent in 1955-60 to 6.3 per cent in 1960-65. Khrushchev prepared elaborate and grandiose schemes to try and overcome this deficiency.

None, however, involved any real shift away from the concentration of power in the hands of those at the top of Russia's bureaucratic pyramid. None was able to deal with the source of the problems.

DISENCHANTED

Internationally, the old monolithic Communist bloc disintegrated. China, Albania and Rumania began to openly argue with Russian policies.

The rest of Russia's top leaders became disenchanted with Khrushchev's methods. The changes he had introduced, full of menace to their position, had done nothing to overcome their long-term problems.

The Russian workers also became disillusioned. Khrushchev had promised them that 'within five years' the food shortages and bad housing would be overcome. Yet, when he fell, real wages in Russia still averaged less than £10 a week.

It was not surprising that no one at all inside the Soviet Union was prepared to put up a fight for him when he was kicked out or even to mourn him when he died.

Khrushchev rose to power by aiding Stalin to establish the rule of a new bureaucratic state capitalist class in Russia. When Stalin died he tried to reform the rule of this class in order to safeguard its long-term future.

But thorough-going workers' revolution alone can overcome the problems that plague Russian society. Khrushchev and his successors feared that more than anything else. That is why no one mourns Khrushchev and no one will mourn Brezhnev and Kosygin when their turn comes.

THEIR WEEK

GREAT BRITAIN (VERY) LTD was shocked to hear that 18 of the largest 200 unions in the country refused to sign an undertaking to restrain their wage demands over the coming year. As reported in the Pay Packet (and Financial) Times last week, the Confederation of British Workers 'would not name the 18, but it is clear from statements made by some of them yesterday that they are mainly unions facing a difficult financial situation'.

De La Rue shop stewards, the paper said, 'admitted frankly that they had decided after careful study that they could not sign the undertaking because their margins (between pay and prices—TW) were still not satisfactory.' Workers at Reyrolle-Parsons, 'another group which has declined to sign, were clearly placed in a difficult position by the fact that GEC workers, their main competitors, were not members of the CBW and

were therefore not asked to make the commitment.'

Shop stewards at Alfred Herbert, the largest machine tool union group in the UK, 'is one of the several machine-tool union groups which had decided not to sign the CBW pledge', but they did undertake to 'follow in the spirit of its policy'.

The Courtauld workers' decision not to sign was predictable. As Len Pearton, the Convenor shop stewards said in a speech to members: 'Two years of stable wages in inflationary conditions is severe medicine for any company' of workers.

None of this discouraged the CBW's president John Peasant. 'Given the high level of wage restraint', he said, 'there should be a significant slowing down in the rate of increase in wages during the coming months'.

AN AMERICAN Professor of Economics has recently discovered that manufac-

turing capital in the US 'in a good year like 1955' is kept idle over three-quarters of the time. 'And it's intended to be'. 'Those who build (a plant) do so with the DESIRE that it be operated only part of the time because it is OPTIMAL—in the ordinary sense of maximising profits—to leave the capital stock idle most of the time' (his emphasis).

The unpublished article (On the Collection of Capital Utilisation Data in Underdeveloped Countries) goes on to show that in a BAD year like 1958 when capital stock was working an average of 35 hours out of the 'engineering maximum' of 140 a week (after allowing more than a day a week for maintenance) less than 9 per cent of the total idleness was due to a lack of demand.

Their Week thinks it's a pretty crazy system that can tie everyone to the harsh business of accumulating more and more capital which isn't even meant to be used.

Vincent Flynn at the TUC: 'SOGAT is against permissiveness. We are for protection, the united self-protection of this movement that was born in struggle and matured in struggle.'

'LEFT' LEADERS LEAVE A BOLT HOLE OPEN ON UNION LAW...

'AN INFAMOUS BILL has become an infamous Act. This has happened because until now this Congress has failed the people.'

It was worth going to the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool last week if only to hear the magnificent speech of Vincent Flynn, general secretary of SOGAT Division 'A' (the paperworkers' union) during the crucial debate on registration under the Industrial Relations Act.

The Press had built up the debate as a 'confrontation' between the left and the right in the trade union movement. The argument, so ran the unanimous comment, was between the leaders of the Engineering Union and the Transport Workers, who wanted Congress to 'instruct' member unions not to register and the General Council who stuck to their line, won narrowly at Croydon last March, to 'advise' unions not to register.

The 'instructors' won this time and the left hailed 'a victory'. Close examination of the speeches made in the debate showed that the victory was a sham.

Hugh Scanlon, President of the AUEW, described the Bill as 'a class attack aimed at transforming our own movement into the tame instruments of the state'.

Everyone agreed with that assessment. Most people also agreed that registration placed the unions under the direct surveillance of the Registrar, who could rewrite their rule books.

Clearly, if the Act was to be properly opposed by the trade union movement, registration had to be opposed by the TUC itself. But what worried everyone in this debate, except Vincent Flynn, was that many unions had already decided to register and others were unashamedly threatening to leave the TUC if non-registration was made a condition of membership.

BEGGED

Walter Anderson, general secretary of the local government union, NALGO, said at the rostrum that his union would probably quit before it was thrown out on the issue of registration. Other unions, notably the Agricultural Workers and the Health Service Employees blandly announced their intention to register and begged for a soft line.

Lord Cooper, General and Municipal Workers' leader, who presided over the Congress, has already made it clear that he will advise his union to register, whatever the TUC says.

Victor Feather deplored this breach of the Congress' 'strong advice' to members. But he agreed that there was nothing whatever that Congress could or should do about it.

The 'left-wing' composite motion, moved by Scanlon and seconded by the TGWU's Harry Urwin (Mr Jones taking a back seat) was no great improvement on the Feather line. Urwin made it plain in his speech that if unions broke the instructions, there would be nothing for it but for other unions to sign on the register.

Hugh Scanlon said breaches of the instruction would have to be dealt with by the Congress itself. 'This Congress,' he said, to applause, 'will have to decide.'

PRETEXT

This sounded very democratic, but in reality it will give the General Council a pretext for doing nothing about unions who say they will register early next year. 'Let Congress decide' will be the General Council cry when NALGO, the Bank Employees, the General and Municipal and the others queue up with applications to register. And since Congress does not meet until next September, these unions will be able to present Congress with an accomplished fact.

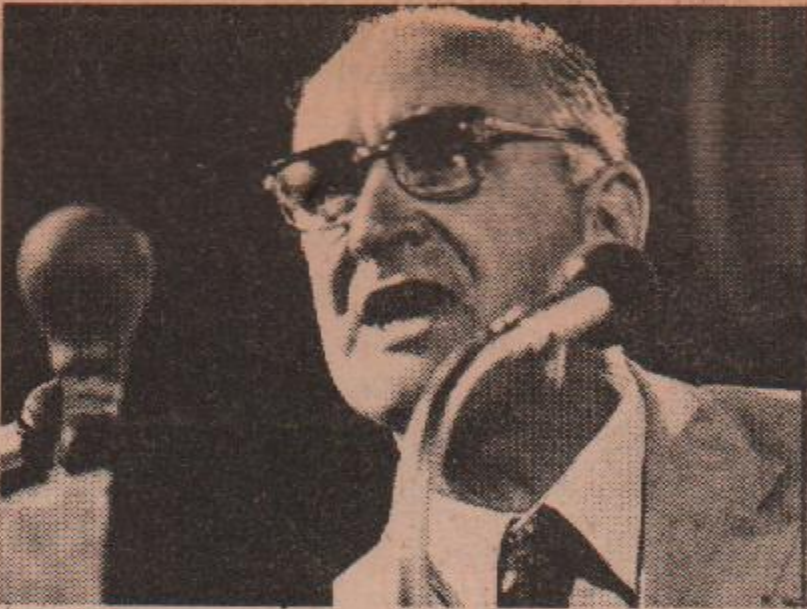
The crucial question at this TUC, then, was discipline. If the TUC was properly to oppose the Act, it needed sanctions against those unions who did not register. 'Tolerance' of registration meant impotence in the fight against it since the temptation to register for any individual union would be irresistible unless all affiliated unions joined in a common policy.

The Paperworkers' motion sought to

Report by PAUL FOOT



Cooper: Everyone knows



Scanlon: Everyone agrees



Anderson: Everyone booted

amend the TUC rules to allow for expulsion of any union which registered. In moving it, Vincent Flynn said:

'The story of the TUC campaign against the Bill is a mixture of tragedy and farce. First, the General Council turned its face against taking industrial action to fight the Bill. That was tragedy.

'We were told that such strike action would be political. The newspaper tigers in Fleet Street took great heart at this and when SOGAT Division A said they would come out on 8 December, the Newspaper Publishers' Association served injunctions on the whole executive. To their shocked surprise we did not run away, even though some of our brothers in other unions were not particularly fraternal...

'In the middle of the campaign we had the postal strike and during that strike there was the great London rally. Why was the occasion not used to hammer home to the government that the slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all' is not just empty words.

'I'll tell you why. Because the so-called leaders of the trade union movement, left as well as right, see the union members as a stage army that they have no intention to use for anything save theatricals.'

'First we're told not to take strike action,' said Flynn, in conclusion. 'Next we're advised not to register. But rumour has it that several of our elder statesmen, including this year's President, have expressed a preference for the permissive society.

'Well, in this matter SOGAT A is against permissiveness. We are for protection, the united self-protection of this movement that was born in struggle and matured in struggle.'

There are those who say that our proposition gives too much power to the General Council, but the truth is that the General Council are terrified of the power and the responsibility which our motion gives them. They are running away in all directions from their responsibilities.'

The SOGAT motion and Flynn's speech touched a raw nerve among 'left' trade union leaders, especially in the TGWU. For Jones and his colleagues plan to let Lord Cooper and NALGO take the blame for 'breaking ranks' and then register the TGWU.

At his speech to TGWU delegates at Scarborough recently, Jones outlined in painful detail the 'disadvantages' of non-registration. Scanlon's composite motion allowed Jones to maintain his left-wing posture and at the same time left him a bolt-hole for eventual registration. Flynn's speech and motion snapped the bolt-hole shut.

This explains the fantastic pressure brought on Flynn and the SOGAT delegation before the debate to withdraw their motion in favour of the composite and, when Flynn refused, it raised for many of the big unions a serious problem. They could not support the motion and be safe to register. But they could not oppose the motion without exposing their hypocrisy.

CONFLICT

In the event, almost all the unions voted against SOGAT's motion, which was defeated by more than nine million votes. But the vote disguised the reality behind the conflict inside the union delegations, especially among the militant rank and file members, many of them members of the Communist Party.

Alan Fisher, general secretary of the 372,000 strong National Union of Public Employees, was forced to admit in his speech on the registration debate: 'We almost voted for motion no. 14'. In fact, NUPE's 25-man delegation had decided to vote against the SOGAT motion by only three votes.

In the AUEW delegation, the Transport and General, the Miners, the Railwaymen, ASTMS, NATSOPA, USDAW and many other unions there was a substantial minority in favour of Flynn's motion. Many Communist Party delegates ignored their party's line and voted inside their delegations for supporting SOGAT.

In his reply to the debate, Vincent Flynn anticipated defeat but warned conference that his motion was the one which mattered. The left-wing talk from union leaders like Danny McGarvey came from 'a stooge army'. 'I am interested,' he said, 'in a trade union movement which challenges those who have set up a society in which the trade union movement always plays a secondary role.'

The only other time when something like the real facts of the situation were put to the delegates was in the debate on pensions. Jack Jones moved a harmless composite motion asking for an increase in pensions and a campaign to bring it about. His empty rhetoric was duly supported by some hearty doses of the same from other unions in support.

Then Mike Cooley, President of the



Morning Star picture

Technical section of the AUEW, formerly DATA, rose to move his amendment: 'Congress encourages affiliated unions to use industrial action to achieve these ends'.

Cooley started with an attack on 'the gutter press which will use acres of column inches about the death of one policeman but will consistently ignore the economic violence done to millions of old people'. Then he turned his attention to the use of strike action for higher pensions, which were only 'deferred wages.' In Italy, he pointed out, strike action had achieved pension increases, and, as a result of mass strike action the Italians got their pensions earlier than in Britain.

Turning to savage Jones, Cooley said: 'It is time we ended the grotesque annual spectacle of Old Age Pensioners around the doors of Congress. They don't want sympathy—they want our support and the backing of our great industrial power. It's no use speakers coming to the rostrum, working themselves up to a verbal orgasm and then concluding by saying they're not prepared to do anything.'

'We refuse to withdraw our amendment because we believe that experience demonstrates that a campaign of this kind without the threat of industrial action would be a sham and serve only to deceive the Old Age Pensioners.'

Anderson of NALGO replied for the General Council, begging Cooley to withdraw his amendment. 'Why should we strike for higher pensions?' he asked, 'when thousands of pensioners were never members of trade unions' (prolonged boos and abuse from the hall).

Jack Jones came to the rostrum wringing his hands. He was not against strikes on pensions, he said, but 'at this stage' they were not a good idea. He too pleaded with DATA to withdraw their amendment, but his pleas were turned down.

DATA delegates shouted for a card vote on their amendment, but after a peremptory show of hands, the amendment was defeated by acclamation.

REALITY

These two occasions were the key points of the week because they lit up the dark reality behind the glitter of the 'big debates' and the 'radicalism' of the left trade union leaders.

It was not, I imagine an accident, that the report in the Communist Party's Morning Star of the pensions debate did not even mention the DATA amendment, and that the very full coverage of the registration debate in Tribune did not make any reference to the motion from SOGAT Division A.

Almost everything else at the Congress

was irretrievably dull or dismal. On Monday, Mr. Ian Mikardo gave the 'fraternal greetings' from the Labour Party. He devoted all of his long speech to the Common Market, which plumbed the depths of narrow nationalism and reformism.

After reciting a long list of all the wonderful goods and services which were available outside the Common Market ('the best leather goods in Austria, the best beer in Denmark' etc. etc.) he went on to say that if it wasn't for the beastly Frogs, the wonderful Concorde project would have finished much earlier. Fortunately, the debate on the Common Market in the Congress itself managed to hold itself, if marginally, above the gutter.

Something of a record was set up by Sir Frederick Hayday who made a 15-minute statement on Northern Ireland for the General Council without once mentioning internment.

CONDEMNED

Two other, smaller matters, summed up the dynamism and courage of the General Council. Tom Parker, of the National League of the Blind and Disabled, made a fine speech on the inadequacy of three-wheeled vehicles for disabled people. The vehicles, he said, were hard to drive, they were buffeted by winds, and easily overturned, leaving their inmates trapped since the cars only had one sliding door.

They condemned disabled people to travel alone, and did not even have a spare wheel. It would cost about £40 extra to equip disabled people with proper, four-wheeled small family cars, which would make an enormous difference to their lives.

Tom Parker has made this speech before, and the General Council has even 'looked into the matter' and 'raised it with the Department of Health' for the past ten years.

It was all very ritualistic. Tom Parker got a polite round of applause (a blind man, after all). He made an excellent speech, well-applauded. Lord Cooper had something nice to say about him, and then conference passed on to next business. No one ever asked why the mighty General Council could not even win the most marginal of reforms.

With all the discussions dealing with social services it was the same story. A shrinking service, an angry speaker, a lot of applause, possibly a few cliches from the General Council and then on to next business.

The shallowness, emptiness and complacency of the General Council in the face of the most relentless class attack since the war was there for all to see.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS' AUTUMN WEEKEND RALLY

Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Centre, Skegness
15, 16, 17 October

Sessions include:

Perspectives for Western Capitalism: John Palmer
Towards a Revolutionary Socialist Party: Duncan Hallas
The International Movement: Tony Cliff
Entertainment by Alex Glasgow and others
Adults £4.50. Reduced rates for children

Write to: Jenny Davison, 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

ETU ELECTIONS — HEADS I WIN, TAILS YOU LOSE ...

WHEN Scottish members of the Electricians and Plumbers Union voted for a new executive councillor in June, left-wing candidate Charlie Montgomery had a 600 majority over his right-wing rival Bill Blairford, the sitting executive member. The rank and file had made their demo-

by an Electrician

cratic choice and Montgomery should have taken up his new full-time post after the next meeting of the union executive.

But things don't run that smoothly in the ETU/PTU, particularly when the winner of

an election is a left winger. The election has beaten all others, even in this union, for 'strange' goings-on.

Nominations for the vacant position were first called for in September 1970 with the result due at the end of the year. But when Montgomery started pulling in a large number of nominations, including one from Blairford's own



Frank Chapple, ETU Secretary: his comfortable election victory shows many sparks still have illusions in their leaders

branch, the executive had to act. This took the form of a trumped-up charge that accused Montgomery of attending an unofficial demonstration against the Joint Industry Board—the management-union scheme for controlling workers in electrical contracting—conveniently ignoring the fact that another 1000 sparks were on the demo as well. Predictably, when the charge was heard, Montgomery was found guilty and expelled from the union.

Played havoc

Then, in some haste, the executive called for nominations for a new election. But the left was not slow in reacting and after a short court case, Montgomery won a High Court injunction saying that he was wrongfully expelled and that no election could be held without his name on the ballot paper.

The executive reluctantly had to accept this ruling and in due course the ballot papers were issued. But the Post Office strike played havoc with the election and again new papers had to be issued, which resulted in Montgomery's June election, hailed by the left as a breakthrough.

But the union bosses had other ideas. Blairford was naturally upset at losing his £3,000 a year job and complained about 'interference' in the ballot. He pointed to leaflets produced by the rank and file sparks' paper Flashlight.

The executive selected an impartial group of three officials to investigate the allegations. The group met stewards, rank and file and officials. They decided there had been interference from

supporters of both candidates and recommended by two to one that the election result should stand.

This was not the result the executive expected. Contrary to the inquiry team's findings, the executive on a majority vote declared the election 'null and void' and have called for new nominations. This puts sparks and plumbers back where they were a year ago, with still no executive councillor for Scotland.

All this takes place at a crucial time for the ETU/PTU leadership, with opposition to General Secretary Frank Chapple from inside the executive council beginning to harden and re-elections due for most executive council areas.

But much more work must be done at rank and file level. In the recent election for General Secretary, Chapple won a comfortable victory and there are a large number of sparks and plumbers with illusions about the union's leaders.

Word must reach them about just what democracy means in the ETU/PTU. It means that opponents of the executive can take part in elections and move resolutions at conference, but if by any chance they win elections or succeed with conference resolutions, then democracy is not on.

The opposition free only as long. Already resolutions Rules Revision propose radical members more of order by the ground is set for battle.

The left-wing Montgomery rally point, but must not be alone.

Union branches the country—and PTU branches concerned with unions—should Charlie Montgomery Scottish executive Write to the TUC protesting in the ETU/PTU more militant discussed.

Determined

Rule change members participation union's business for at conference For a re-structure council with participation.

For election. Annual's political decisions to be executive.

Area committee formed.

The ETU/PTU shaky, but it will campaign involve to finally put the control. It is a fought and won

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:

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Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling

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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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Fulham/Greenford/Havering/Harrow/
Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/
Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/
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Hill/Reading/Richmond/Stoke
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Wandsworth/Watford/Victoria

I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name

Address

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

Private nursing racket milking Health Service

AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY RACKET is milking the National Health Service of precious funds and helping to keep nursing wages low and conditions bad.

The Health Service, starved of funds for years, has fallen victim to sharp operators.

The NHS has enormous trouble recruiting nurses because of miserable pay and convent-style discipline. The agencies have stepped into the gap by virtue of a loophole in Health Service rules.

No limit

While Hospital Management Boards are not allowed to pay their own nurses more than the statutory rate, there is no limit to the fees they can give to outside agents.

The agencies take advantage of this by charging rates way above the wages the NHS pays. For instance, a State Registered Nurse working directly for the service gets a maximum of 54½p an hour.

SW Reporter

The agencies demand 77p an hour for the same job. They skim as much as £11.20 a week into their own pockets.

And while the agency nurses do get more than NHS girls, they get no holiday pay and many of them have to fork out for their own National Insurance.

'Nurse Trading' is good business. One of the agencies—the innocent-sounding British Nursing Association—is owned by Allied Investments.

AI's chairman is Frank Taylor, Tory MP for Manchester Moss Side. Mr. Taylor's interest in medicine can be seen by his profession—he is a chartered accountant.

The BNA's profits up to April were £83,711. Directors have to struggle along on £6,940 between them and shareholders get £26,581.

It's an expanding trade. One agency couldn't tell me how many nurses were on its books because the numbers

were always going

plained about 'all the

Other firms a include Trumps; BUPA is a set-up to jump Health Service.

It calls itself a firm and siphons out of the NHS private patients.

Ha

All of these fi

tinued bad condit their own staff. Service recruitment The NHS, in constant attack, That is why the To they are willing private sharks help

Back in the and engineers against Tory attac need for action Service is evenst was then.

'Please, miss, can I go to the Boer War slum in the playground?'

PETER HITCHENS LOOKS AT THE SCANDAL OF BRITAIN'S SCHOOLS

'...School D. Original 1915 outside toilets—oil stove functional and not very pleasant.' ...School A. 76 years old due for demolition, one exit for four classrooms, no decoration or non-essential repairs being done.'

THESE ARE JUST TWO reports from one borough in London. They were made by teachers for the survey 'Working Conditions in Schools', published by the National Union of Teachers.

They are typical. In fact, if anything, they are less appalling than the general situation. Tens of thousands of children spend their schooldays in classrooms built before the Boer War.

One London teacher told me that while modern teaching methods cannot work without room for staff and children to move about freely, many primary schools are forced to cram pupils into cell-like classrooms, where they can hardly stand up, let alone walk about. And this kind of thing isn't confined to Primary Schools.

I heard of one secondary school, built for 200, that has to cater for 500 children. Desks are so close together that a teacher who wants to get to the back of the class has to clamber over desks to get there.

And if one of the children is needed at the front of the class it involves a mountaineering expedition across desks and seats that holds up work and reduces teaching to a farce.

This is only the surface of the problem. Some schools have no soundproofing and children have to have two lessons for the price of one whether they want them or not.

Unheated

Other schools have no staff-rooms. Teachers cannot even discuss their work with one another.

There is more than simple inconvenience and disruption involved.

Schools are split in two by main roads. Outside lavatories freeze solid. Victorian boilers leave classrooms virtually unheated.

In one primary school, the playground is little bigger than a lavatory cubicle, and there is no lavatory. Children have to trudge in convoys to the nearby vicarage for that.

And there is danger, too. Schools are forced to rely on risky paraffin heaters in winter. First aid kits are not supplied and have to be bought out of money that should be used for books and stationery.

In the NUT report the authors stress the contrast between conditions for teachers and children and those for office and catering

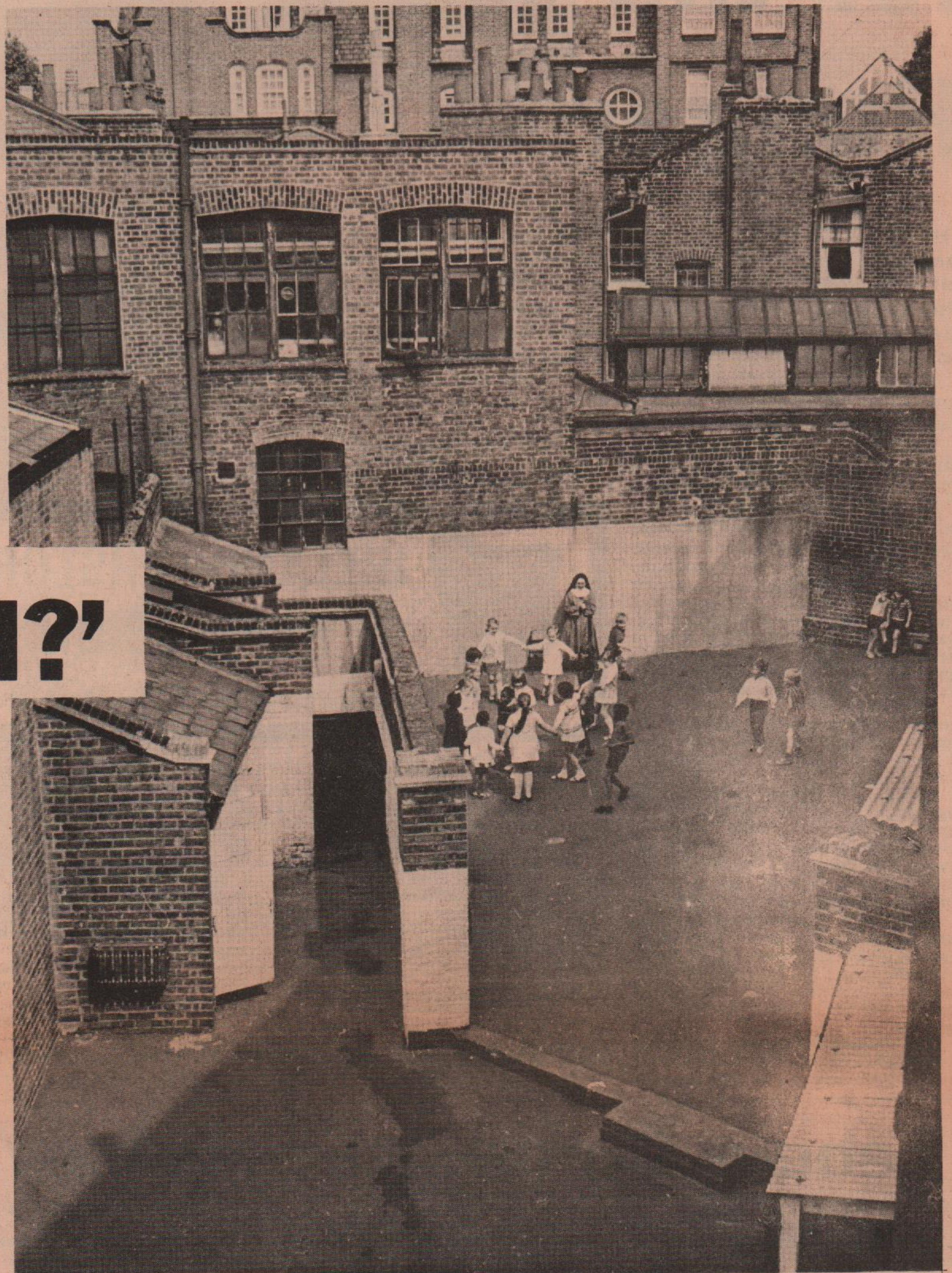
staff. Non-teaching staff are covered by the Shops and Offices Act—an extension of the Factory Acts. Teaching staff and pupils are not.

This leads to ridiculous situations. One headmaster was forced to work in a small corner of his office so that his secretary could have the legally required working space.

The NUT report makes much of this kind of thing. What it completely fails to do is understand it.

The Factory Acts were not given out of the kindness of the government's heart. They were fought for.

And workers still have a con-



'Playtime' in a London school: overflowing lavatories, small play area and sunlight excluded by surrounding factories

stant struggle against employers who ignore safety regulations.

The 'Statutory Instrument' that is supposed to govern conditions in schools is not even legally enforceable. And the NUT's report was rejected without hesitation by Margaret Thatcher, the Education Secretary.

Paltry

In a statement replying to the NUT, Mrs Thatcher dismisses the survey and offers a paltry £173 million over FOUR YEARS to modernise slum schools. Nothing at all is to be spent on secondary schools.

It is the job of the NUT to fight the government and to expose the atrocious conditions in our schools.

But at the same time we must remember that, for the working class, school has never been much more than a parade ground with a roof on—a place to 'learn' how to get up early, obey bells and respect authority.

All a kid has to know is how to read the employers' newspapers, add up and sign his name and he's ready for the narrow world outside. The less he thinks, the better.

This is not an accident, or an act of God. It's part of a system

where people are only valued for the profit they produce. And so the only education they get will be an education in how to produce more profit for someone else.

Stronger

The only solution is to defeat the system of profit that we live under. But nobody ever defeated anything by waiting for it to fall down. It must be fought.

And if we can get rid of places like school D and school A then we will be that much stronger when we come to take on the system that built them.

Just off the press ...an important analysis of events in East and West Pakistan

The blood on Yahya's hands...

The struggle of the people of Bangla Desh for independence goes on, despite the bloody massacre waged against them by the West Pakistan army of President Yahya Khan. Nigel Harris outlines the background to the events of the last eight bitter months and suggests what action can be taken by the socialist and labour movements of the West to aid the Bengali liberation movement.

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Murderous brutality prepares for the Great Hunger

THE UNITED IRISH revolt of 1798 had so terrified the Irish propertied classes that they had surrendered the large degree of self government they had won and submitted to foreign rule again. They preferred a foreign tyranny that would guarantee their right to exploit the Irish peasants and workers to an independent Ireland won by a peasant revolt led by revolutionary democrats.

The poor were abandoned to their fate. The full fury of unchecked landlord rule was let loose on the peasantry. Evictions and rack-renting flourished, backed by the bayonets of the British garrison.

'Sedition', that is any kind of opposition by working people, was murderously repressed. The economic situation of the mass of the people steadily worsened. The foundations of 'the great hunger' were being laid.

The predominantly Protestant parts of Ulster were a partial exception. Political repression was as savage as anywhere, more savage if anything.

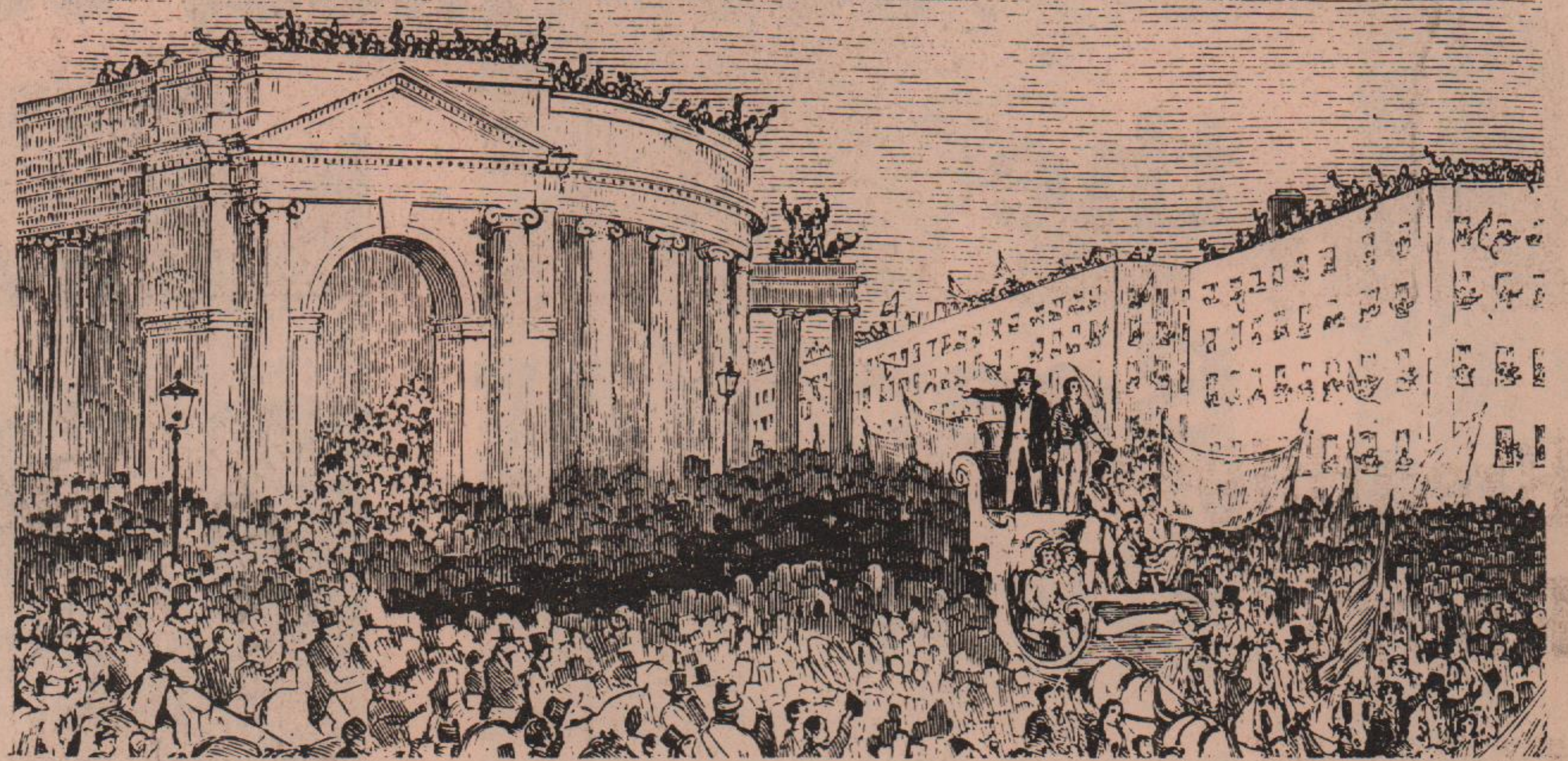
But economically the Protestant tenant farmers benefitted from the need of the Tories to create a 'minority problem', to sharpen religious antagonisms in order to prevent the reappearance of a nationwide opposition such as had threatened to destroy their rule in 1783 and 1798.

The 'Ulster custom', which gave tenant farmers a right to ownership or compensation in any improvements they had made in their holdings, was preserved and consolidated.


Initially the Orange Order was an organisation of riff-raff officered by disreputable aristocrats. Now, given an economic basis and systematically encouraged by the government, it began to gain serious support amongst the Protestant sections of the population.

Along with the growth of Orangism came the movement for 'Catholic Emancipation'. Daniel O'Connell, 'the Liberator', a Catholic lawyer and landlord, effectively channelled discontent into this issue in the late 1820s and worked up a considerable agitation.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1793 had given Catholics the vote for the Westminster parliament on the same terms as



Huge demonstration in Dublin greeting O'Connell the liberator



IRELAND'S HISTORY OF REPRESSION

by JAMES WALKER Part three

Protestants but had denied them the right to sit in parliament. O'Connell was elected for County Clare in 1829, giving notice that he would not take the Protestant oath required of MPs.

The government gave way and introduced legislation that simultaneously admitted Catholic MPs and took the vote away from the poorer electors—the '40 shilling freeholders.' The mass of the tenantry remained without the vote as before.

Divert discontent

O'Connell, who James Connolly described as 'the most bitter and unscrupulous enemy of trade unionism Ireland has yet produced', was the first and most successful

of the 'Green Tory' leaders who consciously developed Catholic sectarianism as a means of diverting mass discontent into relatively safe channels.

It was not easy. The effect of the Tory reign of terror after 1798 was wearing off. A new generation had grown up. The 'emancipation' had, of course, brought no benefit whatever to the Catholic peasants but the agitation for it had aroused them.

An incident in a parish in County Carlow in 1831 sparked off the 'tithe war', a mass resistance to the payment of tithes to the Anglican Church. The strike against tithes spread

At Newtownbarry, in 1831, 12 tenants were killed and many wounded in a

clash with troops employed to confiscate cattle in default of tithe payment. At Carrickshock, in the same year, 11 policemen were killed and 17 wounded in a similar clash.

The disorders became so serious that in 1832 tithes (a tenth of the produce) were converted into a fixed annual payment. Mass resistance continued. So did the regular shootings and bayonetings.

Critical years

The government was forced to retreat again and the tithe collection by force was abandoned in practice after 1835 and the charge transferred from tenant to landlord in 1839. This turmoil was the background to O'Connell's shift to the 'left'. He raised the demand for repeal of the Union Act of 1801 and the restoration of the Irish parliament.

The thirties and forties were critical years for the rulers of Britain. In 1832 the old Tory clique had been pushed out of power and replaced by Whigs who meant to head off revolution by sharing political power with the middle classes and especially with the up and coming capitalists.

This was the object of the Reform Bill of 1832 and it was successful. The industrial workers and agricultural

labourers, voteless as before, soon found themselves worse off than under the old regime.

The working class reaction was Chartism, a democratic movement fighting for a new Reform Bill in the interests of the workers. Two of the best known Chartist leaders, Feargus O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien, were themselves Irish and the movement supported repeal of the Union.

O'Connell came to hate and fear the Chartists and the spreading of Chartism to Ireland itself was a major factor in pushing him to launch the 'Repeal' agitation.

He soon found himself riding a tiger. The agitation 'stirred Ireland to its roots'. Monster meetings, of a size not seen before or since, were held in county after county. The government, in spite of its knowledge of O'Connell's conservatism, became seriously alarmed. Millions of people were drawn in to political activity. Even Orangemen began to be infected and to join the Repeal Association on the understanding that they were free to advocate a federal connection with England as a substitute for the Union.

No gratitude

By 1843 it was clear that either the movement must be destroyed quickly or repeal granted. O'Connell shrank from the struggle.

A huge 'All Ireland' rally had been called for 5 October 1843 on the historic battlefield of Clontarf. The government banned it. O'Connell immediately gave way and used all the resources of his organisation to prevent clashes with the troops.

His prestige was great enough to halt the movement and save the Union. Naturally, once the danger was past, he earned no gratitude from the authorities but a prison sentence for sedition. It did something to restore his credit but the repeal agitation was over.

The last throw of the 'left wing' of the Repealers, Smith O'Brien's rebellion of 1848, was only a pale echo of the 1798. The 'Young Irelanders' who led it put property rights first.

The massive popular support for the repeal agitation had owed a lot to the desperate economic position of the peasantry. That now reached its limit. The majority were on the verge of starvation. In 1845 the potato crop failed for the first time. The 'Great Hunger', the famine of 1845-49, had begun.

The famine was man made. There was enough food in Ireland to feed the population—if they had had the money to buy it. At this time the country was still a major exporter of wheat.

Million dead

In 1845 the official records show that 515 people died of starvation and 3,250,000 quarters of wheat was exported. By 1847, when 21,770 deaths by starvation were recorded, wheat exports were still over two million quarters and even in 1848 when nearly 300,000 died of hunger 1,826,132 quarters of grain was sent out of Irish ports. The sacred rights of private property were resolutely upheld by the British government, supported by the O'Connellites.

On the eve of the famine the population was estimated at over six million. As a direct result of the famine and the typhus that came with it, more than a million Irish men, women and children died, a quarter of million emigrated to England and Scotland and over a million left for the USA.

Post-famine Ireland was a ruined country. Except for the North East corner, where the linen industry was expanding and shipbuilding was soon to be introduced, the whole country became a vast reservoir of surplus labour, barely kept alive by subsistence agriculture and available when required by the expanding industries of Britain and North America.

Labour Committee against Internment

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, demand:

1. Immediate publication of the names of those being held without trial in Northern Ireland.
2. A statement of the reasons for the arrest in every case.
3. An independent inquiry by MPs and trade unions into allegations of brutality against prisoners.
4. Inspection of places of confinement with right of access to all detainees by British MPs.
5. Release of all detainees or right of trial for all not released.

- Frank Allaun, MP Labour Party NEC
- Sid Bidwell, MP
- Lord Brockway
- Richard Clements, Editor of Tribune
- Larry Connolly, Deputy Convenor (AUEW)
- Joseph Lucas, Birmingham
- Don Cook, Convenor (AUEW)
- London Transport Acton Works
- S O Davies, MP
- J Dempsey, MP
- Bernadette Devlin, MP
- Eddie Doggett, Stevedores and Dockers Union executive
- Tom Driberg, MP Labour Party NEC
- Bob Edwards, MP General Secretary Chemical Workers Union
- Bowes Egan
- Tom Ellis, MP
- Ted Fletcher, MP
- Vincent Flynn, General Secretary SOGAT Div A (in personal capacity)
- Paul Foot
- Will Griffiths, MP
- Duncan Hallas, National Secretary International Socialists
- W W Hamilton, MP, Vice-Chairman Parliamentary Labour Party
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- Beryl Huffingley, Secretary Leeds Trades Council
- Hugh Jenkins, MP
- Richard Kelly, MP
- Arthur Latham, MP
- Joan Lester, MP Labour Party NEC
- Jim Light, Secretary 1/4 TGWU (Docks)
- Albert Luck, SOGAT Div A executive
- Bill MacGregor, NEC National Union of Journalists (in personal capacity)
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- Joseph Lucas, Birmingham
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- John Mathieson, Secretary Kirkaldy Trades Council
- Archie MacMillan, Seafield Branch NUM Committee
- John Nielson, Chairman Cowdenbeath Trades Council
- Colin Cameron, Assistant Secretary Kirkaldy Trades Council
- Ian D Chiswull, FOC David Watt & Co Dunfermline NGA
- Roy Collier, Convenor BOC Harlow
- Christine Overy, Secretary Harlow Trades Council
- Michael Hanlon, Secretary Harlow UPW
- Cllr Tom Farr
- Cllr Chris Cackett
- Cllr Tom Topley
- Joe Black, Chairman Clyde District Confederation EETU/PTU Official
- Sam Gilmore, EETU/PTU Shop Steward UCS
- Saltburn Marske, LPYS
- Ray Carter, MP
- Stevenage Trades Council
- Ken Coates)
- Chris Farley) Bertrand Russell
- Ken Fleet) Peace Foundation
- M E Smith, EETU Convenor Ferranti Ltd Hallinwood
- Stanley Clinton Davis, MP
- Bruce Tidy, National Committee member National Organisation of Labour Students
- Alex Brown, Convenor, Bennie's Lifts Peterborough
- W T Browning, Convenor AEI Heating Ltd Peterborough
- C Harris, Senior Shop Steward GMWU Hemel Hempstead
- R Chandler, GMWU Secretary Hemel Hempstead
- R H (Bert) Edwards, EC member Harrow Trades Council
- Cllr R G Aitken, Secretary Harrow Trades Council
- Michael Rooney, TGWU official Regional Chairman Clann na-h Eirean
- Gordon Ashbary, AUEW Doncaster Monkbridge Forge Combine Secretary
- Gordon Wray, ETU Branch Chairman Leeds
- L Karus, Chairman Shop Stewards Committee Bradford
- Peter Plouviez, assistant general secretary, British Actors' Equity (in personal capacity).

ADVERTISEMENT

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!



Breathless Polly crosses the tracks

A Working Life by Polly Toynbee: Hodder and Stoughton £2.

IT MAY HAVE been the search for journalistic fame, or it may have been the strain of being married to the political correspondent of the Guardian, but something made Miss Polly Toynbee abandon the comforts of home and spend several months doing menial jobs in industry to 'find out what it was like'.

Now for the price of £2, any man coming off shift work can curl up with Miss Toynbee and relive those happy hours spent on the track or in front of the blast furnace.

The book is filled with breathless girlish discoveries about capitalist Britain. We learn that among the workers of Joseph Lucas's 'an elected union official ranks higher in people's minds than the firm's selected overseer'.

Not only that, but 'most of the time the unions are there to ensure that the workers go on getting the same slice of the cake, to ensure that their wages keep up with the standard of living. There are very few strikes that are actually demanding more.'

Miss Toynbee was shocked to watch a Youth Employment Officer at work, stuffing hopeful young school leavers into dead end jobs, teaching 16 year olds how to prepare themselves for a lifetime of exploitation.

And she writes with feeling about Reg Atkinson, who worked 52 years for Steel Peech and Tozer in Rotherham, lost all the fingers on his right hand in an accident and was scrapped at 69 with 26 shillings a week pension from the firm.

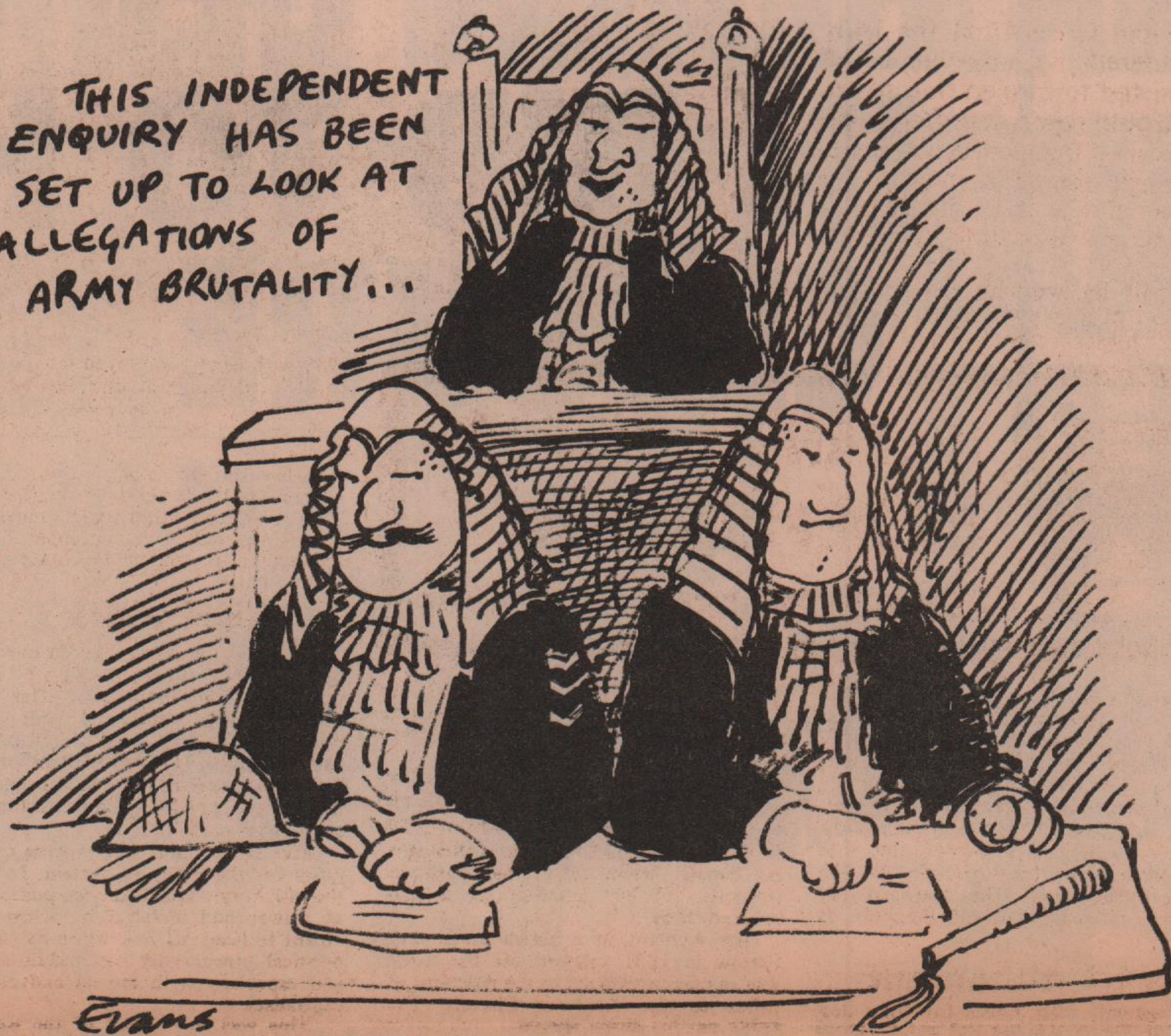
Throughout the book, the working class appear as a lifeless mass who simply grit their teeth every morning and prepare for another day of working to make someone else a millionaire. There is only one account of a strike, which is presented as an aimless and futile affair.

But towards the end she suddenly gets quite lyrical. 'If all the people who have had little control over their destiny and are now in dead end jobs, living in horrible towns all over the country, suddenly became aware that their intelligence had been more or less determined at the age of three by their poor environment, that their education had been geared to streaming them into appropriate categories to fill the needs of industry and society, that however comprehensive their children's education might be they stand no real chance of having a very different life either, that their standard of living will rise at an increasingly slow rate, and that the gap between themselves and the rich is likely to widen and not to narrow, there would be revolution.'

She is, of course, warning her readers rather than mobilising them, and in any case she doesn't think the revolution will happen because 'the facts are too unbearable to face up to.' We'll see about that.

Christopher Hitchens

THIS INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY HAS BEEN SET UP TO LOOK AT ALLEGATIONS OF ARMY BRUTALITY...



COTTONS COLUMN

ONE SAD fact of journalistic life is that most labour correspondents have little or no sympathy with the trade union movement that provides them with their bread and butter. Highly paid and underworked, they view with lofty middle-class cynicism the efforts of workers to organise and improve their conditions.

Mr John Torode, the Guardian's labour man, is no exception to the rule, perhaps just a shade more lofty and cynical than the rest. It is a cynicism underscored by a firm belief in the conspiracy theory of industry—that 'industrial unrest' is entirely unconnected with the conflict between employers and employed but is furiously fomented by agitators and wreckers.

(Torode is a bit hazy about who the wreckers are: when the now editor of Socialist Worker joined the magazine New Society a few years back, Torode beckoned him into his office and solemnly warned him about the 'Trotskyite menace' in industry.)

Now, from the pinnacle of success at The Guardian, Torode argues the case for the Industrial Relations Act, an argument in keeping with that 'liberal' paper's steady Presbyterian trudge to the right, in particular its support for internment in Northern Ireland. In between his TUC reports for the Guardian last week, Torode found time to dash off a 'colour' piece for the New Statesman on the Blackpool proceedings.

Why all the fuss and bother about registration? asked the kipper-tied, lank-haired Torode. 'Registration is a device common to most Western democracies (!) and is designed to bring union rules under the general supervision of the law. Under the Carr Act it is not much more than



JONES: Charity begins at Transport House

a formality—one of the mildest and least offensive provisions of the Act.'

Thank God for John Torode, Robert Carr must pray at nights. How useful to have a friendly scribe on both a 'liberal' daily and a 'socialist' weekly, arguing the case for emasculating the trade union movement.

Torode complains in his Statesman piece that when he ordered a pot of tea in his hotel it arrived smelling of disinfectant and the admonished waitress seemed quite unabashed.

She should have made him drink it. His mouth needs washing out.

WHILE Jack Jones was ranting to TUC delegates about the plight of Old Age Pensioners, his delegation was being lobbied by Albert Heal, 82 year old former York area secretary of the TGWU who has been on a £7 a week union pension since 1954 and has appealed unsuccessfully for an increase for many years. The TGWU has £22 millions in its general fund. Jack's all right.

Offside

THE 'GET-TOUGH' policy of soccer referees is hitting even at trade union democracy. The Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union is one of the small band of brothers in favour of Common Market entry.

Many branches disagree with the executive's policy and the chairman of the London Branch, Eddie Hayes, wrote to the union journal The Clerk outlining the anti-entry position.

Clerk editor Peter Godfrey got agreement from CAWU general secretary Roy Grantham to print the letter in the August issue along with an official statement of union policy. Both appeared but the luckless Godfrey was hauled before the General Purposes Committee and admonished for giving 'such prominence' to material against union policy.

Godfrey was so outraged at this attempt to stifle the members' views that he has resigned. And where, patient readers, do the soccer refs come in to all this?

The president of CAWU and the man most angered by the publication of Eddie Hayes' letter is Dennis Howell, former FA referee and the ludicrously-titled Minister of Sport in Wilson's less-than-sporting government. Howell is a prominent and enthusiastic pro-Marketeer.

CAWU members should call 'foul' and make Derek Dougan an honorary member.

SIR ARTHUR YOUNG, you may recall, was much admired as a humane and progressive chap when he took over the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the behest of bluff, smiling Uncle Jim Callaghan.

Just how impartial Sir Arthur was towards the Ulster minority can, perhaps, be judged from this little reminiscence. During the bloody struggles in Palestine in the late 1940s, plain Arthur Young was head of the British police force and he posted the following humane and progressive notice in the officers' club at the Beisan Police Station: NO DOGS OR JEWS ADMITTED.



THE DAY Before Yesterday (ITV 11.05, Thursday) is a fairly typical historical series which deals in documentary fashion with the period 1945-63. Anyone who sees programmes such as All Our Yesterdays and The Fifties will at least enjoy a look at the old newsreels. They ramble on week after week. The Day Before Yesterday does have more of a unity to it.

But what kind of unity? We see the world largely through the myths of the capitalist class. But also we have a 'tailoring' of reality to suit these all-too-prevalent myths and without which they would dissolve. But there are some mighty bulges in the suit which no amount of tailoring can really hide.

Last Thursday's programme dealt with a very ill-fitting garment—the foreign policy of the 1945-51 Labour government. I certainly sat up when I heard some mild criticism of distortion in some 1948 newsreel about British troops in Palestine, about how the newsreel was glossing over the failure of British government policy there. Thus even this very conservative programme (which had a Tory historical adviser) has to admit the principle that the news can be distorted in Britain.

The media today however is still as biased, but not as crudely so. It would not lay it on so thick about the 'British Ambassador, the British Tommy'. But basically the old newsreel commentary on the troops in Palestine was as familiar as if it were spoken in a Northern Irish accent.

Imperialism in general is usually referred to on the TV as merely a state of mind which only our elders suffered from—a sort of delusion of grandeur. Or worst still it is redefined as 'responsibility' or 'commitments' to some country which in truth is exploited by imperialism. This programme combined both these errors.

Bloodbath

But it seemed unable to sustain another myth—that Britain's imperialism has usually been a peaceful affair with a peaceful ending of direct colonial rule. British rule in India ended in a gigantic blood-bath between Hindus and Moslems brought about by British policy. The events in India with its 500 million people were skated over double-quick. Nor were they dealt with very truthfully in the 12 hourly and dreary episodes on Lord Mountbatten (who was Viceroy in India at the time).

And yet the Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, is praised for embodying typical British virtues of 'stubbornness, commonsense and stability'. He is seen as being conciliatory in his dealings with the Russians. Russians, by the way, are almost invariably seen as 'inflexible' or 'belligerent'. Another vulgar prejudice is to see the Chinese as 'inscrutable' in some supposedly 'oriental' fashion. Bevin's search for a settlement was on the basis of British and American imperialism which no longer coincided with the interests of the Russian bureaucracy.

Another excuse for praising the past actions of politicians is to magnify some measly reform that they have conceded. This was duly done in The Changing Years of David Lloyd George (BBC2, Sunday). As for the present actions of politicians, especially their nastier policies, another unspoken rule holds true nearly always—don't ask them any awkward questions, unless the point is not too important. Such was the Man in the News interview with Brian Faulkner (Sunday, ITV).

Eyeless in Gaza (Sunday, BBC2, 9.20) is an adaptation of an Aldous Huxley novel about a pacifist in the 1930s. Looks very interesting.

Phil Hall

Socialist Worker

Victory for Lucas engineers

BIRMINGHAM:- The three-weeks-old strike of 300 Lucas engineers is over. It was caused by the deliberate breach of an agreement and eight-months' delaying tactics by the company.

The strike began when Lucas—which last year gave £12,000 to the Tory Party—refused to honour a parity agreement that entitled the engineers to the same holiday pay as other skilled workers. The parity deal was agreed in 1968.

The company broke the agreement this year and when it refused to pay an extra £48 holiday money already given

by **ROGER ROSEWELL**

to the Tool Group, the engineers stopped work.

On Monday, with 13,000 car workers laid off, the strikers refused to carry out an AUEW executive instruction to return to work. The company then retreated and agreed to honour the holiday agreement.

Jack Lynch, the AUEW convenor, told me: 'This was an important issue of principle.'

The strike took place against the background of the new Industrial Relations Act.

The company was assisted by the local right-wing AUEW district organisation. It publishes an anonymous paper, *Datumline*, which condemned the strike and called it 'needless'.

A call for a one-day token stoppage throughout Midlands industry as a protest against rising unemployment was made at a meeting of 300 car industry shop stewards in Birmingham on Saturday.

Site workers strike after two sacked

LONDON:- 400 building workers are striking at Cubitt's Mondial House site in Upper Thames Street. They are demanding reinstatement for two men who were sacked for so-called 'industrial misconduct'.

A meeting on 6 September demanded that the two men be given their jobs back. Management refused and the workers took a unanimous decision to strike.

The site, for a £30million telecommunications building, has been worked for about a year and began with all the workers on the lump. Within six months it was organised and is one of the few 100 per cent trade union sites in the City.

Some time ago, the men began a campaign for better conditions. Management's answer was to send foremen to spy on men in the toilets and chivvy them out of the canteen.

Militants have been harassed and attempts have been made to isolate them by telling them that they are 'not working hard enough'.

Determined

The employers have even tried to use racism to split the workforce.

The men have treated all this with contempt. The sacking of the two carpenters brought things to a head, and the men are determined to win.

A local conciliation panel has supported the employers and the national board is not expected to be much help, either.

Site workers told *Socialist Worker*: 'We have no faith in the regional or the national panels. The only place to fight is here outside the gates'.

The three unions involved—ASW, TGWU and AUBTW have failed to support the strike in any way.

Contributions and messages of support to: c/o J Brady, 36 Shadwell Gardens London E1.

BLACK GEC CALL IN BID TO HALT CLOSURE

by **SW Reporter**

GLENROTHES, Fifeshire:- Workers at GEC's semi-conductors factory were told on Monday that their efforts to persuade the management to keep the factory open have been ignored.

Two GEC bosses, Mandl and Shriggley, arrived to tell the workers that closure was to go ahead next month.

Brian Young of ASTMS, who along with Eddie Street, also ASTMS, has led the fight, told me: 'We are furious at GEC management.'

'They have ignored our detailed proposals for keeping the factory open and they have totally disregarded union procedure in their efforts to tell workers the news of the closure.'

The workers staged a token walk-out on Monday afternoon following a mass meeting that rejected the GEC statement on closure.

Occupation?

Brian Young added: 'If we do not put up a united fight now, Weinstock (the GEC super-boss) will continue to pick off individual factories. It is essential that GEC is shown that we are no longer prepared to accept his right to throw workers on the dole.'

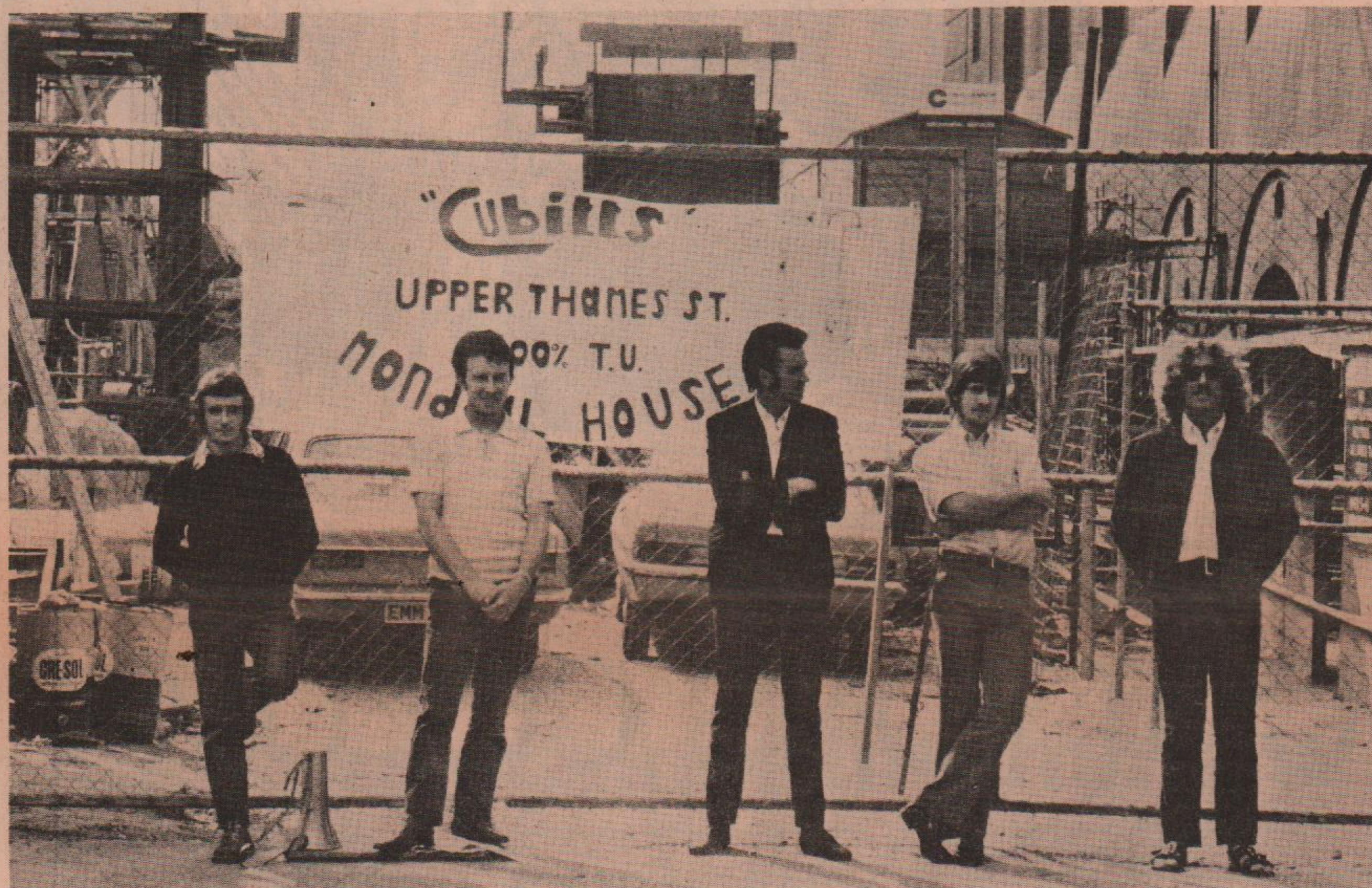
The question for workers at Glenrothes now is—how far are they prepared to go on fighting the closure?

There is general agreement that a 'work-in' is not on. All that is left is an occupation on the same lines as Plessey's in Alexandria—aimed at preventing GEC moving plant to the South.

Donations and messages to: Eddie Street, 14 Laverock Terrace, Glenrothes, Fife.

A meeting on Tuesday of GEC stewards from all Fife factories decided to ask the Scottish TUC to black all GEC products. The stewards also decided to ask the TGWU and the NUR to black the transfer of machinery from the Glenrothes factory. The TGWU immediately accepted the request.

The stewards will press for an early joint meeting of the four trades councils in Fife where a call will be made for a two-hour token strike of all Fife workers in support of the stand at GEC.



'The fight is here outside the gates'—pickets at the Mondial House site.

Boilermakers eight weeks without any strike pay

LOWESTOFT:- The strike by boilermakers at the Brooke Marine Shipyard is now in its eighth week.

The men have received no strike pay, even for the first four weeks when the strike was official. The union declared it unofficial after the men threw out a call by executive committee member Ted Williams to return to work without any firm offer from the company.

The dispute is over a wage claim and arose partly because another local yard pays £4.75 more than the Brooke Marine rate of £24.75.

The company claims it has no money—an argument it used only three months ago when rejecting a DATA claim. The DATA men got their £3 per week increase.

Though the union accepts what the company says, the men are not fooled.

The management seems out to smash the power of the boilermakers, who have been the only union to put up militant opposition to their policies.

A hardship fund has been set up and donations are urgently needed. Send to: Branch secretary A MacLean, 3 Longden Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

ALCAN DISPUTE GROWS

By **DAVE PEERS**

LYNEMOUTH, Northumberland:- The nine-week strike of electricians at the Alcan smelter site escalated into a national struggle last Friday.

Two big sites in Liverpool—the Inland Revenue offices and the teaching hospital—stopped work in support and sent a delegation to join their protest march through the streets of Newcastle.

Representatives from sites on Teesside, Huddersfield and London were also there, plus contracting electricians from the Newcastle area.

The 400 marchers crowded into the Connaught Hall after the march to hear speaker after speaker urge the need for a co-ordinated national campaign of guerrilla strike action in support of the Alcan men.

The meeting agreed to support the national conference called by the Contracting Action Committee in London for 3 October which would decide a campaign for a £1-an-hour rate for electricians in the construction industry.

At the site the contractors, N G Bailey, are attempting to introduce scab labour, advertising to replace the 390 electricians they have sacked. Several imported workers left when they discovered that there was a dispute but a dozen or so are still working.

Support and donations to Alcan Shop Stewards Committee, c/o Brian Walls, 67 Julian Avenue, Newcastle upon Tyne, 6.

Double blow as 12,000 workers join big walk-out

BRISTOL:- Workers at both Rolls-Royce and the British Aircraft Corporation walked out last Friday afternoon—the first time the factories have come out at the same time.

Six thousand Rolls-Royce workers stormed out in support of a 15 per cent cost of living increase.

An increase is due but the management have refused to talk—and a mass meeting answered them by declaring an overtime ban and a cut in the working week to 37½ hours by walking out on Friday afternoons.

A confrontation between white collar workers and the Rolls management is likely soon. The annual pay claim is coming up and last year they got only a trivial seven per cent—a 30 per cent demand is probable.

Six thousand BAC workers walked out at an hour's notice from their joint trade union committee.

It was one of a series of lightning strikes which aim to force the BAC bosses to negotiate over the 1600 sackings recently announced—and the best reply to the arrogant offer of jobs for those sacked—jobs from the bottom of the barrel.

Labour Party Conference
Public Debate

How to Fight the Tories

Stan Orme, MP and Norman Atkinson, MP (Tribune) versus Paul Foot and John Palmer (IS)
7.15pm. Thursday 7 October,
The Dome, New Road, Brighton.

NOTICES

KILBURN IS public meeting: Tony Cliff on UCS—how to win. Tuesday 21 Sept, 8pm, York Room, Anson Hall, Chichele Road NW2.

IS Women's Newsletter, July issue now reprinted price 5p available from A Paczuska. Contributions for OCTOBER issue should be sent NOW to Anna Paczuska, 43 Darlington St., Wigan, Lancs.

NATIONAL IS Women's meeting: Sat 25 September, 10am, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 on 'WNCC and Women's Lib movement'. Accommodation inquiries: Gill Nichol 01-348 3881.

ANY spare duplicators? One urgently needed in Peterborough. Write to John Broadbent 10a Cromwell Road, Peterborough.

UNEMPLOYMENT: is UCS the way to beat the dole queue? Spkrs Roger Rosewell and Reg Higginbotham, Golden Cross, Unicorn Hall, Redditch, Sat 18 Sept 7pm.

ERNEST MANDEL, secretary of the Fourth International speaking on The Common Market—what it is and how to fight it. Friday, 17 September 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, near Holborn. Organised by International Marxist Group.

SWANSEA IS: Red Clydeside and its history, Spkr Bob Hart, CUWU, Red Cow High St, Thurs 30 Sept 7.30pm.

ROOM available for 15 female in Golders Green from beginning of October, £2 a week, ring 458 6828.

HARLOW IS socialist day school: Nigel Harris on imperialism, Ross Pritchard on industry, Roger Protz on the revolutionary socialist party. Sat 18 Sept, Poplar Kitchens, Bush Fare, Harlow, 11am-5.30. Followed by barbecue and social.

DON'T forget Nigerian socialist library appeal. Books and pamphlets urgently needed. Send to 28 Manor Road, London N16.

HACKNEY IS public mtg on Ireland. Spkr. Eamonn McCann. Mon 20 Sept 8pm. Rose & Crown pub, cnr Albion Rd/Church St. N16. Bus: 73.

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