

Socialist Worker

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Grim reality of Heath's 'better tomorrow'

THIS IS TORY BRITAIN...



Ulster - new 'get tough' moves

by EAMONN McCANN

THE 219 internees in Northern Ireland were moved at the weekend to a camp at Long Kesh in Co Antrim. The camp is surrounded by barbed wire. Watch towers with machine gun emplacements are spread along the perimeter.

Searchlights illuminate the area at night and army patrols guard all access roads.

On Monday Prime Minister Faulkner said he signed internment orders only on those whom clear evidence indicted as members of the IRA. This is nonsense.

If such clear evidence existed the men would be hauled before the courts. The corrupt judicial system in Northern Ireland has never hesitated to imprison opponents of the regime even when evidence was far from clear.

On Tuesday Faulkner announced new 'get-tough' measures against civil disobedience. But the Catholic working-class areas have shown that they are prepared for a long haul. The rent and rates strike is still solid and is costing the state more than £60,000 a week.

The Creggan estate in Derry is still holding out with all barricades up after five weeks of almost non-stop fighting.

The Stormont cabinet is considering what it calls 'constitutional' reform. Proportional representation and the creation of a block of 10 Catholic senators are on the agenda.

No such measures have a chance of working even if they are approved at next week's tripartite talks between Heath, Lynch and Faulkner. The unconditional release of all internees has become the absolute minimum demand of the Catholic communities before they will even begin to talk.

An increasing number of Catholic workers are coming to realise that tinkering with the machinery of government offers no solution, that there can be no peace until we end the whole system that has spawned sectarianism.

2000 hear Bernadette

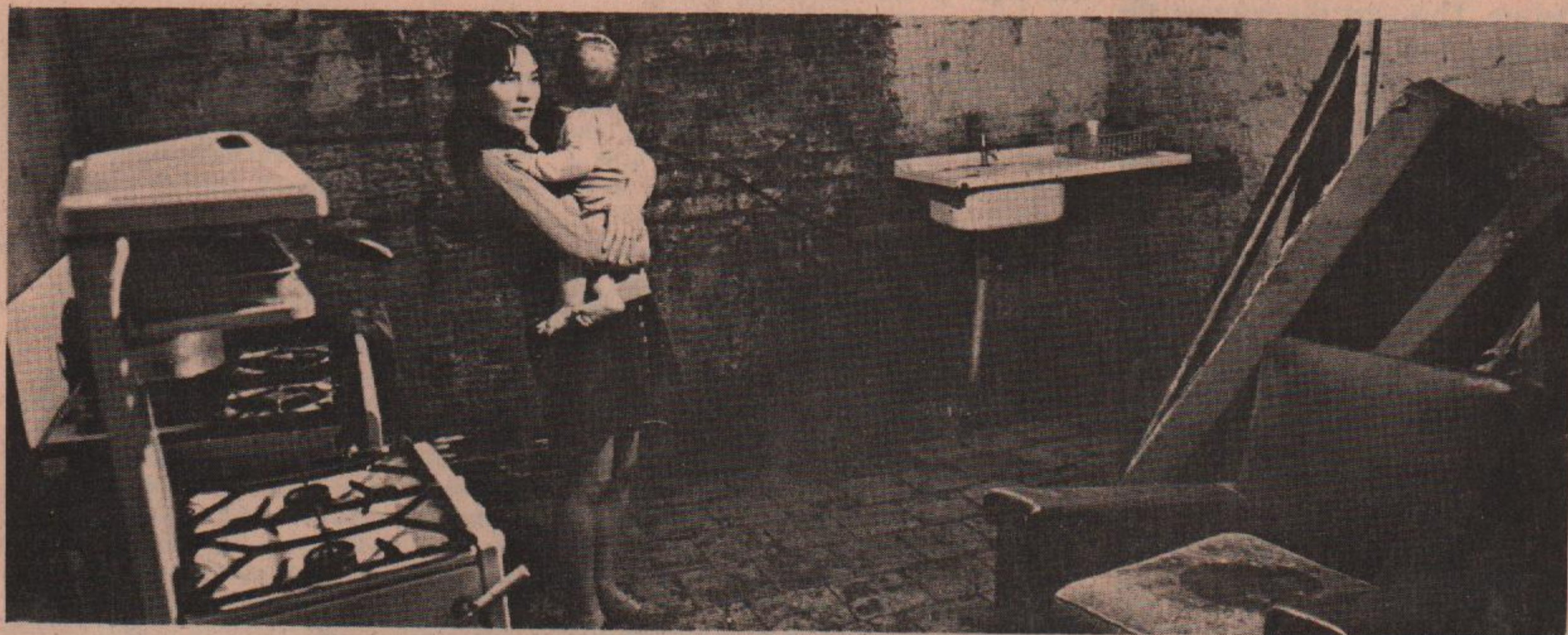
THE ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE in Britain ran a number of highly successful meetings in North London last Saturday. More than 2000 people turned up in Kilburn High Road to hear Bernadette Devlin, MP, tell them that the struggle in Ireland must be linked to the struggle in Britain.

She urged Irish workers while demonstrating their solidarity with those fighting in Ireland to 'get into the fight against the Industrial Relations Act, the Immigration Bill and to bring down the Heath government.'

The success of the meeting suggests that there exists a real possibility of winning workers, especially Irish workers, to the idea of a socialist solution to problems on both sides of the Irish sea.

500 people packed Camden town hall last Friday at a meeting called by the Labour Committee Against Internment. Speakers included Bernadette Devlin, MP, Eamonn McCann, John Palmer, Jock Stallard, MP, John Gray of the Anti-Internment League and John McGuffin, a member of People's Democracy, recently released from internment. A collection for the Irish struggle raised £140.

Speaking for the International Socialists, John Palmer said that while IS supported the LCAI, its demands did not go far enough. IS fought for the unconditional release of ALL political prisoners and the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland.



FIVE MILLION families live below the poverty line. That's one in 12 of the population.

1,836,000 houses in England and Wales—one eighth of the total—are unfit for human habitation. A staggering total of 4,700,000 houses are in an unsatisfactory condition and will be unfit in a few years' time.

In Scotland there are 273,000 unfit dwellings.

These dreadful figures, produced in a new Shelter report called *Condemned*, rip aside the image of ever-increasing prosperity painted by press and television.

This is the grim reality of Heath's 'better tomorrow'. It's better all right—for the slum landlords, the money-lenders, the profiteers from other people's, working people's, misfortune.

Look at those figures again. Add to them more than 900,000 on the dole. And rising rents, prices and welfare costs.

Add to them the human cost of being without work, of living in stinking, festering slums without hope of a decent home, paying anything from £3 to £10 for one peeling, damp room.

Think, in particular, of the effect on

children brought up in these conditions—and now deprived of their school milk by Mrs Margaret Thatcher.

This is Tory Britain. Not 30 years ago. Today. And we mustn't forget our Labour friends. They helped create that Britain, too.

It is a Britain where working and living conditions are being callously driven down in order that the tiny minority who own industry can make bigger profits. Fewer houses, fewer

schools are built. Families are condemned to eke out their lives in buildings condemned 40 years ago.

The Shelter report spells out the situation. It has no answer. 'Housing is simple,' it says. 'It is just a matter of land and bricks and money and technique. We have all those things.'

Oh, no, we don't. THEY own the land, the bricks and the money. Slums, poverty and unemployment won't be removed until WE take the land, the

bricks and the money from THEM.

These pictures, these facts, should make you angry. Angry that a system can do this to human beings.

Angry—and determined to fight to build a movement that will make sure that tomorrow's Britain—and world—is free from the Tories and their rotten system.

Condemned: a Shelter report—15p from National Campaign for the Homeless, 86 The Strand, London WC2.

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'Bankrupt' press—the biggest lie of all

THE PRESS LORDS faced a terrible dilemma at the end of last week: they were keen to crack down on the print unions and show who was really boss in Fleet Street and Manchester but, as representatives of their class, they were anxious to avoid any lengthy stoppage of the papers that play a key role in persuading working people of the values of capitalist society, the importance of profits and the daily threats to the economy posed by the 'greed' of the trade unions.

They decided to run the risk. With a display of class solidarity that should not be lost on trade unionists, the press owners closed down the national papers. But even the act of closure exposed their own hypocrisy: all last week they bewailed the loss of 'several million copies' because of work-time meetings of printers, but the total shutdown on Saturday alone amounted to a loss of 24 million copies.

A few points need to be cleared up on the press.

- 1 It is not free. 90 per cent of the press in Britain—national, regional and local—is owned by six powerful combines, dominated by immensely rich tycoons whose politics are hard-line Tory. Newspapers, including the allegedly radical papers such as the Daily Mirror and the Sun, argue basically the same line, even though they may occasionally differ over which capitalist party to support in elections. All of the papers, to a greater or lesser degree, lie, ignore or distort the facts about workers' lives and struggles.

- 2 The unions are not responsible for the financial state of the press. The reason for the decline of newspaper finances is due almost exclusively to commercial television, which has diverted large chunks of lucrative advertising from the papers. The bosses expect print workers to sacrifice their jobs to ease their economic plight—just as they expect them to cheerfully accept redundancies in order that new and cheaper methods of production can be brought in.

- 3 In any case, the financial plight of Fleet Street is a lie. All of the big newspaper combines are enormously profitable. Associated Newspapers, for example, which closed the Daily Sketch in order to 'save' the Daily Mail and threw several hundred printers and journalists out of work, announced in July profits of £2,271,000 for the last financial year. Not bad for a company that whined publicly about its terrible losses.

Lord Thomson's group, which owns The Times and Sunday Times, made a profit of £3,796,000 last year. The News of the World organisation, which includes the Sun, made £3,781,588. Reed International, including the Mirror group, notched up £11.1 million. S Pearson, the group that owns the Financial Times and the Westminster Press chain of local papers, increased its profits from £3,454,378 in 1969 to £6,062,357 last year.

The interests of these combines are not confined to newspapers. Associated Newspapers, for example, owns wharves in the London docks, a road transport company, the London General Cab company, restaurants and Blackfriars Oil, which is on the lucrative North Sea oil fields, and has a 37½ per cent stake in Southern Television.

As Sir Vere Harmsworth says in the Associated Newspapers' company report: 'The prosperity of your company is bound up with the progress of the nation's economy.' The 'free press' exists to argue the case for the tiny minority who own and control British capitalism. We should shed no tears for their economic difficulties or for their inability to spread their propaganda.

The duty of socialists and trade unionists is to support the printing workers in their justifiable fight for higher pay. Over and above that, we should redouble our efforts to build an 'alternative' socialist press that speaks for the majority against the parasitic minority and argues the case for a society in which a truly free press could flourish, unshackled by the demands of the profiteers.

SLUMS—UNIONS MUST ACT

THE FACTS about housing are appalling. The number of homeless people in London rose by 77 per cent between 1966 and 1970. Yet last year 24,000 fewer houses were built than the year before. This year the number will fall still further. Fewer new homes are being built now than in 1962.

Back in that year the story of all politicians was that if only we all pulled together, then productivity would go up, the total wealth at the disposal of society would increase, and those in bad living conditions would get a bigger share of a bigger national cake. Well, productivity has shot up—by 36.7 per cent since 1963 according to the Economist. The national cake has grown bigger, although not nearly as fast as it would have if the unemployed were allowed to work. But the housing situation has got worse.

Not that the amount of money spent on housing is going down. There is hardly a year in which council rents do not rise, even though the number of new houses built by councils falls.

The discrepancy is explained by the vast sums that pour into the pockets of land profiteers, big building contractors, and above all money-lenders. The average council house costs only £5000 to actually build. But it costs £24,970 extra in interest repayments to moneylenders. Many councils now spend more in interest repayments than they actually collect in rents.

The housing shortage can be solved only by a challenge from a fighting, working-class-based movement. The natural leaders of such a struggle would be the trade unions. It is their members and their members' families who above all suffer from bad housing—just as it is their retired members who suffer from low pensions.

The unions' leaders have never done more than pass resolutions against such conditions. Yet only when we see strikes over pensions, housing and welfare services will the government face a real challenge to its cut-backs in these areas. The struggle for genuinely militant policies in the unions is also a struggle for the homeless, the sick, the old and the unemployed.

ATTICA—BLOODY SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICA'S JAILS

by Christopher Hitchens

LAST WEEK's bloody revolt in Attica jail and the killing of George Jackson in the notorious San Quentin prison have revealed to the world how brutal and backward the American penal system really is.

This should not surprise us. A regime whose military and financial power spans the globe and extracts profits at gunpoint can hardly be expected to treat its minorities or workers with humanity.

We must be very clear on one point. The question of 'who started the riot?' may be important to the middle-class press. But to socialists it is as irrelevant as who shot first in Vietnam.

We have the task of supporting the brave prison rebels against torture and murder, and of making sure that their case does not go unheard. For the record, then, here are the facts.

1. In Attica jail, 70 per cent of the prisoners are black or Puerto Rican. All of the guards are white.



George Jackson: stole £20

2. It has now been admitted by the authorities that the prisoners had few if any guns and that the hostages were killed by police gunfire.
3. Dr Sheldon Schwarz, who investigated

the deaths, found that no less than 300 prisoners had gunshot wounds in the back. 30 of them may die. He believes they were shot while being made to lie or crawl by guards during reprisals.

It makes even Ulster's bully-boy soldiers look tame. But no doubt they're learning.

SUICIDAL ESCAPE

As for George Jackson, the prison authorities have now changed their account of events three times. Why should a man who fought for 10 years for the right to a trial attempt a suicidal escape the day before it began? The jailers had plenty to hide.

But we say this. If George Jackson had tried to shoot his way out, he would have been fully justified. Whoever pulled the trigger, the real killers are those who kept a young man in solitary confinement for 10 years for stealing £20 and who subjected him to the foulest racial humiliation and brutality throughout.

The victims of class and racist justice, the black and the poor of America, continue to rot in horrifying conditions.

Engineers need big campaign on wages

THE TORY PRESS has not been slow to begin its propaganda campaign against the engineers' claim. Talk of 'those selfish engineers', unrealistic pay claims', 'inevitable bankruptcies and consequent redundancies' has been freely meted out in the papers and on TV.

The industrial strength of the engineering unions and their ability to win the claim are undoubted. But, as with the power workers, a press campaign that remains unchallenged in any serious way by the trade unions could prove crucial. The unions must be pushed to begin a propaganda campaign putting forward our point of view.

It is important to publicise the following facts:-

1. Basic wages in the industry are abysmal. We must smash the illusion that all engineering workers are in the £50 per week bracket.
2. Most wage increases in the last year have been way behind cost-of-living increase.
3. Militant, well-paid sectors of the industry do not hold down wage levels for other workers. In fact militant sectors drive wage levels up generally.
4. Holiday agreements are Victorian.
5. There are no national lay-off agreements.
6. There has been a high level of productivity dealing in the industry with consequently much unemployment.
7. Relating to the last point, the demand for a shorter working week coupled with a realistic basic wage is most important in the fight back against redundancy.
8. Profits in the industry are still extremely high.
9. The only bankruptcies that would occur as a result of conceding the engineers' claim would be among the many small, poorly-paid non-union firms that survive off sub-contracted work from large combines. The break-up of this sweated sub-contracting system would be a service to all trade unionists.

Socialist Worker must urge all its supporters in the engineering unions to fight for the adoption of an active campaign on these issues. We must also ensure that we are properly prepared for the battle ahead. You can bet that the other side are!

As any rank and file trade unionist knows, negotiations without the realistic threat of organised militancy are meaningless. Talk of the inevitable crunch next February is no substitute for organising now.

This means that our union officials should begin now, touring the country, holding mass meetings, explaining the claim and raising support for it. Also a joint union fighting fund should be set up

REMEMBER TO USE THE FOOD! LETTERS

immediately and arrangements made now to make union assets available. It will be too late to liquidate assets next February, and the cash crisis could be serious. The AUEW, for example, only has sufficient funds available for a four day strike while vast sums are held in trust.

In addition pledges of support and readiness to black possible scab firms should be sought now, especially from the transport section of the TGWU.

Lastly in each district meetings of shop stewards from all unions involved must be held to draw up plans of action. Such preparatory meetings would lay the basis for democratic control of the expected strike by local intra-union committees of shop floor representatives mandated by mass meetings.

We do not want to lay ourselves open for a repetition of the Ford-type sell out by hastily negotiated settlements being forced on the rank and file by secret ballot.—JOHN DEASON (AUEW), Wigan.

Too crude

ALL READERS of Socialist Worker should be opposed to crude simplifications about aspects of capitalist society. Peter Hitchens' statement in his article on slum schools (18 September) that 'for the working class, school has never been much more than a parade ground with a roof—a place to "learn" how to get up early, obey bells and respect authority' is a very crude and misleading simplification. His description fits a traditional upper class boarding school far more accurately.

He must realise that capitalist institutions (as distinct from the buildings which house them) are more complex than that. If state primary schools were really

as he describes them, does he imagine that the majority of teachers could continue in the job if to do so entailed acting as the instruments of such thinly disguised class oppression? Does Peter not realise that if what he wrote were true, than far more militant socialists would be turned out by the school system?

Capitalist education is very subtle. But its very subtlety is a source of weakness to the system. The ideals which it holds up about personal freedom and democracy allow for a great improvement by individual teachers, even under bad physical conditions.

Since World War II, progressive teachers have opened up important gaps in the traditionally authoritarian structure and practices of British schooling. The ideal now held up approximates, in some schools to a free atmosphere in which children are encouraged to develop their personal interests and abilities.

This is not to deny, as Peter says, that schools are 'part of a system where people are only valued for the profit they produce'. This is true. But it is now too late to attack the barrack-room image of the past, when pro-ruling class ideas were fostered far more blatantly.

The task of socialists today is to demystify the progressive attitudes and methods which have grown up in schools. We must show how they serve the latest needs of capitalism and mask its real repressiveness. We have to back this up with a struggle to extend the democratic control of schools by teachers, children and parents.

To accomplish these goals, we need to clarify our ideas and plans. We must ditch Peter Hitchens' mistaken simplifications, which are obviously a result of a lack of involvement in and experience of the state school system.—TONY WILD, Newcastle.

A garbled line in last week's front page story about free school milk suggested that councils should give free milk only to children with medical certificates. We meant to imply that Labour councils should be forced to declare ALL children medically in need of free milk

THEIR WEEK

CAR WORKERS in Britain have, it seems, been squeezing the wrong pedal for some time. According to the Financial Times' motoring correspondent: 'The average British (wage) rates are probably now the lowest in Europe'—and Europe, remember, includes Spain. German car workers who are already way out in front with a quarter more in their pockets than their French or Italian brothers, are pressing for an 11 per cent increase, to follow on the 12 per cent they got last autumn.

THEIR WEEK's American Professor is still pushing papers. This week it's on 'Prohibition and the US Heroin Market' from which we learn — between graphs and headings like 'The Present Value of a New Addict'—that the cost of prohibition to the US economy before the Vietnam

heroin boom really took off was somewhere between 674 million and 1.7 billion dollars (say £300-900 million).

Most of this goes as a present to the organised suppliers who make their money out of the illegality. Another large amount is due to losses caused by incidental criminal activity. Only a small part (29 million dollars) is due to the direct cost of enforcement.

Other studies show that an addict left to himself will kick the habit spontaneously after 9.38 years on average.

COFFEE is the single most important agricultural commodity exported by underdeveloped countries, second only to oil in international trade. It is produced in 41 tropical and sub-tropical countries by an estimated 20 million people.

At least 15 countries get one-third of their foreign exchange from exporting it. Yet it is almost fully controlled by the rich importing countries, particularly the US which buys 45 per cent of all coffee imports.

Recently the US instant coffee manufacturers persuaded the food workers' union to protest at the import of manufactured (soluble) coffee from Brazil (which took a tenth of the US market last year) on the grounds that the big firms, like Coca Cola, were shifting there to take advantage of low Brazilian wages and then exporting the product.

Strengthened by the union's stand the bosses then forced a deal on the Brazilian government whereby they dropped the demand for protection in exchange for cheaper coffee beans. The moral? Don't play bosses' games. They win.

The funny and not-so-funny sides of this Saturday's 'Festival of Light'

For Mary Whitehouse, a dole queue is not obscene—unless the workers take their clothes off...

IF YOU ARE not upset by long hair, nudity or OZ magazine, stay away from Trafalgar Square this Saturday. Mrs Mary Whitehouse, guardian of the nation's moral conscience, friend of the Pope and scourge of the unclean thought and deed, will lead her faithful flock there in the 'Nationwide Festival of Light'.

The Festival's stated aims are to 'take a positive stand for truth, purity and light'. The organisers believe 'there are god-given standards for us to go by in the 1970s' and claim that pornography, obscene spectacles, the systematic corruption of the young... has become almost commonplace today'.

A leaflet given out at the Festival's founding meeting on 9 September suggests that we pray for 'The moral state of the nation—evidenced by hooliganism, pilfering, promiscuity, abortion, venereal disease, drugs, pornography, moral anarchy'.

The thought that someone, somewhere is taking off her clothes in public is a constant worry to Mrs W and friends.

But the prayer sheet fails to mention the million unemployed, the millions more living on subsistence wages or the slums in which thousands of families are forced to live. Apparently it is all right for people to stand in dole queues as long as they keep their clothes on.

Old standards

Running through all the Festival's propaganda is a cry for a return to the 'old standards'—to a time when people knew their place and kept it. A time that for the vast majority of the population, meant abject poverty, vile housing and the 10-hour day with no strikes, but with just as much prostitution, illegitimacy and pornography as there is today.

The Festival has its comic side. The beacons that were lit on Thursday night to warn against 'Moral Pollution' were not all traditional bonfires.

The Calor Gas Company has developed a special butane beacon for Christians worried about the fire risk from the conventional type. And the Royal Navy provided floodlights for the Plymouth Beacon.

Mrs Whitehouse has a very 'moral' background. She met Mr Whitehouse in an organisation called the Oxford Group in the 1930s. Dr Frank Buchman, founder of the group, visited Germany in 1936 and spent his time there with prominent Nazis.

When he arrived back in America he stated publicly: 'Thank heaven for a man like Hitler'. Hitler had, after all, calmed

by PETER HITCHENS



Trevor Huddleston and Malcolm Muggeridge: two men of light

down industrial strife in Germany. The fact that Hitler saw 'a Marxist in every Jew' was slightly, but not unduly, worrying. As long as the Jews were Communists, their fate was unimportant.

Active in unions

Mrs Whitehouse remains a supporter of the movement—now known as Moral Re-Armament, the world-wide, big-business-backed, anti-strike, anti-communist organisation.

MRA is active in the unions, advocating friendship between employers and workers. It used to claim 'large numbers' of trade unionists as members but names were not usually forthcoming.

Part of MRA's policy is that 'Business would be owned by individuals... but the owners would be God-controlled'. It should make shareholders' meetings more interesting.

Much of MRA's money comes from wealthy elderly women. Miss Boot, the chemist, believed in it so strongly that she gave it vast sums. Henry Ford was another powerful backer.

Other leading supporters of the Festival are Malcolm Muggeridge, one-time witch-hunter of communists in the journalists' union, and popster Cliff Richard, who returned from a South African trip to state: 'The black people are happy... they like being servants'.

Festival of Light's Saturday march may

Mrs Whitehouse, waving goodbye on her recent visit to the Pope to discuss pornography. It is understood that world poverty and war were not on the agenda.



look quite harmless. It may even look funny. But pre-war history in Germany and Italy shows that appeals for stiff moral standards do not stop there.

Other causes and other demands have followed fast and furious. Hitler cleaned up Berlin's 'red light' district in next to no time—but not before thousands of socialists had been 'cleaned up' as well.

Sense of frustration

What really worries the Whitehouses and Muggeridges about the 'permissive' society is that many people are rejecting not any morality but the moral standards of capitalism that enriches the few at the expense of the majority and condemns

most of the world's population to poverty and disease.

Pornography and obscenity exist—but not just in sleazy Soho bookshops or 'members only' cinemas. Unemployment, slums and poverty disfigure the country in a way that dirty books never can.

The Whitehouse gang may seem pathetic and funny. But they express a sense of frustration among certain sections of society that could overflow into book burning and strong-arm tactics.

The Festival spreads the idea that pornography is worse than poverty. And when it attacks 'permissiveness', that means the right to strike just as much as it means the right to take off your clothes in front of an audience.

Tory pensions fraud means

rich pickings for businessmen

THE LATEST Tory proposals for pensions have been greeted with loud approval by the Stock Exchange, the employers and the financial interests in the City. This was to be expected, since the Tories have not set out to help the pensioners, but rather to use pensions to help solve some of the current difficulties of British capitalism.

The desperate poverty of millions of existing pensioners is ignored in the Tory plan. It is made clear that there will be no further increase in pensions until the autumn of 1973, no matter how fast prices rise over the next 24 months. By which time, if prices keep going up at the present rate, the old age pension of £6 will be worth about £4.50.

When the Tory scheme comes into operation every worker will have to make two pension contributions each week. The first, into the basic state scheme providing a flat rate pension. This is to remain, as at present, well below the official poverty line.

A second contribution will be required into an employer-run pension scheme. And in cases where the employer does not provide a pension scheme, workers will have to contribute instead to a State Reserve Scheme.

For people retiring over the next 10-20 years, the promised extra pension rights will be quite microscopic. Only if a person has been contributing to the new reserve scheme for at least 30 years will his total pension be above the pres-

ent official poverty line. The outlook is very bleak indeed for the millions of people who are now over the age of 40, and relying mainly on the state schemes for their future pension.

In the meantime the government is going to require large increases in contributions to occupational pension schemes and to the new Reserve Scheme. Gigantic extra investment funds will be placed at the disposal of British capitalism. 'The new plan for pensions,' said the Stock Exchange happily last week, 'will be a tremendous fillip for the market.' The new funds will drive share prices to undreamed of heights, and offer existing shareholders the enticing prospect of fat capital gains.

Shortage of capital

The Tory objective is to use pension contributions to help cure the shortage of investment capital which has plagued British industry in recent years. Increased contributions to the pension funds will raise fresh capital directly at the expense of wages. In effect the new schemes are

simply a method of cutting wages. All that is offered in return is a small addition to pension rights, payable only in the remote future.

One of the biggest differences in conditions of work between white collar and manual workers is in the pension rights offered through employer-run schemes. At present only about one half of manual workers are in occupational pension schemes—and even for those who are covered the benefits offered to manual workers in these schemes are simply pathetic.

In most of them there is no coverage at all for the widows of men dying after retirement. Usually there is a complete loss of pension rights on changing employers. A person leaving a job can usually get a refund of his own contributions, but is very rarely entitled to get a refund of the contributions which the employer has made on his behalf.

In these schemes there is very little allowance for pension increases to compensate for inflation. Few manual workers, now retired, get enough from their employers' scheme to make their state

pension up to the poverty line.

In future the government will insist that occupational schemes will have to meet certain minimum standards. The new rules will be extremely limited. They are an improvement over the present system—but only because the present system is so scandalously inadequate.

Fatal snag

HOW MUCH PENSION? The rule is to be that an employer-run scheme should offer a minimum pension of £1 a week for every £5000 earned by a person during the time he has been contributing. Thus if a worker earned a steady £1000 a year, he would be adding an extra £1 a week to his pension for every five years worked.

But there is one fatal snag. No allowance is made for inflation occurring in the period before retirement. £5000 is a lot of earnings to have to pay contributions on. The £1 a week of pension which it will earn will be increased after retirement to match inflation, BUT ONLY INFLATION OCCURRING AFTER RE-

TIREMENT.

A worker contributing now, but not retiring till the year 2000 or 2010 will get an initial pension of no more than £1 a week on each £5000 earned during the 1970s and 1980s. But what will £1 be worth in the year 2000? On the experience of the past 25 years—about 25p.

Nearly all pension schemes provided for professional and managerial employees are now organised so that the pension paid is a percentage of earnings DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS BEFORE RETIREMENT.

The government is allowing employers to fob their workers off with a scheme in which the pension is calculated as a percentage of lifetime earnings. The effect is that the value of the eventual pension is pulled down by inflation over the 40 to 50 years of a person's working life.

The Tory plan for pensions means rich pickings for the businessmen—and continued poverty for millions of pensioners.

JIM KINCAID



Effigy of a company spy hanging menacingly from a factory window

SIT-IN!

by ROGER ROSEWELL

It was 1.57am, 29 January 1936. The tyrebuilders worked in a smooth frenzy, sweat around their necks and under their arms. The belt chattered, the insufferable racket and din went on with a relentless rhythm. The clock on the south wall hesitated; its minute hand jumped to two. The tyrebuilder at the end of the line looked up, saw the movement and gulped. His hands stopped. Every man on the line stiffened. Then he walked to the master safety switch and pulled it. Instantly the noise stopped. A moment before there had been work, revolving wheels, clanking belts and moving machinery. Now there was absolute stillness. Out of the quiet came a worker's voice: 'Jesus Christ, we've done it!' The production line had been stopped. The Akron rubber workers sit-down strike had begun.

THE UCS work-in and Plessey occupation have focused attention on the sit-in strike. Many people regard it as something new. It is not. Although rare in Britain, more than 2000 sit-ins took place in America during the 1930s.

At the end of 1936 the greatest sit-in strike of them all began. It happened in the city of Flint, which was totally ruled by the General Motors Corporation.

The company was enormously rich. In 1936 it made a profit of \$225 million and paid its two top bosses a salary of \$375,000 each.

The condition of the car workers was in stark contrast. Their average wage was \$900 and trade union organisation was forbidden. In 1934, for example, General Motors spent \$839,000 in hiring detectives to spy on their workers and hunt out militants.

It was an intolerable situation. In 1936 the fight back began. During the summer the newly formed United Automobile Workers Union sent its organisers to Flint. They were immediately successful. Workers were secretly recruited in their thousands.

By December the UAW felt strong enough to demand sole national negotiating rights with General Motors. But the company rejected them. The response was immediate.

The Cleveland factory was occupied first and then on 30 December 1936, the sit-down started at Flint's Fisher No 1 plant. It was to last 44 days and entirely change the history of American trade unionism.

The workers began by securing the plant against attackers. They moved unfinished car bodies in front of all the entrances to form a gigantic barricade. They welded steel frames around every door with acetylene torches.

Horried

Bullet-proof metal sheets were put up to cover every window and holes drilled in them to allow the nozzles of fire hoses to be screwed in. Wet clothes were kept in readiness as protection against tear gas attacks. Large supplies of metal parts were placed in strategic spots and paintguns for spraying would-be invaders were located throughout the plant.

The sit-in spread immediately to the smaller Fisher No 2 factory and all car body production ground to a halt. General Motors were horrified.

The 1200 workers in Fisher No 1 continued to organise themselves. They held two mass meetings a day and formed many committees — food, security, information, sanitation and health, safety, entertainment, education, and athletics. All of these were elected democratically.

Every worker had a specific duty for six hours a day. A post office was established and a basketball court set up. Film shows were arranged and classes held in labour history.

Outside the factory the union organisation was just as efficient. The responsibility of feeding several thousands of workers was enormous. One day's supply included 500lbs of meat, 100lbs of potatoes, 300 loaves of bread, 100lbs of coffee, 200lbs of sugar and 30 gallons of milk.

The city bus drivers delivered the food. A special newspaper was produced and 24-hour picketing took place in front of the factory.

Support poured in. Trucks of food arrived from Akron and Chrysler workers donated an hour's pay each day towards the strike fund.

As the strike strengthened and the workers' spirits rose, big business revealed its true character. General



Victory! Jubilant scenes in Fisher Body No 1 on 11 February

Motors turned to violence. On the afternoon of 11 January the company attacked.

Some of the Fisher No 2 workers were beaten up and immediately several hundred workers rushed to the plant and beat off the assault. Minutes later the cops arrived and charged the factory.

Inside, the workers used fire hoses to drench the advancing cops while others threw 2lb door hinges down from the roof. Five minutes later the police opened fire. 14 workers were wounded but even while they were being carried away others overturned the sheriff's car (with the sheriff inside) and drove the police off.

The next day 8000 workers celebrated the victory. Thousands signed up in the UAW. In both factories the defences were strengthened.

During the battle many of the strikers' wives had fought the police and afterwards they formed themselves into a Women's Emergency Brigade. They wore red berets and proved invaluable during the struggle.

The entire working class of Flint mobilised for the showdown with General Motors. It was clearly going to be a fight to the finish.

Terrorised

The State Governor placed 3000 National Guardsmen in readiness and on 13 January he called a peace conference. At it GM agreed to meet the UAW, but the company refused to give the union sole negotiating rights and the sit-in went on.

The company launched an all-out drive to smash the strike. Union officials were beaten up and terrorised. Plants that GM had closed at the beginning of the strike in order to try and discredit the union were reopened.

GM had snatched the initiative away from the workers. Only a determined counter-offensive could win it back.

Across the road from Fishers stood nine Chevrolet factories. The biggest and most important of these was No 4. It produced a million engines a year and

was vital to the heavily guarded by a Nazi syndicate considered to be important.

But UAW's Travis, decided to 29 January—a year later a meeting of Chevrolet and organisers to re-

Then, together went into a darkened room the men in candle burned and 'conspiratorial' targets selected as the others were sent a paper saying 'secret man who takes the

The 30 were the next afternoon to be occupied. aside the leaders if them to only hold 4.10 as actually target. He told the No 6 and No 4 the decoy and that they occupy No 4.

Travis's idea was the earlier meeting room' with 'secret that GM's spies company that No over and that the co be drawn away from worked perfectly.

When the No 'sit down' the next shut and hidden them. At 4.10 the and the company for long.

At 3.30 in No the entire plant m No 4. They met n and immediately s cades. When the their phoney vic found themselves l

On the 34th d the workers had r ive.

General Motor decided to make break the strike. 40

WHAT WE STAND FOR



THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its principles and who contribute to its work in one of its organisations. It believes in independent action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist society with a planned economy and not for a class organisation of the working class and are committed to a policy of internationalism. The International Socialists have no national front and accept to work in any economic system they can help to improve.

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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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/Gloucestre/Mid-Devon/Plymouth/Swansea

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

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

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES
Acton/Bletchley/Camden/Chertsey/Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/Fulham/Greenford/Havering/Harrow/Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/Lewisham/Merton/Neckham/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

'It was like soldiers ho Yes, sir, Chevy No 4 w

Barricades and workers' battalions versus armed violence from bosses and state: the story of Flint, USA, 1936-37



37
empire. It was armed thugs, man-hater and con-ble.

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of the great sit-in ptured the initi- ere furious. They e final effort to National Guards-

men were drafted into Flint and howitzers were mounted on a hill overlooking the factory. Picketing was forbidden and the Women's Brigade forced off the streets.

On 2 February the heat was shut off. Immediately the workers threatened to light bonfires to keep warm. Scared for their property, GM restored it.

Then the lights were turned off. Again the workers threatened action. On went the lights.

Showdown

Tension mounted. By 8 February the company had mobilised the National Guards, 1000 armed vigilantes and the Flint police.

Inside the factories the workers prepared. Daily drills were held and plans drawn up to resist any invasion on a floor-to-floor basis. Outside 20,000 GM workers surrounded Fishers 1 and 2 and 5000 women marched through the town.

Rumours of a coming showdown were everywhere. One worker described his feelings:

'It was like we was soldiers holding the fort. It was like war. I remember as a kid in school reading about Davy Crockett and the last stand at the Alamo. You know, that's how I felt. Yes, sir, Chevy No 4 was my Alamo.'

Finally with tens of thousands of workers ready for battle and others threatening to blow the factories up, General Motors surrendered.

It was 11 February, the 44th day of the sit-in. The workers had won. The union was recognised, negotiating rights agreed and a pay rise given.

The immediate effects were enormous. In the next two weeks 87 sit-ins occurred in Detroit. Millions of workers joined unions and one after another the giant companies gave in.

The Flint sit-in had led the way. Its power was tremendous. The determination of the workers to fight defeated the seemingly invincible bosses and wrote a page of labour history that is relevant and alive today.

ding a fort... as my Alamo'

On the eve of talks between Westminster and the two Irish premiers, a look at the pressures from both left and right on the 'Green Tory' leader of the 26 Counties

AS THE Westminster, Dublin and Stormont talks of 27-28 September approach, Jack Lynch, Prime Minister of the 26 southern counties of Ireland, is sliding back into his customary position of openly upholding British big business's interests. His role, which has earned him the title 'Union Jack' Lynch, reflects the ever-closer interlocking of the Irish and British economies.

Lynch has been a key figure in the efforts of British capitalism to create a new and more stable balance between the Green (Catholic) and Orange (Protestant) sections of the Irish ruling class.

The other role he has played unconvincingly in the past few weeks—the spokesman for an indignant oppressed people—has been forced on him by pressure from within his own party, Fianna Fail, from the Irish Army, and from the population generally.

Jack Lynch's hard line against the Northern government six weeks ago showed not a position of strength but one of weakness. The hope of creating political and economic stability in order to make the exploitation of Irish resources and Irish labour easier has been shattered by the impact on Ireland of the international economic crisis and the upheaval in the six Northern counties.

Since 1969 Lynch has several times been close to being removed from the leadership of Fianna Fail. In order to appease those people within the party who insist on its republican heritage and press for firmer action in support of the Catholics in the North, he has had to make gestures of not 'standing idly by'.

With the introduction of internment in the North in August this year, he had to appear more radical even than the Irish Labour Party and call for the abolition of Stormont. Otherwise he stood in danger again of being swept from power.

But Lynch has not succeeded in holding his opponents in check. A former government minister, Kevin Boland, who resigned last year in connection with the supposed conspiracy of government ministers to 'run guns' to the North, has formed a new Republican Party.

He has won considerable support from within Fianna Fail, capturing a quarter of the officials of Jack Lynch's own constituency party.

Dismissed

There is deep discontent within the ranks of the Irish Army. Several battalions have demanded combat instructions for possible action in the North and have threatened to join the IRA if they do not get satisfaction. Some officers with republican sympathies have been dismissed recently.

Lynch has failed, too, to hold down the growing class struggle in the South. Attempts at a 'voluntary incomes policy' and repressive anti-union laws now on the statute book have done nothing to restrain working class militancy.

The union leaders' acceptance of a national wage agreement has widened the gap between the officials and the rank and file. The present wave of redundancies, which is further sharpening class conflict, is virtually out of the control of the Irish government.

The unrest in the South threatens Lynch's personal position and, as a result, poses several problems for continued British domination over the whole of Ireland by political and economic means.

The 26 Counties are the third largest importer of British goods, and two thirds of Irish exports go to the UK. It is clearly important to British capitalism, in particular, to prevent the extension of mass political action from the North to the South.

The aim is to head this off by using Jack Lynch and his supporters in the North, principally Gerry Fitt's Social Democratic and Labour Party.

Crisis

Within the republican and socialist movement in Ireland it is generally accepted that Lynch and Heath have made their deal already, and that they are waiting for the right moment to reveal it publicly. The present apparent crisis in Anglo-Irish relations might have been avoided if previous 'deals' had been stuck to, and if Lynch had been consulted on British policy in the North.

British governments and military experts have repeatedly said that 'the key is in Dublin', that internment could not be an effective weapon against republicans if it were not introduced simultaneously in both Irish states. But in August the Westminster and Stormont governments ratted on their agreements with Lynch, introduced a vindictive and one-sided policy of internment, and roused Lynch's temporary opposition.

Lynch did manage to swing a certain section of the Southern population behind him in his opposition to repression in the Six Counties. Some memories were short enough for people to forget that he had prepared concentration camps in the South late last year, that the series of dawn raids in July on republicans' homes in the Six Counties were matched in the South, and that Lynch's government had just forced through repressive legislation (Prohibition of Forcible Entry and Occupation Bill) which matched that in the Six Counties.

'Union Jack' Lynch - has he reached a deal with Heath?

The main area of solidarity in the South with the resistance movement in the Six Counties has been the trade union movement. Here, the opposition to internment in the North had been coupled with opposition to repressive legislation in the South. The rank and file Committee of Trade Unionists Opposed to Internment has few illusions in any section of Fianna Fail, or in the trade union leadership, which has made protest noises against repression in the Six Counties.

Action

This committee of shop stewards and trade union branch representatives exists only in Dublin, but it is hoped to set up parallel committees in Cork and Limerick. In both of those towns there have been large anti-internment rallies organised by local trade unions.

From many quarters calls have come for industrial action in support of the struggle in the North.

More militant action by workers in the South would quickly expose the sham of Lynch's stand. But it is unlikely to happen on the basis of opposition to internment alone. The connection has to be made with the workers' struggles in the South. The Dublin government's fear that this connection might be made is reflected in the increased police attacks on republicans and socialists in the South.

The present situation in the 26 Counties opens up great possibilities for socialists within the working-class movement. There were 50 per cent electricity cuts last week as 45 technicians in a new, breakaway union picketed power stations to demand recognition and negotiating rights. Contrary to the ruling of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, they were supported by members of other trade unions in the power industry.

A wave of redundancies throughout Irish industry has sparked off a number of protest actions. The sackings are affecting both the older industries, established under trade protection in the 1920s and 1930s, and the most recent industry, established by foreign enterprises, with state support, in the 1960s.

The Shannon Industrial Estate,



The parliamentary alternatives to Jack Lynch's government are a Fianna Fail government influenced by the oppositional 'republican' elements in the party, and by the new Republican Party, or a coalition government of Fine Gael (extreme conservative) and the Labour Party. It would be difficult for either government, if it were committed to maintaining capitalism in Ireland, to have policies very different from those of Lynch. Neither of them could avoid the problems which he faces.

Unstable

In a more severe crisis the Irish ruling class could not even rely on the military to impose order, because it is such an unstable element. But the soldiers are now being given intensive training in riot control.

Whatever solution is agreed upon between the Irish and foreign business interests, it is doomed from the start. Increasingly, Irish workers are recognising that they must strive for a totally new system.

The urgent task in Ireland is the building of a revolutionary socialist organisation that can weld the republican struggle and the class struggle into a fight for a Workers' Republic.

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'Home Rule' is agreed -but Tories prepare for

armed revolt in Ulster...



Irish peasants besieged by troops in 1846 during an attempted eviction. Hundreds of thousands were involved in the land struggle

BEFORE the great famine various economic experts had blamed Ireland's troubles on 'overpopulation'. The famine solved that problem—if ever it was a problem—with a vengeance. Yet it brought no relief to the peasantry.

The English capitalists had forced free trade through against the opposition of the English landlords (1846). Free trade meant, above all, cheap imported food from the virgin soil of the new world and of eastern Europe.

The effect on Irish agriculture can be seen from a single statistic. In 1849 there were 697,646 acres under wheat, in 1914 only 26,916 acres.

During the same period the acreage under barley was halved. In England too, agriculture declined due to free trade. But there industry was leaping ahead on the basis of its earlier growth.

Export of men

In Ireland, outside the North East corner, it could not develop effectively against the established competition. The economy of pre-famine Ireland had been based on the large-scale export of grain. The economy of post-famine Ireland was based on the export of men.

The Anglo-Irish landlords no longer controlled Westminster but they did not give up in Ireland. They fought a savage rearguard action to safeguard their unearned incomes. Rack-renting and evictions increased.

The mass of destitute families, the great pool of paupers, was constantly replenished by eviction in spite of massive emigration.

The resistance continued in spite of terrible difficulties. In the early 1850s Gavin Duffy, one of the surviving rebels of '48, organised a Tenants' Rights League to fight for fixed rents and security of tenure.

It made such headway that the Catholic Cardinal Cullen, the Orange Grand Master, the landlords, the Whigs and the



IRELAND'S HISTORY OF REPRESSION

by JAMES WALKER Part four

Tories, were all of one mind. The aims of the Tenants' Rights League were Communist and they had to be thwarted. In fact religious sectarianism fostered by the Catholic hierarchy wrecked the movement.

The Fenian Brotherhood was founded in 1857 as a secret society with one aim—the destruction of British rule in Ireland by armed insurrection. Though led by Catholics it was strictly non-sectarian and indeed anti-clerical.

It is notorious that Fenianism was regarded with unconcealed aversion, not to say deadly hatred, not merely by the landlords and the ruling class, but by the Catholic clergy and the middle class Catholics.

The Fenians wanted to unite all classes in Ireland against foreign rule and therefore would not take up the land war as a central means of mobilising the mass of the Irish people. Fenianism remained an urban movement and a strictly military one at that.

The Fenians had good support in the USA and members had fought on both sides in the American civil war. When that war ended in 1865 the rising in Ireland was expected to be supported by returned soldiers from across the Atlantic. In fact the 'Chief Organiser of the Irish Republic', John Stephens, could not make up his mind to strike.

The government made wholesale arrests and when the rising was finally called in 1867 it went off at half cock, the date having been changed without the knowledge of all the units. In any case its key weakness, the lack of rural support and a social programme, stunted its mass appeal.

The Fenians left behind a tradition and a new crop of martyrs. Their heroic

failure also left its mark on British politics. The rising of '67 was one of the factors that helped to convince the leaders of the Liberal Party—at the time the main capitalist party—that 'something must be done' about Ireland.

Land reform and, ultimately, 'Home Rule' became their policy. They became willing to sacrifice the landlords, 'to transfer the solution of the Irish land question to an Irish parliament', in order to make it easier to keep Ireland as a labour reservoir for British capitalism.

Already in 1870 they passed a Land Act, denounced by the Tories as 'a gross interference with the rights of property', which gave tenants a right to the value of improvements they made in their holdings. Thus the 'Ulster Custom' became general.

Drastic demand

This was the first of a long series of Acts between 1881 and 1909, all aimed at producing a minority of socially conservative 'strong peasants' with real property rights as a bulwark against further upheavals.

They gave too little and too late. In 1879 Michael Davitt, an ex-Fenian convict, launched the Irish Land League around the slogan 'Fair rents'. A fair rent was what the tenant 'can reasonably afford to pay according to the times; but in bad times a tenant cannot be expected to pay as much as he did in good times three or four years ago'.

This apparently moderate demand was really a drastic one. It was like saying that when a worker is unemployed his house, rent and rates should be what he thinks he can afford. Davitt had the co-operation of the parliamentary 'Home

Ruler' Parnell and together they developed a devastatingly effective tactic to paralyse the landlords and the law. It was the boycott.

Captain Boycott, an estate agent for Lord Erne, refused the 'fair' rent offered by his impoverished tenants and secured eviction notices. The Land League's tactic of 'isolating him from his kind like the leper of old' was first applied against Boycott.

All his domestics and farm hands left him. Shopkeepers refused to serve him, the laundress and the blacksmith would not accept his orders; his letters and telegrams had to be delivered by the police. The effect was electrifying. Boycott fled the country and all over Ireland evictors were boycotted.

The government responded with arrests—Davitt and Parnell were prosecuted for 'seditious conspiracy' and when the jury failed to convict a Coercion Act was brought in enabling the police to arrest and hold without trial 'persons reasonably suspected' of organising the agitation.

Jail treaty

But mass arrests failed to stop the movement. Payment of rents practically ceased in whole counties. The government was compelled to bring in the Land Act of 1881 which deprived the landlord of the right to raise rents arbitrarily. When that failed to stop the movement, the government was forced into the humiliating position of negotiating with the imprisoned leaders of the Land League.

These negotiations led to the Treaty agreed in Kilmainham Jail by Parnell and the representatives of the British government and this Kilmainham Treaty showed the fatal flaw in the movement.

The Land war had been the biggest mass movement in Ireland since the tithe war but its leaders were closely involved with the parliamentary Home Rule party, which was dominated by Irish property owners. It was once again demonstrated that 'the men of property' would always compromise when matters reached an extreme.

Parnell agreed to call off the land war in return for the release of all prisoners and state payment of arrears of rent.

The long drawn-out struggle for Home Rule put the Irish Party in the House of

Commons at the centre of the stage. Bombings and boycotts were equally disapproved of. Sooner or later, the parliamentary leaders reasoned, a British Liberal government will be dependent on Irish votes and then Home Rule will be achieved without dangerous social upheavals.

Parnell's successor, Redmond, moved into ever more cautious and conservative paths. In 1912 the long awaited situation arose, the Liberal government, which depended on Irish and Labour votes in parliament, introduced yet another Home Rule Bill and this time, with the absolute veto of the House of Lords abolished in 1911, nothing it seemed could prevent it becoming law.

Home Rule would go through, allowing for the two years' delay the House of Lords could impose, in 1914. Two developments prevented it.

Real threat

From 1907 onwards James Larkin and James Connolly had been building a militant labour movement in Ireland. Connolly's Irish Republican Socialist Party remained small but the Irish Transport and General Workers' union became a force.

Using the lightning strike, the boycott and violence when necessary, the union had become a real threat to the employers in Dublin and in 1913 they called a general lock-out to smash it. The workers 'found themselves faced with an alliance of Dublin Castle with its police, the Orange-Tory magistrates, the Nationalist employers and the Catholic hierarchy'.

It was a bitter and violent dispute. Substantial aid was obtained from British unions (even the CWS helped to send a food ship) and though not a victory, it produced 'a great growth in militant class consciousness among the Dublin workers'. It made the Irish Party leaders more cautious and 'constitutional'.

At the same time the British Tory opposition began to support armed opposition to Home Rule in the North East. Carson, the leading Unionist MP, sponsored a Covenant pledging resistance to Home Rule and a force of Ulster Volunteers trained and drilled by ex-army officers.

Arms were smuggled in from Germany and elsewhere. Bonar Law, the Tory leader, publicly supported Carson. Religious sectarianism was whipped up and civil war threatened.

Orange monster

The motives of the Tories were mixed. In part they were bluffing in order to discredit the Liberals—they had just lost three general elections in a row and badly needed an issue. In part they genuinely disagreed with the Liberals about the best way to 'preserve the interests of British capitalism in Ireland and in part they were pulled along by the monster they had conjured up. The Orange extremists were certainly ready to fight.

The Liberals wavered. Secret negotiations between the parties on the 'temporary' exclusion of some of the Ulster counties from Home Rule got under way.

The Irish Citizen Army emerged out of the Dublin strike. In 1914 the British Army officers of the Curragh garrison declared that they would not fight the Ulster Volunteers. The 'parliamentary road' was leading to civil war.

When on 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany, the issue was shelved to the immense relief of all the parliamentary factions. Home Rule became law but its operation was declared postponed 'for the duration of hostilities'.

The parliamentarians were mistaken. On Easter Monday 1916 some 750 armed men, socialists and republicans in the Fenian tradition, raised the tricolour over the Dublin Post Office and proclaimed the Republic of Ireland. The struggle had returned to the streets.

Government bid to crush Ghana's unions

by Wenda Clenaghan

GHANAIAN WORKERS are trying desperately to salvage the remnants of their TUC, dismembered by a rush government Labour Bill last week. Strikes have broken out throughout the country. Police have been rushed to quell strikers who have paralysed Ghana's most militant and second largest city, Sekondi-Takoradi.

Such was the speed of the government's action in virtually destroying the TUC that the workers had no time to co-ordinate opposition to the Bill. The Takoradi strikers will hold out the longest but there is no possibility of a general strike which could seriously threaten the government's shaky control over the state.

Up to last week the TUC was the most powerful section of Ghanaian society. With 300,000 members and covering practically all Ghanaian workers, it had lurched into an uncomfortable head-on collision with Busia's government over the 1971 Budget which imposes a special levy on urban workers to finance 'rural development', and says nothing about raising the pitiful minimum wage. The levy is imposed in such a way that workers pay more a month proportionately than salaried civil servants.

Rampant inflation has caused the work-

ers to agitate and strike repeatedly since the beginning of the year. The Budget was the last straw.

Prime Minister Busia has been following events with increasing uneasiness. Agitation against the development levy finally convinced him that the unity of the TUC must be destroyed.

The unity of Ghana's unions is a strange left-over from ousted President Nkrumah's party machine set-up. In order to control the unions, Nkrumah designed a highly centralised bureaucracy in which he placed key local members of his Convention Peoples' Party. Membership of the TUC was compulsory for every worker and dues were paid directly by a check-off system.

Now the tables have been turned for the TUC. Nkrumah is gone. Busia became the army-sponsored civilian prime minister in 1970. CPP politicians proved excellent opportunists almost to a man and either bribed and talked their ways into Busia's Popular Party, or joined the flabby opposition party.

But now the TUC has been forced to oppose the government over the last four years. Ghanaian workers are more politically sophisticated than the mass of CPP voters and will not allow their leaders to turn complete somersaults as did the CPP politicians. They struck against the British in 1954, against Nkrumah in 1961 and

now they are striking against Busia.

TUC leader Benjamin Bentum began to see the writing on the wall two weeks ago when the CPP finally became a banned party. When four right-wing unions with 33,500 workers simultaneously formed the Ghana Confederation of Labour (GCL), the writing was even clearer. The GCL is government-backed.

The government welcomed the GCL but still had the problem of breaking the TUC monopoly over membership. Bentum doesn't seem to have had many illusions about the government's intentions. When the CPP was banned he set off for a whistle-stop tour of urban Ghana, agitating over the Budget, warning about government attacks on the workers' unions and saying how the levy was designed to set country against town whereas both deserved more money.

Assets frozen

The parliamentary blow came last Wednesday. The Bill froze all TUC assets and set up a committee to share the proceeds among constituent unions, which were made completely autonomous. This was the go-ahead for right-wing trade union bureaucrats to drag their unions into the GCL.

Secondly—and similar to the Tories'

Industrial Relations Act—a 'freedom' clause was inserted. Workers could choose to be in a union or not, to choose which union, and to pay dues to whichever body they chose. They are to inform their employers, personally in writing, of their decision.

For good measure, a 90-day cooling-off period was imposed which makes all the present strikes illegal. Tribunals set up to arbitrate will have four members all appointed and approved by the Minister of Labour.

Bentum has been accused of stirring up student unrest of which Ghana has plenty. There is certainly an increasing amount of contact between Ghana's students and workers. Perhaps it is here that a new alliance of the left will be formed.

Busia's collaboration with South Africa's 'dialogue' policy has been one of the main issues on which the students are fighting. The attack on the TUC, though directly an attack on the workers' main institution, is seen by many as connected with the general domination and demands of imperialism.

Although the workers will be weakened and divided when the current strikes end, political lessons will have been learnt by the Ghanaian left to help them in their future struggles.

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!



Putting his foot down...

ONE of the distortions that capitalism has brought with it has been to take certain products of the industrial system and turn them into objects of adoration. The most obvious example is the car—millions of people achieve more personal joy through their cars than with fellow human beings. In fact, men often refer to their cars in human terms—'Doesn't she run beautifully?' and so on.

Perhaps the most important aspect of cars is their speed factor. Sheer speed holds a fascination in itself for many people, particularly the young. It is therefore not surprising that *Vanishing Point* (now on general release) has been pulling in the crowds.

Endless shots

The film traces one mammoth car chase from Denver, Colorado to San Francisco, hundreds of miles away. For a long time, this is all the film is—endless shots of motorways, interspersed with views of the American countryside.

But, as the film unwinds, it becomes obvious that this car chase is being used as a symbol. In a series of confusing flashbacks it transpires that the hero speed-fiend used to be a policeman and left the force because of his disgust at the corruption. And Kowalski, the driver, is adopted by a blind Negro disc jockey, who arouses the nation's interest in the chase.

Thus, in a fairly oblique manner, *Vanishing Point* is meant to be an illustration of the generation and political conflict in America. All the hippies and young people are on Kowalski's side—all the forces of law and order are against him.

Social division

As such it does not really matter that it is never clear just why Kowalski is so hell-bent on almost inevitable suicide. As a symbol he and his fast car are sufficient in themselves to illustrate the gaping social divisions of America.

There are many things wrong with *Vanishing Point*. It is filmed in a very amateurish manner. There is not a sophisticated image in the whole production. When a couple make love we get the inevitable waves and expanse of blue water. And the acting is non-existent.

But *Vanishing Point* is still a fairly pleasurable film. It really doesn't matter about the quality of the acting because the chief actor is the car. It is an exciting film and the tension is well maintained right up until the last minute. At this limited level, *Vanishing Point* is successful.

Martin Tomkinson



COTTONS COLUMN

QUOTE of the week in a fairly quoteless, paperless week: Jock Stallard, Labour MP for St Pancras, speaking at the Labour Committee Against Internment's rally last Friday: 'I have fought the Irish issue on the streets, I have fought it in the House of Commons... and (pause—audience holds its breath in excited anticipation) I shall fight it in the House of Lords if I am asked to go there.' That was another Labour left, that was.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD: a UCS shop steward tells us that on the first Clydeside delegation to Downing Street way back in July, one worker admonished Ted the Teeth: 'If you spent more time on land and less at sea we might not have this mess.'

The PM paled under his tan. 'I resent that remark,' he wailed. 'I've been working like a black.'

Milking time

PRIORITIES DEPARTMENT: A meeting of Aberdeen town council revealed that the increase in grants to the three local 'grant-aided' (ie private) schools amounted to £8000 more than the total saved by depriving primary school children of



HEATH: black looks

their free milk.

Although the appalling fact was spoken in open council, no mention of it appeared in the local 'free' press. One shake of the head from a prominent Progressive (the Scots joke name for Tory) councillor was enough for the local reporter to hastily put down his pen.

NEVER believe all you see on the telly—least of all the ads. Carlsberg Lager have currently got a good line on the soft-sell: you see the dark outline of a ship silhouetted against a sun-down horizon while a seductive voice tells you that three times a week this proud vessel breasts the cruel sea from Denmark with 60,000 gallons of grog. Someone needs a new compass: the ship in fact is none other than the Isle of Wight ferry.

Please, sir

A SERIES of expensive advertisements in the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* placed by the right-wing Labour Committee for Europe have been arguing the case for British capitalism to join the Common Market mafia. Clearly convinced that their message hasn't been getting home, the committee last week ran a short and astonishing piece by one Edward Hyams.

With a fruity prose style reminiscent of the label on an HP sauce bottle, Mr Hyams berates socialist opponents of entry for betraying the fundamental principle of the movement: internationalism. All workers must unite against national capitalisms, roars the absurd Hyams. How? ... seize the chance offered by joining the EEC to unite the social-democratic and trade union movements of all western... Europe.'

Excuse us, Messrs Big Business cartels of Europe, Can we join your market so that the unions can get together? We aren't strong enough to do it without your permission.

Avon's above

SIR BERNARD MILES' much-publicised 'nude Desdemona' in the Mermaid Theatre's production of *Othello* has made him the hero of the impresarios. By finding 'proof' in Shakespeare's text for the fair lady to shed her nightie, Sir Bernard has provided a foolproof cover for all producers anxious to get in on the bare boobs scene without losing their literary integrity.

Already, a new film version of *Macbeth* has Lady M doing her sleep-walking scene in the feudal all-together—it being an established historical fact that central heating reached Scottish castles several centuries ahead of the rest of the country.

One Shakespeare play rarely performed but due for reappraisal in this permissive time is *Timon of Athens*, in which our hero gives up the good life to wander naked in the woods. Male nudes are not popular on the stage (they tend to give somewhat limp performances) but the problem could be solved by turning the play into a Christmas pantomime with a nubile lady playing *Timon* as 'principal boy'.



A PROGRAMME of some significance is *Double Vision*, a series of three programmes (Wednesday, 10.05, BBC). As the title suggests two views are presented to us. In the programme last Wednesday, they concerned the Hull docks. The views were expressed in two films, one made by a dock employer, the other by a dockers' shop steward, both made with the help of BBC film crews.

In general TV documentaries are the creatures of the people who make them. *World in Action* or the recent *Where I stand* series however, give people a chance to talk at length and then edit what they say, hoping to cut out the unimportant parts. This is certainly very different from programmes like *Whicker's World*, where nobody really gets the chance to express their own point of view, except, of course, the commentator.

This point is important for socialists: that the ordinary working people have their chance to make their voice heard.

However, even more important is that working people can have the facilities to make their own films for TV. In a socialist society, it is not difficult to envisage many different people making their own documentaries, with of course the necessary technical assistance. In this way different points of view could be argued freely, one against the other, through documentary films.

The employer's film on *Double Vision* was shown first. He is chairman of the Hull Dock Employers' Association and there is little doubt of his sincere class hatred of those whose labour he buys. The disturbing thing is that his film was so much like the usual documentary made by the professional TV people, even if the latter would not have been so crude with their comments and would have included an interview with someone from the union side.

But in the end they would echo the employer's last hypocritical statement—'Damn it all, we're all on the same side—the men should be reasonable'.

Wally Greendale, the steward, made many of the necessary points and argued for workers' control of the docks—'by the men who do the work'.

The interviewer in the discussion afterwards tries to hide the real nature of the class conflict that the two films had shown us so clearly. He, in a supposedly 'middle of the road' fashion suggested 'the two sides should come together before trouble starts, not after'.

But the employer and steward effectively ignored him and went at each other hammer and tongs. Most documentary and news programmes have at their heart the assumption that the class conflict which divides capitalist society from top to bottom can be dissolved 'by getting together round a table' and making a good agreement within the status quo. That strikes are a weapon to limit the employers' exploitation and not a 'breakdown in communication' is foreign to the usual TV report.

The interviewers' question trade unionists about their ability to communicate 'reasonably' with management and avoid 'unnecessary' conflict. They do not care to know that there are two kinds of 'reason', that of the workers and that of the capitalists.

As long as this is the case, objectivity and truthfulness are better served by an open contest between employer and workers like over the Hull docks. Then we shall see who possesses the real 'reasonableness'.

How bad can TV get? Answer: the new series *The Persuaders* (ITV, Friday 7.30), a sad waste of Tony Curtis's abilities.

Phil Hall

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 8DM

Socialist Worker

Stewards refuse to be bribed

ALEXANDRIA:- As the occupation of the Plessey works enters its fourth week, the workers behind the locked factory gates are determined to hold out against redundancies in an area plagued by 16 per cent unemployment.

A representative of the 600 Metal Group, the scrap merchants, tried to bribe the stewards into letting him move out the machinery. Plesseys have agreed to sell the plant to the group but the stewards refused to allow the man inside the gates.

In a move to split the unity of workers at Alexandria and Ilford, Plessey took a deputation of Ilford shop stewards to

Scotland last week to prove how 'out of date' the machinery was.

But senior shop steward Kath Kelly said they were unimpressed by the management's story. They thought the plant was in good working order and they would be calling a combined meeting of stewards from all Plessey plants to discuss action to back the Scots workers.

The Alexandria plant was formerly the Royal Naval Torpedo Factory. It was sold to Plessey in January at a knockdown price and the firm wants either to move the valuable machinery to Ilford—a move blacked by the stewards—or to sell it for a

huge profit to the 600 group.

The Alexandria workers—with strong backing from other local factories and traders—have called for a campaign to end unemployment in the area, to change the Tory government responsible for the present situation and for a public inquiry into Plessey's acquisition of the torpedo works and their plans to scrap the expensive plant.

Financial support is needed urgently to allow the men—no longer employed by Plessey—to hold out for victory. Send to: Eddie McLafferty, Plessey Works, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire.

400 out at engines factory

By SW Reporter

PETERBOROUGH:- Four hundred workers at Perkins Engines struck for three days last week after seven technicians were declared redundant and told to pick up their cards.

The seven were not the first to go. Some 600 shop floor workers had gone with no reaction from their colleagues. Then the first technician, a member of the technical and supervisory section of the AUEW, was sacked in July. His colleagues, in true East Midland style, did not react.

The seven men were dismissed on 10 September after extensive discussions with management. On the advice of the office committee the seven reported for work on 13 September. When they were told to leave, 400 of their colleagues left with them.

Work-sharing

After three attempts to take the seven back to work the men were advised by a full-time official to stay where they were—outside the gate.

National union officials contacted the company and, three days later, advised the men to return to work, leaving the seven outside so that discussions could go on. Reluctantly the men agreed.

Talks are going on about work-sharing, accepted in principle by the executive at a meeting on 12 September. It is now inevitable that to establish this principle a dispute position must arise sooner or later. The union must be prepared to fight to establish work-sharing.

Pickets clash with blacklegs

LYNEMOUTH, Northumberland:- There were violent clashes between pickets and scabs at the Alcan smelter site last week after the employers, N G Bailey, gave strikebreakers a 15p per hour rise.

Militant picketing has reduced the number of blacklegs from 40 to 25 but the increase, which is against the Joint Industry Board agreement, is a sign of how the 10-week-old strike is hitting the firm.

The firm has asked all strikers to apply for their jobs back, but without any guarantee they will all be taken on again, which is one condition made by the strikers before they will return.

Paddy Crerand, Manchester United's Scottish International star, talks about soccer 'violence', his days as a Clydeside shipyard worker, unemployment and the struggle in Northern Ireland. NEXT WEEK.

PRESS LOCKOUT - PRINT UNIONS MUST UNITE

by SW Reporter

PRINTWORKERS in London and Manchester were locked out this week. One Scottish paper has apologised to the Newspaper Publishers' Association for the use of such an inflammatory word as lockout.

But what other description fits a situation in which printers are refused permission to work and journalists are threatened with the sack if they prepare copy?

The dispute centres around the de-

mand of the National Graphical Association—the compositors' and typesetters' union—to pursue individual claims at each paper to restore the wage differential with the two other print unions, NATSOPA and SOGAT, who organise the less skilled grades.

They have traditionally received 87 per cent of the NGA rates in any wage awards, but the recent settlement with the NPA increased that amount by a small percentage. The NGA claim for separate house awards of about 30p per member would

have restored the differential.

Rather than fork out, the press barons were prepared to shut down the whole of Fleet Street and Manchester, showing that their main concern is getting tough with the unions, not with the loss of papers.

Those members of NATSOPA and SOGAT who have refused to support calls for united action to produce papers in defiance of the lockout have done so because of their understandable distaste for the NGA's concern with differentials.

But that is no longer the main issue. The NPA's attack is on the bargaining rights of all print unions and the press tycoons will be defeated only by a united front of all newspaper workers.

And NATSOPA, SOGAT and NUJ members must support the NGA's right to hold chapel meetings during working hours. Any wavering on that issue will weaken all the unions.

PIRATE EDITION

There have been some welcome steps towards that unity. Journalists and NGA members at the Sun wrote and set-up a four-page paper on Sunday but NATSOPA members stopped it at the printing stage.

NGA members at the London Evening Standard produced a four-page 'pirate' edition on Monday without journalists' help and a move to produce a paper at the Guardian was narrowly defeated.

More unity, closer links between all newspaper workers could have broken the press lords' embargo and showed that they, not the millionaire bosses, are the key people in the industry.

That unity can be built only at rank and file level. The NGA leadership, in particular, has not become more militant this week—on the contrary, its concern over differentials panders to the most backward and outdated 'craft' attitudes that have for too long bedevilled the print unions.

The solidarity of the bosses is impressive—but there is a suggestion that the most vociferous supporters of the total shut-down were the owners of the more financially buoyant papers, in the hope that their less successful competitors might go to the wall.

Nevertheless, their class solidarity holds lessons for print workers. At chapel level, all print workers, including journalists, must forge strong and militant links.

In that way they will be in a better position to fight off further attacks and defy publication bans. And through such unity the 'holier-than-thou' preoccupation with differentials can give way to an understanding that only a common policy and common demands can keep the arrogant owners in their place.

Family firm that aims to smash the unions

By DAVE PEERS

CLEATOR MOOR:- A grim struggle to maintain trade union organisation has been going on in this remote West Cumberland village.

This struggle, similar in many ways to the Fine Tubes strike in Plymouth, has gone completely unreported in the national press despite several acts of violence against pickets and the homes of strike leaders.

Sixteen weeks ago 129 members of the AUEW, mainly women, came out on official strike at S Brannan, Cleator Moor. This family business, which makes thermometers, is one of the few employers of labour in an area hard-hit by mine closures, and other firms in the district are following closely what happens at Brannans. If this company is successful in its attempt to smash trade unionism, they will not be slow to follow suit.

In May Kenneth Brannan offered staff conditions and salary to selected individuals on the shop floor. They were not promoted but continued to work alongside other workers.

Police

The differential between these new members of the 'staff' and fellow workers doing the same job was as much as £12 per week. This was deliberate provocation, and after Brannan had ignored normal industrial relations procedure the strike began on 3 June.

From the beginning the picket line has been manned 24 hours a day, but transport in and out of the factory is now in unmarked vehicles with scab drivers.

Brannan refuses to talk to AUEW officials and squads of police escort the scabs from the factory.

The Brannan strikers have fought this reactionary employer with tremendous spirit and determination. A scab labour force of supervisors and their relatives continue some sort of production from the factory, but an effective boycott of Brannans' products by trade unionists would soon stop this.

Please send donations and messages of support to Mrs M Hillon, 34 Greystone Place, Cleator Moor, Cumberland.

NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS' HQ requires full-time administrative secretary. Fast, accurate typing essential. Applications from members only to IS (AA) 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN or phone 01-739 1878.

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Tony Cliff on the struggle in the Seventies—the fight for socialism. Thursday 30 Sept, 8pm The Spotted Dog, 72 Garrett Lane, near Wandsworth Town Hall.

TEACHERS AGAINST RACISM: teach-in on racial discrimination in schools. Conway Hall, Sunday 3 October, 10am-4pm. Spkr include Gus John, Bernard Coard, Louis Chase, David Udon. Advance tickets 50p from Teachers Against Racism, 9 Huddleston Road, N7. 607 7633.

MERTON IS meeting on Unemployment. Speaker Chris Davison, 30 September 8pm William Morris Hall, Wimbledon.

MANCHESTER Irish Solidarity Campaign: Demonstrate against internment in N Ireland Saturday 25 September, 2pm, Albert Square. Release all prisoners! Withdraw the troops!

CROYDON IS public meeting: The Struggle in the Unions. Tuesday 28 September, Ruskin House, 8pm.

HORNSEY IS public meeting on Ireland. Speaker Brian Trench, 28 September at Duke of Edinburgh pub, 8pm, Fonthill Road N4. Near Finsbury Park tube.

OWN ROOM and share of non-profit-making West Kensington flat: £4 including light etc. 385 5817/9066.

IS BOOKS opening hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs; Fri: 2-5pm; Wed: 2-8pm, Saturday: 11-2pm. 6 Cottons Gardens London E2. Tube: Old Street and Liverpool Street.

IRISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN Forum: Sean Matgama on Socialism and Republicanism at the General Picton (cnr of Wharfedale and Caledonian Road, Kings Cross). Friday 24 September, 7.30pm.



The Sun front page that never saw the dawn

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Work on Concorde may be blacked

BRISTOL:- 2000 workers from the British Aircraft Corporation's Filton works walked out on Tuesday to a mass meeting to discuss further action in the battle to stop 500 being made redundant.

They decided to suspend the campaign of lightning strikes pending a satisfactory result of top-level talks between employers and unions. But blacking of work to and from the factory goes on—along with a ban on overtime.

The decision to end the strikes was carried without any opportunity for discussion at the meeting. Some 100 workers voted against and they angrily surrounded union officials after the meeting broke up.

There is now a strong chance that all work on the pre-production model of Concorde will be blacked.

Tuesday's meeting followed talks the previous day between the unions and the Engineering Employers' Federation. The talks were adjourned until Monday but it was agreed to hold off redundancy notices from this Friday until 29 September and 1 October.

This is just a stalling tactic. The danger now is of divisions in the unions' ranks. ETU official Don Holden said on Monday that if one of his members was sacked BAC would have a fight on its hands.

To be successful, that fight must be a united one. It is more-essential than ever that the management are forced to recognise the Joint Trade Union Committee

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