

# Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Union action vital to cut dole queues

## VICTORY FOR MINERS WILL AID JOBLESS

**THE MINERS' STRIKE** is as strong as ever after three weeks. Reports show that thousands of power workers, dockers, lorry drivers and railmen are respecting the miners' picket lines.

They recognise that men who work in a dangerous and precarious job are having to fight an arrogant and vicious government merely to keep up with the soaring cost of living.

The Tories and the press see the strength of this support and try to undermine it with lies. Their favourite story is that they sympathise with the plight of the coalworkers, but that a further pay rise would damage the economy, make the mines unprofitable and push up unemployment even more.

The truth is quite different. A victory for the miners can help the unemployed.

The biggest single cause of unemployment in recent years has been the spread of productivity deals throughout industry. Even Edward Heath inadvertently admitted this in parliament on Monday when he said that 'last year productivity rose by the exceptional amount of 5.5 per cent . . . thus slightly more was produced using only 19 workers for each 20 previously.'

The Coal Board's offer in the present dispute rests on the same argument. It demands productivity increases that cannot be fulfilled without closing more pits.

If the miners smash the Tory policy on wages, then they will feel strong enough to take on the Coal Board over the question of pit closures as well. And all other groups of workers will see that pay increases can be won without accepting cuts in the work force.

### END OVERTIME

The fastest way to cut unemployment in Britain today would be for the trade union movement to fight for an end to overtime working, so forcing employers to take on more men. But this is not easy while the average worker has to put in 7½ hours overtime a week in order to earn enough to live on. If the Tory policy on wages is beaten, real struggle against overtime working can begin.

For these reasons, it is essential that every section of the working class redoubles its efforts in support of the miners. The official leaders of other unions have been slow in organising support.

Leaders of the four unions in the power industry have called for an overtime ban, but have not issued the call for a more militant more effective form of action, a work-to-rule, that would hit big business immediately.

The leaders of the miners union have been slow in at least one respect as well. Tens of thousands of single miners are beginning to face hardship. Now is the time for a real hardship fund to be set up and for the miners to demand that the leaders of other unions organise massive support for the fund throughout industry.

Real solidarity action, effective blacking of coal and a united front of miners and power workers can win a major victory for the entire labour movement and ease the misery of the million on the dole queue.



'Your lorries aren't moving!' That was the clear message from miners picketing Bromley coal depot, East London, on Tuesday. A Gas Board official (in white helmet) wanted to use blackleg drivers to take coal up north, but the 80-strong picket line foiled him. Picture Jeff Pick.

## Roll in cash for IS Fighting Fund

'TO JIM NICHOL: I have enclosed £20 to help you in the fight against this bastard government.' That was the reaction of one Yorkshire reader this week to our appeal for £5000 to help boost the activities of the International Socialists. With the miners locked in a grim battle with the government for a living wage and other key sections of workers coming up with important wage claims, the working-class struggle in Britain is at its highest pitch since the War.

Tremendous opportunities exist for the revolutionary socialist movement. We need more papers, more posters, more pamphlets and more full-time organisers throughout the country. Times are difficult, money is tight, but YOUR donation will help build an effective organisation to defeat the Tories and spearhead the struggle for socialism. We urge all IS branches, readers and supporters to help us reach our target by 29 February.

Cheques and postal orders should be made out to the International Socialists and sent to Jim Nichol, National Treasurer, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

### THIS WEEK

In spite of its ruthlessness, the regime continues to face a more defiant African population. The 'happiest Africans in the world' boiled with rage at the farce that was being performed before them.

The defiance is not merely against the sordid settlement but against a whole system of repression and deprivation that has been created in Rhodesia for the past 80 years. British imperialism and its miserable child, the Rhodesian government, are being spat upon by five million African workers and peasants. The settlement is being universally rejected, exposing at the same time the entire system.

Part of Roger Tembo's brilliant demolition job on the brutality and thuggery of Smith's racist regime in Salisbury, its support from the British Tories—and the magnificent fight back by the lawful inhabitants of 'Rhodesia': **page 2.**

THE PORT EMPLOYERS, one of the most greedy and heartless sections of bosses, have a simple aim: to wreck the London docks and the jobs of thousands of men with them. After several years of relative peace, dockers are beginning to fight back against the bosses' plans and the Devlin productivity swindle. Wednesday's strikes in London, Liverpool and Southampton showed the growing militancy of port workers. Authoritative report by London docker Bob Light:—**page 4.**

IF YOU THINK that British workers in uniform always carry out unquestioningly the orders of 'officers and gentlemen', read Peter Hitchens' exciting historical article on the Invergordon mutiny. The Day the Fleet went on strike: **page 5.**

NEXT in the Tories' firing line are Britain's 5½ million council tenants. The grab-all in Whitehall have a humorous scheme called the 'fair rents' Act that will hike up your rents to as much as £24 a week, plus rates. Tenants' organisation backed by the trade union movement can defeat the Tories and the landlords, argues Hugh Kerr in a special feature: **pages 5 and 6.**

ADVERTISEMENT

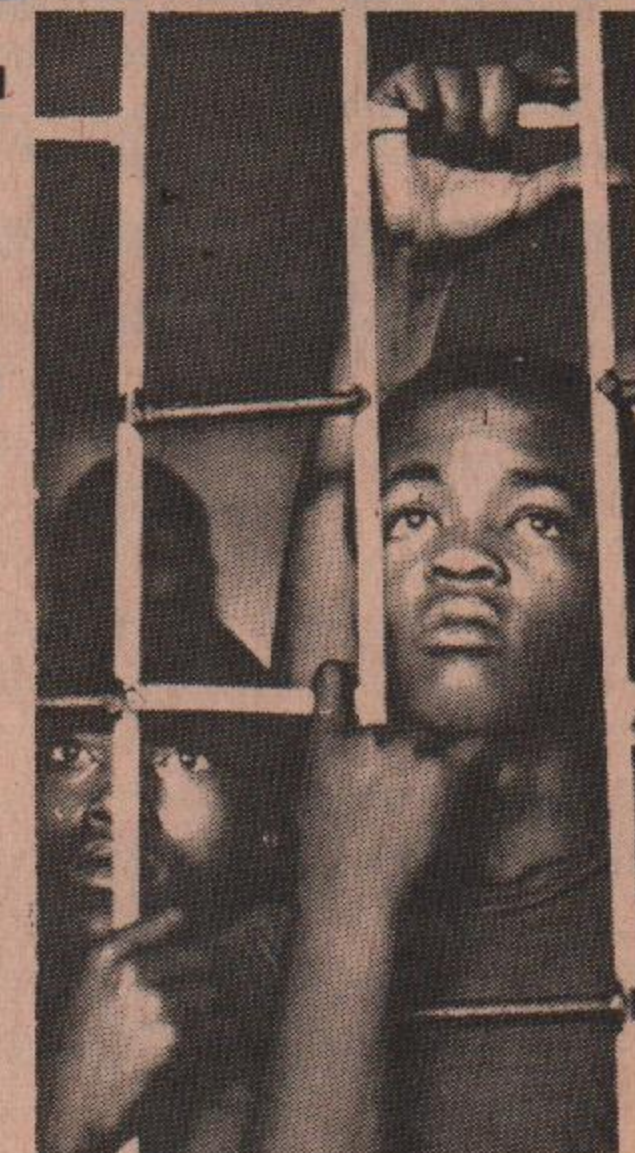
## FIGHT RHODESIA SELL-OUT

DEMONSTRATE SUNDAY 13 FEB  
Meet Speakers Corner  
(Hyde Park) 1pm  
March to Trafalgar Square  
for Rally 2.30pm

Demonstration to be followed by march to Rhodesia House.

Speakers include:  
Lawrence Daly, Jimmy Reid,  
Althea Lecointe Jones,  
Michael Foot, MP.

Rhodesia Emergency Campaign Committee, c/o AAM, 89  
Charlotte Street, London W1P 2DQ. Tel 01-580 5311



**COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE ROUNDUP: BACK PAGE**



# WORLD NEWS

on the crisis in  
Southern Africa

BRIEFING

## Rhodesians fight back

by Roger Tembo

A MONTH AGO Ian Smith, the Rhodesian premier, impudently declared that he had 'the happiest Africans in the world'.

It was this assumed apathy on the part of the Africans that was the basis of the deal between Rhodesia and Britain. It was never considered important that the African masses ought to be consulted, never mind included, in the making of decisions that affected their lives.

It never occurred to the opulent, well-fed Lord Goodman and his bosses the British government, nor to the white parasites in Rhodesia, that the ordinary African worker and peasant had the power of reason; that he had feelings or that he was a human being. As in all ruling classes, the assumption remained that in a police state (like Rhodesia) any sordid, filthy policy could be dished out to a hungry, suppressed population.

The urban unemployed have since then spearheaded a dramatic intervention of the African masses to smash this Anglo-Rhodesian confidence trick.

Up to 90 per cent of all Africans giving evidence to the Pearce Commission have said 'No' to the settlement terms. In the cities this 'No' was reinforced by a tremendous outburst of violence, which has shaken white Rhodesia to its very foundations.

The pattern of violence, which now characterises all Pearce Commission hearings, started long before the arrival of the commission. Ever since the beginning of January there have been attempts to organise African opinion against the Anglo-Rhodesian deal.

As the campaign intensified, police harassment reached unbearable proportions. People began to disappear from the townships of Salisbury and Bulawayo. Meetings were broken up and even discussions in beer halls were pounced upon by informers and police.

### Violence flares

In the tribal areas, the district commissioners, arch-representatives of British imperialism, began threatening people with arrests and suppressing meetings. Militant African nationalists began to be detained on the pretext that 'they were talking to others about politics'.

All this was preparation by the regime to ensure a 'yes' to the settlement. Again the assumption was that the vast majority of Africans were too frightened of politics after 10 years of Rhodesian Front rule. All you had to do was remove the agitators and the settlement would be saved. The Smith regime actually believed its own propaganda.

This happy illusion was shattered by the spontaneous violence that flared up after 11 January. The dismissal of 10 miners in the Shabani asbestos mines for 'not obeying orders' provoked a massive response from the 3000 miners. They immediately went on strike and prepared for demonstrations, demanding reinstatement and a pay rise.

The police response was frantic. The commission had arrived and any African manifestation had to be suppressed quickly. On the evening of 12 January the police opened fire on a demonstration.

While retreating, the miners, in sheer frustration, began burning the beer hall (municipal property) all administrative offices and motor cars (all cars are assumed to be owned by whites). Eye-witnesses claim that they saw at least seven people shot dead.

It is the usual practice of the Rhodesian police in



Rhodesians give their answer in the Salisbury township of Harari: No

## CHIEFS PAID BY REGIME

AS AFRICANS fight back against the Smith regime, the Rhodesian authorities and their friends in the Tory press will put much stress on the fact that the settlement has been accepted by the tribal chiefs, who are said to be 'responsible' representatives of African opinion.

Who are these chiefs? Far from being spokesmen for their people, they are paid agents of the white minority regime. From the earliest

days, colonial administrators enrolled them as managers or office-orderlies.

Most chiefs remain illiterate or semi-literate and imbued with the idea that the white man is boss and the African his slave. As bearers of the message of white supremacy, they receive a minimum of £36 a month. Their loyalty is thus guaranteed.

To ensure that the people

would not object to this sell-out by their traditional leaders, a law was introduced which made it an offence for an African to criticise a chief in speech or writing. He can be fined £30. A white person may say what he likes about a chief.

The few chiefs who have rejected their new role, such as Chief Mangwende, who supported African nationalism, were deposed and detained.

these circumstances to surround the township, impose a curfew and begin indiscriminate shooting from armoured cars against anything that moves. At dawn a truck full of sacks tours the township to pick up the dead. The regime claimed that only one miner was shot dead and nine were wounded.

By then the commission had arrived. The British Foreign Office made its usual noises about 'regrets'.

The following five days saw similar riots in Gatooma, Salisbury, Umtali, Que Que and Fort Victoria. The police behaved with their customary barbarity, using dogs, tear gas, machine guns, armoured cars and helicopters.

The regime feared, above all, uprisings in Salisbury and Bulawayo, the largest cities, and it was there that security had been tightened. Much to its annoyance it was in the small industrial towns of Gatooma and Que Que that violent riots began.

White Rhodesia began screaming for blood. The regime's reaction was typically desperate. It banned Sir Dingle Foot, arrested the Todds and numerous African

National Council officials.

The ANC in fact has repeatedly called for calm. But the regime had to find agitators. It had to appear to the manic white Rhodesians to be ruthless. That is the main reason why casualty lists are made public. The 14 Africans shot dead are enough for the moment to placate white supporters of the regime.

### Repression

In spite of its ruthlessness the regime continues to face a more defiant African population. 'The happiest Africans in the world' boiled with rage at the farce that was being performed before them.

The defiance is not merely against the sordid settlement but against a whole system of repression and deprivation that has been created in Rhodesia for the past 80 years. British imperialism and its miserable child, the Rhodesian government, are being spat upon by five million African workers and peasants. The settlement is being universally rejected, exposing at the same time the entire system.

The Pearce Commission hearings are now being used by the Africans to express general indignation at white rule. The cry now is not only about constitutional guarantees but for land, for jobs, for education and for freedom.

This is taken by reporters to mean that Africans do not understand the terms. But they understand them very well. The legal jargon of British civil servants, specially developed to confuse rather than explain, has been rejected in favour of a clear discussion about basic issues.

The revolt of the Rhodesian Africans has effectively buried the possibility of entrenching the alliance of the Rhodesian middle classes and British capital. But the revolt against this alliance must go beyond the settlement and prepare to take power in Rhodesia.

## Ovambos: The struggle goes on

by W. Enda

GOVERNMENT reports from South West Africa say that a settlement has been reached in the strike of 20,000 Ovambo workers, which has brought the country to a complete standstill.

In Ovamboland, to which the strikers have been repatriated from the white areas, an elected strike committee has circulated leaflets outlining demands:

1. An end of the labour contract system, to allow them freedom to choose where to work and to change jobs without incurring jail sentences.
2. Rate for the job irrespective of

colour, and equal treatment for all.

3. Abolition of the official recruiting organisation and establishment of labour exchanges in all rural and urban towns.

4. Pay sufficient to buy their own food and transport rather than these being provided by the bosses.

5. Identity cards rather than pass books.

6. Removal of the police barrier at the Ovamboland border.

Needless to say the 'settlement' has not conceded these demands, which would threaten white supremacy itself. The third has been granted, but recruitment is now placed in the hands of reactionary Ovambo chiefs, who last week called in more than 100 armed police from South Africa to protect themselves from the strikers.

The strike committee has already said it would reject any agreement that is reached if the strikers themselves are not consulted. This means continuing the strike, since the settlement has been arrived at between the chiefs and the whites.

against the workers.

Although small and isolated from the big mines on the copperbelt, this strike is important as it is the first challenge by any group of workers to a new Industrial Relations Act which makes the strike illegal. The Act contains most of the measures familiar to British workers, but unlike in Britain, the official trade union movement in Zambia has failed to oppose the introduction of the Act even nominally.

This is because it contains no threat to the trade union bureaucracy, which has an even more privileged position than in advanced countries. For example, the Act was introduced by a Minister of Labour who was formerly head of the Zambia Congress of Trade

Unions.

The Act must be seen in the context of Zambia's flagging economic position and the fall of copper prices on the world market. Zambia is the world's third largest copper producer, and depends on it for 97 per cent of exports.

### Failures

The '51 per cent nationalisation' of mining in 1969 was negotiated on terms extremely favourable to the international companies. They continue to export profits, and the government cannot increase taxation until all compensation and interest has been paid. This will take from eight to twelve years.

This year the state's dividend is

A CORRESPONDENT recently in Yugoslavia reports: 'The student demonstration in Zagreb was not an isolated occurrence, and it did not solely involve support for the deposed Croat leaders. The strike there not only triggered off other student strikes up and down the country, including one in Belgrade itself, but involved many workers as well.'

'It is clear now that factory strikes took place, and not only in Zagreb and the Croatian towns. We can take as evidence the constant press reports that factory X and factory Y had not supported the students.'

'The street battles in the centre of Zagreb were reminiscent of Paris 1968, with students and young workers confronting the forces of 'law and order'. (The main square is now popularly known as 'The Square of the Victims of Marshall Tito').

'One student I spoke to drew an analogy with France, claiming that the failure of an all-out workers' opposition to the state was the fault of the sacked Croat leaders, who encouraged the movement in the universities while failing to call on the workers. The students plastered the universities with statements declaring: 'Workers we are with you'.

'A measure of the existence of a threat from the left has been the behaviour of the party leaders, in the wake of the repression of dissidents, promising to raise workers' wages. 'When there is trouble', one worker told me, 'they feed us bones'.

'The fear of an alliance between the student 'left' and the workers is evident in the press harangues about the loyalty of the proletariat to the Tito regime against the forces of counter-revolution. Meanwhile the police shoot miners in Kosovo and Metohija, and imprison Zagreb students for printing a 1919 manifesto by the revolutionary poet Gustav Krklec.

*THE Nigerian Socialists, together with eighty other political parties and cultural associations, have had all their assets, including books and documents, seized by the Nigerian government.*

RECENTLY people in Rome have been travelling free on the city's public transport. The initiative, taken by the Rome Administrative Council, was 'tentative and temporary', and very limited indeed. There were no extra buses or other initiatives to prevent the traffic jams which paralyse the city every day.

The experiment coincides with a recently announced shake-up in the car industry. Up to now production and selling have been mainly concentrated on cars, and public transport was so bad that even poor people have been forced to buy a car. Now the car market is declining, the emphasis is switched to building buses and trains. Fiat have reorganised their production to include a separate unit for building big public transport vehicles.

Free public transport may yet be another hidden state subsidy to the Italian car industry.

*'DEMOCRATIC America has already found a companion, and the cause of Sun Yat-sen a successor, in the Chinese Communist Party... The work which we communists are carrying on today is the very same work which was carried on earlier in America by Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln, it will certainly obtain, and indeed has already obtained, the sympathy of democratic America.'*

*Peking preparing a new line ready for Nixon's visit?*

*No. The above statement appeared in the Chinese Communist Party's Liberation Daily in July 1944.*

POLICE clashed with striking students at Madrid University in Spain this week. The students are demonstrating against changes in classes and academic life is at a standstill. Armed police broke up several 'illegal assemblies' held on campus by the students.

## Zambian workers challenge legal shackles

From a correspondent in Lusaka

POLICE were called in to 'restore order' after fighting between striking miners and scabs at Nampundwe iron ore mine near Lusaka on 9 January.

More than 300 miners were demanding an increase in their monthly pay from the present £18-a-month to £25-a-month, and better housing conditions. The miners live in a shanty town near the mine.

These basic demands could easily be won if the men's union, the 50,000-strong Mineworkers' Union of Zambia would give them even token support. But, as in most workers' struggles recently, the strike is unofficial, and the company, the government (which owns 51 per cent of the mining industry) and union officials are all ranged

not even big enough to cover the annual repayment and interest to the companies.

Failures such as these—together with recent advances by the racist regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa—have led to splits in the governing party, Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party. But the opportunists who have formed the new United Progressive Party have nothing different to offer.

The middle class in Zambia is weak and unwilling to stand up to imperialism. The peasantry is backward. The working class, who played a vital role in the struggle for independence, have no tradition of independent political organisation.



## Unemployment and wages: Tories' big lie campaign

THE LATE NAZI propaganda minister Dr Joseph Goebbels used to say that the bigger the lie, the better the chance of putting it over. Heath, Barber, Carr and Davies are trying the Goebbels technique. The massive unemployment their policies have produced is not THEIR fault, they claim.

It is the fault of those greedy workers who fight for wage increases. According to Unemployment Minister Carr we had six or seven years of wage stagnation followed from 1970 onwards by 'a wage explosion of unprecedented severity'.

'That is what happened on an enormous scale throughout the British economy,' said Carr, 'and that is why we have suffered this unprecedented rise in unemployment'. For sheer brass-neck cheek this takes first prize. The figures issued by the man's own ministry show that there was no significant overall increase in real wages in 1971. Indeed big sections of the working class suffered real wage reductions because they got no increase or an increase that was too small to compensate for the rise in prices.

One thing that did increase significantly was the retail price level—more than 10 per cent in 1971. Another big increase was in share prices, which have now reached an all time record—reflecting current profits and future profit expectations. Even the ex-liberal paper The Guardian felt bound to remark on 'the coincidence of a booming stock market and more than one million unemployed and still rising.'

1971 was a good year for big business. The present 'big lie' campaign of the Tory government is intended to help make 1972 an even better one. The key aim of the Tories is to keep wage increases below the level of price increases—to push down real wages. This means, first of all, beating the miners, forcing a settlement that involves a real wage cut. Hence the absurd claim that wage increases cause unemployment. It is a stunt to weaken solidarity for the miners' struggle.

The Heath gang did not invent this particular fable. It is nearly as old as capitalism. Early capitalist economists—apologists for the system—used to argue that there was a 'wages fund', an amount of money that was available to pay wages, and that it was fixed at any particular time.

So if some workers forced up their wages by trade union action, there was less available for other workers. Either these other workers must take cuts corresponding to the increases or workers would be thrown out of work. The conclusion was that trade union action would never help workers as a whole, that in fact it was harmful to the majority of the working class—a very convenient conclusion for the capitalists.

## Scruples disappear

In fact the 'wages fund' theory is false to the core. Over a century ago Karl Marx wrote a book called Value, Price and Profit which disproved this theory. That, of course, did not prevent it being taught by the universities. But even there, eventually, the weight of evidence and theory alike compelled economists to drop it.

When Barber tried it on last year—'I am in no doubt whatsoever that the major cause of the increase in unemployment is the absurdly high level of money of the pay settlements . . . —he was generally derided. The 'top people's' paper, The Times, politely noted: 'There is some mild official embarrassment at the technical weakness of the Chancellor's explanation . . . of the way he believes pay inflation causes unemployment.'

The hotting-up of the class struggle causes such scruples to disappear. Never mind the facts. Big business needs the myth as a weapon in its battle with the miners. And so the Tories, newspapers and television peddle this long discredited fairy tale.

Rising unemployment is basically due to rising productivity, to job destruction at a time when overall output is rising only very slowly. The big business weekly paper, The Economist, admitted last week: 'Employment in Britain has never got back to its peak before Mr Wilson's deflation in 1966 when nearly 26 million people had jobs. Today only just over 24 million have them . . . Since 1967 almost every sector of British industry has run down its labour force; manufacturing as a whole has done so by just over 7 per cent in five years.'

Productivity has soared—helped by the trade union leaders' failure to fight productivity deals. Unemployment has risen hand in hand with the rise in productivity.

Real wage cuts now will help to INCREASE unemployment—workers will have less money to spend. The fight to maintain and increase real wages without productivity strings is an essential part of the fight against unemployment.

THAT'S A FEW VIOLENT HOOLIGANS WHO WON'T BE ON THE PICKET LINES...



# COTTONS WARNS

## Chain gang

GREAT SCREECHING from the manufacturing giants last week when Britain's biggest supermarket chain, Tesco, blew the gaff on the great label fiddle. Tesco's announced in an advertisement that many of its 'own-brand' products were in truth made by such firms as Heinz, Brooke Bond and Nestle.

'Foul' yelled Brooke Bond. 'If you think Tesco tea is really ours, you're wrong. We make only pickles for Tesco.'

'Offside' bellowed Nestle. 'People might think we were supplying instant coffee to Tesco. In fact, we supply packet soup.'

Oh yeah? Pardon us if we're a mite sceptical about these frantic disclaimers. The own-brand game is one of the biggest rackets to hood-wink and bamboozle the consumer. Competition, it seems, really works as the supermarkets—Tesco, Fine Fare, Sainsbury, Marks and Spencers—flaunt their 'own' coffee, tea, soap flakes, cat food, toothpaste and so on.

Few of these goodies are made by the supermarkets themselves. They are supplied by the giant monopolies.

Proof? Hard to come by, of course. But a student tells us that he worked for a canning factory one vacation, on the processed pea conveyor belt. Every half-hour a whistle would blow—the signal to change the label on the tins. Same peas, just a different brand name.

## Cry Wolfenden

THE NEWS that Kohls Liegenschaften, a German company which runs two profitable brothels, is to offer its shares to the public has been received with considerable interest in the City of London. Common Market entry will mean no barriers to prevent British investors getting a slice of what promises to be highly lucrative action.

Mindful of the need to maintain good public relations (and avoid industrial disputes) the firm's founder, Kurt Kohls, claims that his firm has tried to get 'some heart into the profession' by running the brothels in a new style. A number of fringe



DASH: collared at Eton

benefits are offered to give the girls some security and 'take some of the hardness out of the profession.'

It is unlikely that any moral constraints will trouble investors who are offered a minimum return of 9 per cent on their money. After all, there is scarcely a big British property company that is not quietly emulating Herr Kohls by offering their flats to those who can pay the highest rent.

The most notorious of all are the investment advisers of the Church of England. Perhaps Herr Kohls should ask the Archbishop of Canterbury to perform the opening ceremony?

**PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE (1):** Lawrence Kirwan, full-time national organiser of the Journalists' Union and a self-confessed member of the Communist Party since the 1930s, last week opposed union members who want the NUJ to refuse to register under the Industrial Relations Act with the remark that it was now law 'and we have got to learn to live with it.' What will he say when the Tories ban strikes?

## I'm Dashed

**PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE (2):** Lord Snooty reports from Eton—Gad, what's the world coming to? There's a chappie called Jack Dash comin' to speak at the jolly old college. Blighter's supposed to be a communist, doncherknow? Used to lead strikes in the London docks.

Rum show, the whole thing. Fellah's speakin' to the Keynes Society, named after the noble fellow who thought you could cure unemployment by getting chaps to dig holes in roads and then fill 'em in again.

Funny kind of red, this Dash. Talking on 'The nation is a family'. Told the press he sees the government as a kind of parent and the people as the children.

None of us here believe that kind of hash. That's just propaganda for the proles. We know that the government exists to provide us with jobs when we've been on to 'varsity. We're in it for the filthy lucre, not to help look after the starvin' masses.

And if communist devils are taken in by nonsense about the 'impartiality' of government, then we haven't got much to worry about.

## Wight stain

PLESSEY executives had long been congratulating themselves on buying the Argyle works at Alexandria, Scotland, for £650,000 when it is worth £6.5 million. Until the magnificent workers' occupation came along, that is.

But true to form, Plessey has a number of other little deals going. Another which has only now come to light is in the cheap-labour line rather than knockdown machinery and factories.

Mentally handicapped patients at the Medina, Isle of Wight county council training centre are hard at work five days a week in workshops owned by Plessey Radar, Ronson Lighters and Dixon's Cameras.

The patients get the grossly inflationary sum of 55p a week for their labours. Their meals in the firms' canteen cost them 60p a week.

A spokesman for all three companies stated they had no control over the wages paid to the worker, and added that the wage contracts with the council were 'at normal economic rates'.

**THE OFFICIAL REPORT** on Warrington New Town in Lancashire has a long list of acknowledgements for services rendered, including the consultant sociologist 'the late John Madge'. Wonder how he got his ideas through? But it does help explain why most new towns look like graveyards . . .

## Dog's life

A TALE of the priorities that govern America was told by Paul Ehrlick, the Population, Resources and Environment expert speaking in London last week.

The American poor, he said, eat dog and cat food rather than buy cheap meat from the butcher. Federal food regulations apparently set higher standards for pet food than human food.

He told too of the exploitation of South America, where Peru produces a sixth of the world's fish yet manages to have a terrible hunger problem—for 80 per cent of this fish harvest goes to the rich countries of the West. Of the fish that does not go abroad, half does not reach hungry Peruvians—for Peru cannot afford the refrigerated storage and transport needed.

**DOG LOVERS' CORNER:** A memorial that houses the ashes of all South African police dogs killed in the execution of their duties has been unveiled by the Commissioner of Police in Durban. The memorial, claimed to be the only one of its kind, was built from funds donated by the public.

The ashes of black dogs are, of course, carefully segregated from white ones in the mausoleum.





# 2000 sackings the thin end of the wedge

LAST WEEK'S news that the Port of London Authority intends to make 2000 dockers redundant came as a great shock to the men of Fleet Street. It came as no shock at all to dockers.

In fact Wednesday's one-day strike was the opening barrage in the battle by the national shop stewards to thwart the port employers' plans.

Quite simply, the port employers are trying to wreck the docks industry, at the eye of the storm is London where employers want to remove 2000 or more from their livelihood. But this is a recurring problem in every port in the country.

In Liverpool the employers claim 600 men are 'surplus to requirements'. In Hull the figure is 400. All told, nationally, the employers claim a surplus of 6690—all of whom they plan to push out the industry.

In any other country, the employers would just go ahead. Most of these men would already be on the million-long dole queue. But dockers are protected by the national dock labour scheme.

The scheme, set up by an Act of parliament in 1947 vests control of the dock labour force—including hiring and firing and discipline—in the National Dock Labour Board. The board is made up of 50 per cent employers and 50 per cent representatives from the unions.

Dockers are employed in almost two stages: they are registered with the board and then 'lodged out' with port employers. So the employers can take away a man's regular employment—but they can't drive him entirely out of the industry. Instead men revert back to the 'unattached register', existing on the national minimum wage of £20.

At the moment there are 574 men on the unattached register in London, and 39 in Hull, who will be joined by another 274 in three weeks' time. If the employers are allowed to get away with it there will be 4000 or more living in this limbo, and the unattached will become a scrapheap for ex-dockers.

Then registration will be worthless: it will guarantee dockers nothing more than a different form of dole house. And, the whole dock labour scheme will be under the hammer.

## The sting

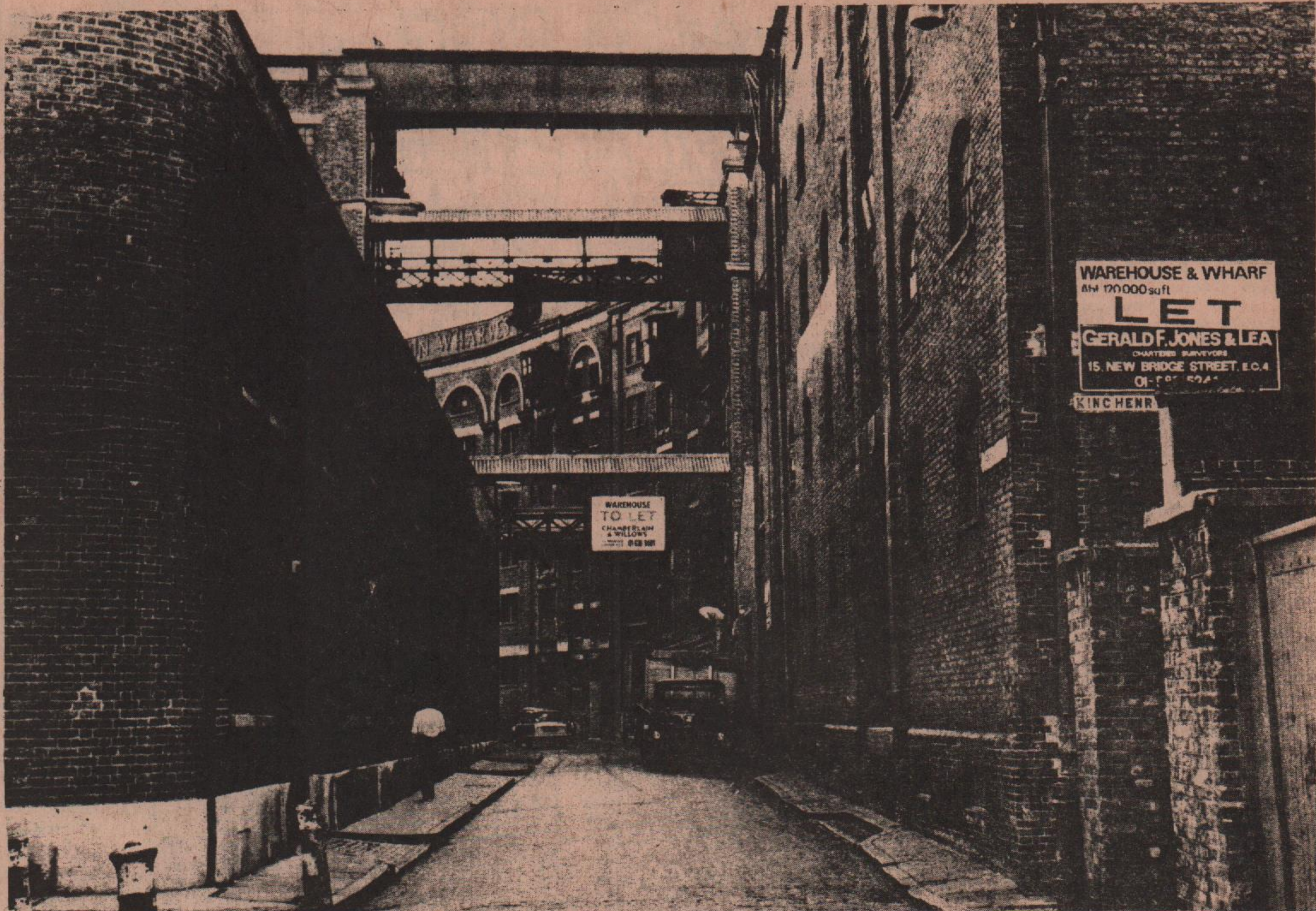
In this, as in all things, the employers and the Tory government are two cheeks of the same bum: since 1947 the employers have been itching to scrap the scheme. With 4000 men on the unattached, Robert Carr would set up a stooge inquiry to legislate the scheme out of existence.

And even this round of sackings is just the thin end of the wedge. The National Ports Council is already talking of a dock labour force of 35,000 by the end of 1972. This is a battle that affects every dock-worker—and it is one nobody can afford to lose.

This current crisis can be traced back to the Devlin Inquiry of 1965. The scheming Lord Devlin made one startling discovery: 'The docks is not like a factory', he revealed.

Since 1965, the employers have dedicated themselves to putting this right—making the docks just like an employer-controlled tame factory. In 1967 came the first phase of the Devlin plan, giving all

**DOCKLAND  
TO LET:  
Wapping  
High Street,  
where  
the jobs  
used to be**



# Port bosses out to wreck docks jobs

dockers regular employers. A few years later, came the sting in the tail: Devlin phase two, a productivity deal to end them all.

Before Devlin there were 58,500 registered dockers. Today there are 44,643. Until now this clear-out has been achieved by 'voluntary' severance, whereby for £1800 or less a man left the industry—taking his job with him.

Now the employers are impatient with this show of good manners and are openly pushing compulsory severance.

To justify this the employers have carved out a legend of 'the crisis in the ports'. They claim that docks are unprofitable. They claim that excessive demands from dockers is driving trade elsewhere.

But are the docks on the rocks? Thames Stevedores, in London, are trying to sack 241 men, because trade has been 'driven' to Southampton. But the British and Commonwealth Steamship Company, which co-owns Thames, also owns the Southampton Stevedoring Company, so trade hasn't been 'driven' away, it has just been transferred to another part of their empire.

What is just an exercise in book-keeping is used to 'justify' sacrificing 241 jobs.

## THE DOCKS



by **BOB LIGHT**  
Transport Workers Union,  
London Royal group of docks

And profits.

Take the case of Butler's Wharf, also in London. This is about to close, because it is 'unprofitable'. But Butler's is owned by the Hay's Wharf consortium.

This is a club of capitalist heavies led by Sir Max Rayne and his fun-loving but aging popster wife Lady Jane Rayne.

Last year they made a cool £2m profits. Next year they expect to make it £4m. Hay's Wharf is also the money behind the £300m scheme to erect offices and luxury hotels along London's waterfront.

And when you hear talk of unprofitability, bear this in mind: last year Slater-Walker bought Hay's Wharf. After six weeks they sold it—making a clear £1,500,000 profit. Why should dockers and their jobs be sacrificed to these people and their filthy system?

Technology and the English language has confronted the industry with mechanisation, containerisation and palletisation. All these techniques could have been used to the fantastic benefit of dockers. Instead the employers are trying to make dockers the victims of technology. And this they call 'progress'.

It is progressive only for the port employers and their profits.

## Containers

The main dock union—the Transport Workers Union, has done very little to fight these moves. It was the TGWU that agreed to the Devlin phase two productivity package. It was taken in by the employers' fake 'no redundancy' pledge.

The Union was quite prepared to see its members in inland container 'ports' handle cargo that had been diverted from the ports. Even now TGWU secretary Jack Jones is prepared to agree to working LASH (lighter-aboard-the-ship) vessels.

But, pushed by the national shop stewards, the union is at last crawling into action, pinning its main hopes on a hair-brained 'work-sharing' plan by which dockers will share work and share the pay.

In other words, while the employers continue to run down the industry dockers will share a smaller amount of work among themselves. Shared poverty is no solution to the employers' attack.

Once again, the official union is trapped by its desire to avoid being labelled 'irresponsible' by the Tories.

And like all those who stay in the middle of the road, they are in danger of being run over.

The employers have thrown down the challenge and it is the national shop stewards who so far are rising to meet it.

It was they who called Wednesday's strike and demonstration. At their last meeting they agreed on a nine-point programme:—

**ONE:** No redundancy.  
**TWO:** Retention of the dock labour scheme as it is.

**THREE:** Implementation of the Bristow recommendations nationally. The Bristow Inquiry was set up to investigate container handling after a dispute in London in 1967. It was killed by the Labour government under pressure from the employers before it published its final report.

But its preliminary recommendation was for a five mile 'corridor' each side of the Thames within which all containers would be handled only by dockers.

**FOUR:** The unattached register to be purely temporary, for dockers in transit from one employer to another.

**FIVE:** Recall of the union's docks delegate conference.

**SIX:** Lowering the retiring age to 60—with full pay to 65.

**SEVEN:** Reduced working week and more holidays with no reduction in pay.

**EIGHT:** Re-introduction of the nationally-fixed manning scales that were sold away under Phase Two.

**NINE:** Nationalisation under full workers' control.

## Showdown

As a programme this is far from perfect—for instance it dodges the central issue of productivity dealing in the run down of the industry. But even so, this is a very important step forward and most certainly the programme can be the launching pad for the fight against the employers.

And Wednesday's strike was a fine show of determination. But the employers are just as determined. Joe Payne, Chairman of London Enclosed Dock Employers, has spoken publicly of 'the showdown that cannot be avoided' and a 'bloodbath'.

The days of talking are at an end. There is no longer time for the unions to take their time—the first sackings will be finalised in the next few weeks. The employers must be answered in the only language they understand.

This is a struggle that affects every docker—and one that no one can afford to lose. But one thing is certain: if dockers close ranks nationally and unite behind a fighting programme, it will not be dockers but the employers and their government who face a future of redundancy.

# Death of a 'careless' docker

ONE of the worst traditions of the bosses' press is that only the rich and famous receive obituaries. Yet the lives of 'ordinary' working people should not go unremarked.

Take for instance, my uncle, Wal Martin, who died last week. He was a docker in London's Surrey Docks on the south side of the river.

In the early 1950s he gave up dock work for good—but not because he wanted to. He fell into the dry dock one day when he missed his footing on a ladder that had a rung missing.

His legs were badly smashed. Through his union, the Stevedores and Dockers, he sued the port employers for negligence. But the judge found against him. He said that an experienced docker should have known there was a missing rung on the ladder.

Wal Martin got no compensation. His union is a desperately poor one with no fund provisions for accidents. So he was forced to live off meagre handouts from the state.

The accident left his legs crippled permanently with arthritis. An endless stream of 'specialists' found no cure.

One night when the pain was particularly unbearable he was so beside himself with the agony that his wife found him drinking from a bottle of Sloan's Liniment.

He lived in a little house in Rotherhithe near the Old Kent Road. It has an outside lavatory and only recently has been converted to electricity. He became familiar with its walls. His two great passions—greyhound racing and cricket—had to be given up.

You cannot exercise a spirited greyhound if you can merely hobble and finally the summer journeys to the Oval to watch Surrey play became too much for him.

I don't know if he believed in a life after death. If he did, I hope the ladder to it was in good working order.

ROGER PROTZ

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# THE DAY THE FLEET WENT

# ON STRIKE

**T**HE BRITISH ruling class has always proudly claimed that its army and its navy are made up of willing men. If we believe the history books, they are quite right to be proud. But socialists do not believe the history books. From the press gang to the dole queue, our rulers have used violence to force men into their armed services.

And even today the recruiting sergeants are waiting outside the labour exchanges looking for likely victims. Again, if we believe the history books, 'Jack' and 'Tommy' have always done the dirty work of Empire cheerfully, without a murmur of protest.

The history books do not mention the State of Emergency in April 1921. Five hundred sailors were sent to Newport in an effort to break the miners' strike. When they found out what they were doing, they refused to serve.

In answer to appeals from the officers, one man called out: 'You don't expect us to fire on the miners, sir!' and another: 'Ninety per cent of us are trades unionists. We would down arms if we were called upon to act as strikebreakers'.

The men were hurried back to Portsmouth, where they pulled down the white ensign and ran up the red flag before they were put under guard. Four hundred and forty men were disciplined and several discharged.

## Dole cuts

They don't tell you about the rebellions and mutinies—like the one of 40 years ago when half the Royal Navy went on strike. August 1931 had seen the end of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government. The profit system was deeper in crisis than it had ever been before. A united front of bankers and big business was formed to begin a new attack on the working class. It was called the National Government.

*It was also called the National Starvation Government. Almost the first thing it did was to cut the dole—already wretched—to 15s 3d per week. (This is about £2.25 by 1971 values). The only escape from the dole queues was the armed forces. But there was no escape from the cuts. Service pay suffered as well—most of all in the navy.*

A promise had been given to the navy in 1919 that no cuts in pay would be made before 1932. The promise was broken in 1931. And the way it was done was almost as insulting as the Queen's £1½m pay rise last December.

A highly-paid admiral lost seven per cent. The seamen's 4s daily pittance was cut by a quarter. Not that the 4s had been enough in the first place. Sailors with families to keep had to take in laundry or mending work to make ends meet. A warship's deck on a Sunday looked like a market place. High seaport rents and hire purchase debts meant the cuts were not just a hardship—they were a disaster.

News of the cuts filtered slowly down to the lower deck. They had been planned in August, but were not announced until the evening of Saturday 11 September.

## Spontaneous

On the Saturday evening the Atlantic fleet was at anchor at Invergordon, 20 miles north of Inverness in NE Scotland. The rest of the navy was at sea, scattered and isolated.

Half the fleet's 12,000 men were ashore to watch the navy cup final. A few men had heard the news of the cuts on the radio and the word began to spread. Without any organisation the men made for the shore canteen. After some speechmaking they agreed to hold a bigger meeting the next evening.

*On the Sunday night, the canteen was packed. That morning, huge printed notices had been posted up in every ship bearing official confirmation of the cuts. While men*



HMS NELSON, the flagship: Seamen sat on the anchor chains to prevent the officers putting the ship to sea



Ramsay Macdonald, head of the National Starvation Government

*were still pouring through the canteen doors, Able Seaman Bond, from the HMS Rodney, jumped upon a table and began to speak.*

**T**HE ONLY way to fight the cuts, he said, was to unite as a body. They would have to strike. He was followed by Leonard Wincott, a seaman from HMS Norfolk. Wincott—later drummed out of the service—compared the seamen's miserable pay with the millions spent on useless manoeuvres, servants and luxuries for officers.

He asked for volunteer representatives from each ship to find out the general feeling, and to spread the news of a further meeting to be held the following night, which would make a definite decision as to the action which would be taken.

There were more volunteers than were needed, and the men held elections on the spot. Monday night's meeting had already begun when an officer forced his way in and tried to silence the speakers. He was lifted off his feet and carried outside. He came back later with an armed patrol and the canteen was cleared. But the meeting went on in Black Park, a football ground close by. A unanimous show of hands decided that the strike would begin the next morning. The men went back to their ships singing the Red Flag.

At six in the morning on Tuesday 15 September the crew of the battleship Rodney refused orders and struck. As each ship's company stopped work they gathered on the decks and cheered, passing the message down the line. All radio communications were shut down. Marines, used traditionally to keep order on His Majesty's ships, threw in their lot with the seamen.

Officers manned the loudspeakers and hectoring the men on prestige and traditions. One tradition, they warned, was that 'mutineers' usually got themselves nowhere but the end of a rope. The men ignored them.

## Drastic

Meanwhile, a manifesto was drawn up and sent to the press, MPs and around the fleet. It read:

*'We, the loyal subjects of His Majesty the King, do hereby present to our Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty our earnest representations to them to revise the drastic cuts in pay that have been inflicted upon the lowest men of the lower deck. It is evident to all concerned that these cuts are the forerunner of tragedy, poverty and immorality amongst the families of the men of the lower deck. The men are quite willing to accept a cut which they, the men, think within reason and unless this is done we must remain as one unit refusing to serve under the new rates of pay.'*

**T**HE STRIKE went on. Leonard Wincott wrote: 'The ships were under our complete control. We carried out all the essential duties, such as food supply, cleaning of living quarters, provision of safety men and fire parties at night time. The services of the officers were not required and they were completely ignored and shunned by us.'

More attempts were made to get the seamen back to work. The fleet chaplain toured the ships in his personal launch but was pelted with potatoes and went home. Officers tried to split up the ships (and the men) by putting to sea. But only one ship—the Repulse—got under way. Aboard the flagship Nelson the men sat on the anchor chains and made it impossible for the ship to leave without the officers using force. On another ship the men watched while the officers raised one anchor, and then lowered it while the officers were straining at the other.

By Wednesday evening, the Admiralty was offering a commission to reconsider the cuts.

They insisted that there were to be 'no further breaches of discipline' and that the fleet disperse to its home ports. There would be, they promised, no victimisation.

But as soon as the ships steamed into Plymouth, Portsmouth and Sheerness, MI5 and Naval Intelligence began an intensive ferreting operation.

At Devonport 24 men were taken from their ships and 'compelled to drill with rifle and bayonet continually at the double. We were run off our feet and allowed no time for rest, and we were subjected to rigorous punishment at the slightest provocation'.

On 3 November these men (including Wincott) were dismissed the service. In all 397 men were purged—not just from the Atlantic fleet but from the whole navy.

*Invergordon was only half a victory. The men's pay was still cut, but by 10 per cent. They and their families would have to live on the princely sum of 3s 7d a day. Outside the navy, a hard-pressed labour movement was kept ignorant of what was going on. Only the Communist Party's Daily Worker gave complete support to the seamen.*

**T**HE GOVERNMENT replied swiftly and ruthlessly. The Daily Worker's offices were raided. The printer, business manager and a member of the board were arrested and the paper appeared under censorship for several weeks. The pages were peppered with blank spaces and almost every article was full of gaps.

The three accused men were jailed for a total of five years and nine months under the Incitement to Mutiny Act of 1797. Hardly surprising. The dole cuts had sparked off angry and near desperate demonstrations in every major city in the country. An anonymous letter to the Daily Worker revealed sympathy for the sailors among troops at Woolwich barracks. The government was clearly terrified of what might happen if the sailors got organised support from the working class. As well they might be.

In 1931 they managed to prevent it. But when the paid protectors of the profit system realise which side they are really on it will be no use calling out the troops.

**Peter Hitchens**

## IN THE CITY

# Crocodile tears as the profits roll in



with Arthur Millium

**LAST YEAR** the once-prosperous textile industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire were hit by the worst depressions in their history. In Lancashire alone, more than 13,000 workers lost their jobs. Short-time working is still extensive. Both managements and unions leaders alike joined in a hysterical campaign to keep foreign textile goods out of the country.

Yet it would seem that the grief customarily exhibited by the bosses at each mill closure did not last long. For according to figures just published, profitability of public companies in the industry actually increased last year by £2 million to £90 million—after tax. Dividends too were up. Shareholders drained more than £50 million from an industry that desperately needs money for re-equipment and improved wages.

The same pattern is certain to emerge in 1972. Even more closures, and speed-

ups for the remaining workers—for textile employers are hoisting output per worker by well over 10 per cent a year. Whatever the state of trade, the reduction in the bosses' wage bill will ensure that the £90 million profit figure will be comfortably exceeded in 1972.

**THE SHARES** of Thorn Electrical suffered a modest setback this month when startled investors learned the news that several million pounds worth of the company's assets were under control of 900 workers at the Fisher-Bendix plant at Kirkby.

Naturally the company was quick to assure its shareholders that 'appropriate steps' would be taken to protect their interests. No group of individuals, it was stressed, have the right to seize control of the company's wealth in this way.

Strangely, in all the reports of the factory no mention has been made of the latest seizure of Thorn's properties which

involved the permanent loss of £8 million.

The group responsible did not work for the company. It would be surprising if any have ever worked at all. Yet this did not prevent them grabbing what is known in financial circles as 'a dividend' of 24 per cent.

This is not the first time they have behaved in this way. The Company is undoubtedly rich, yet year after year vast sums which could be used to better wages and working conditions, or bring down the prices of Thorn products, are confiscated by this small group of investors.

The pickings for them are rich. Thorn's profits, which amounted to a mere £2.8 million in 1962, reached the pre-tax level of £37.2 million in 1971. This works out at about £500 for every worker the company employs.

These vast resources have not, however, prevented the Thorn manage-

ment bleating that the Fisher plant is losing £1 million and is thus 'no longer viable'. Even if this were true, it would take a tiny cut, from 24 per cent to 21 per cent in the company's dividend, to make up the difference.

In fact the losses claimed for the plant are patently absurd. Its main products are central heating radiators, which are going through a period of unparalleled prosperity. Hullrad, another big name in the industry, made profits of £750,000 last year and it only employs 500 workers.

The company's boss, Sir Jules Thorn, is not paid his £200 a week, plus dividends, plus enormous pension rights, to be sentimental about 900 workers or even tell them the truth. His job, like every other company chairman, is to protect the interests of that tiny minority who seize control of the workers' wealth every day. It's time that the workers, too, took 'steps' to protect their interests.



# TORIES PLAN BIG BLITZ

by Hugh Kerr

Harlow Tenants' Action Committee

THE TORY GOVERNMENT'S vicious rent plans have started to stir up angry reactions from council tenants. More and more tenants are beginning to realise that their rents are going to double from April—and they are organising to fight them.

The Tories plan to save £200-£300 million in government subsidies to council housing. They intend to do this by more than doubling 5½ million council tenants' rents by 1976. The most precise figures available so far come from a secret document from the Department of the Environment which Labour MP Frank Allaun has published (see chart with picture).

These figures are averages. This means that the average outlay of £9.45 a week in London conceals many rents higher than this. For example, Camden council estimate that the 'Fair' rent for some of their houses will be £20 - £24 a week.

The Housing Finance Act will make it a duty of every local authority to charge a 'fair rent'. The definition of a 'fair rent' is contained in Clause 50 of the Act. 'Regard shall be had to the age, character and locality of the dwelling and to its state of repair.' But an incredible addition to the clause makes it clear that a council 'fair rent' must have regard to 'the return that it would be reasonable to expect on it as an investment'. In other words, council houses are now openly declared to be profit-making enterprises.

Under the Act, local councils must draw up a provisional list of 'fair rents' for all their houses. Then three months are allowed for objections from the tenants. They can object only to the council and have no right of appeal. The proposed rents then go to a Rent Scrutiny Committee made up of lawyers, surveyors and property valuers—appointed by the government.

This committee can confirm or alter the proposed rents. Such committees have the right to inspect any council house and if a tenant refuses them entry he can be fined £50. But the tenant cannot make any appeal to the committee and the decision of the committee is binding on the council and the tenant.

## TAKE ACTION

The legislation is going through parliament now and will become law this spring. It requires local authorities to take action to raise rents in the financial year April 1972 to 1973 by not less than 50p a week.

If local authorities have not raised their rents since July 1971 there will be a compulsory increase in October this year by £1 a week. The aim of this clause is to force local authorities to begin raising rents now before the Bill is even law. After that, council rents will rise by 50p a week every year until they reach a 'fair rent' level.

For most tenants this will be in five or six years, by which their rents will have doubled. But the 'fair rent' is assessed every three years, so in five years time it will be much higher than the current 'fair rent'.

This will mean that many council estates despite paying vast sums to moneylenders (about 65 per cent of their present rents) will in fact be making big profits in five years' time. Half of any profit under the 'fair rent' goes back to the government.

## SUBSIDY LIE

It means also that council tenants will pay an extra £500 million to the government by 1976. The lies about council tenants being subsidised by owner-occupiers will be much harder to sustain by 1975. By then many house buyers who get tax relief on their mortgages will in fact be subsidised by council tenants.

Of course, the Tories' response to high rents is: 'If you can't afford it then you won't pay it'. This means that tenants will get a rent rebate related to their income.

For example, if you earn £16 a week and have one child you pay only 40 per cent of your 'fair rent'. But this will be more than twice your previous rent and you could still be paying more rent even at this low income and on a rebate.

Some other points about the rent rebate scheme worth thinking about:—



London transport workers supported tenants in the last rents fight. Such backing will be essential in the coming struggle.

**1** The calculations of your income are gross income, that is, before tax and deductions and including family allowance and wives' earnings.

**2** Any rebate is deducted by various amounts if you have other non-dependents in the house. You lose £1.50 of your rebate for a son or a lodger and even £1 for a pensioner.

**3** There is a maximum rebate of £8 a week in London. If you are unlucky enough to end up in one of Camden's £24 a week 'fair rent' houses, you could still pay £16 a week.

**4** If you want a rebate you must get a statement of earnings from your boss, fill in a form giving your income, capital resources, who is living with you etc. and submit it to the local authority. If you get a rebate you will have to repeat this process every six months. If your circumstances change before the six months is up, you have a duty to report this to the local authority.

**5** Most vicious detail of all is in clause 5 of schedule 3. It says:—'If some person who resides in the dwellings occupied by the tenant appears to an authority to have a higher income than the tenant, the authority may, if in the circumstances they think it reasonable, treat him as the tenant for the purposes of the schedules and in that case the tenant shall be treated as a non-dependent.'

## TORY CON-TRICK

In other words, if the son or even the lodger earns more than the tenant then they can be classed as the tenant and the rebate cut or removed. George Best's landlady in Manchester could find that George was classed as the tenant!

The truth is the Rent Rebate scheme is a major con-trick by the Tories to dress up their rent rises. Most tenants will not apply for it and those who do won't benefit much and will find them-

selves tied up in a means-test knot.

For example, if they are earning between £16-£22 a week and getting a rebate, they will lose 17p out of every pound wage rise. If they are getting any other means-tested benefits such as Family Income Supplement (which incidentally is classed as income for rebate purposes), rate rebates or school meals then they will lose even more.

The Sunday Times estimates that workers will lose on average 85p in every pound wage increase through loss of benefits or rebates. This is the highest rate of tax even including surtax and will obviously help the employers to go on paying low wages.

Any council that refuses to raise rents in the required way will be threatened with sanctions. Under clause 93 of the Act the Minister can withdraw all government subsidies from the council. He can deprive the local authority of all its housing powers and

instead appoint his own housing commissioners, who will introduce the rent rises.

Under clause 94, if any elected member or officer of a council willfully obstructs the production of a document or the supply of information to the commissioner, he will be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine up to £400.

## NO ILLUSIONS

The appalling prospect of the Tory rent plans has begun to stir considerable opposition. But while welcoming any opposition to the plans, we should spread no illusions among tenants about some of the people fighting those plans.

For example, various Labour members of parliament have been making loud noises. Tony Crosland, the Shadow Minister of the Environment, has promised that Labour will repeal the Act when they return. But can tenants place much trust in people

who presided over more than 65 years 1964-1970?

Many Labour have been expressed at the rent rises. So far have said definitely refuse Act or co-operate with it.

Only a few authorities have included Halst Rugeley in Stafford in Derbyshire. All councils have to oppose the Act specified how. The tant point becomes may be just to get in the London plan. Instead of rents in April then nothing until October government will put the rent up.

They can't say us it's the wicked preserve what really concern

# ON TENANTS WITH 'FAIR RENTS' ACT

## Needed: mass campaign with a programme of action

- Mass leafleting, protest meetings, petitions. Every tenant must know what he is fighting.
- The active involvement of the local and national trade union movement. Get trade unions to pledge their industrial strength behind the tenants' movement.
- Demand that all Labour councils refuse to operate the Act or co-operate with the housing commissioners.
- Organise total or partial rent strikes from next April. Freeze your own rents.
- Organise united national tenants' action, including national rent strikes to force the Tories to retreat.

United action with the unions can defeat



# THE SCANDAL

## that is Britain's mental hospitals

FARLEIGH SUBNORMALITY HOSPITAL in Somerset has been in the news again. Two nurses have been suspended on full pay pending police inquiries into an incident in which a patient at the hospital received two black eyes and a cut lip. Predictably the local press and television landed a blitz of attention on the hospital.

Farleigh is a relatively small hospital with only just over 200 beds and, in the Bristol area alone, compares favourably in terms of staffing and conditions with other subnormality hospitals. The problems of these hospitals in general are often obscured by directing attention to what is portrayed as a particularly 'bad' one.

Mental subnormality (or mental handicap), like mental illness, is for many people something heard about from time to time but never really understood. When incidents of ill-treatment are alleged (or even proved) fears and worries about these problems are stirred up, usually for sensational purposes, but are rarely discussed seriously.

For some, mental illness is something called 'depression' or 'schizophrenia', or just plain 'nerves'. For most, the idea of mental subnormality is even more emotive and vague.

But much of what is called mental illness is not illness at all. The idea of illness implies that people, somehow, 'catch' or 'get' mental illness, and that by one means or other this can be 'cured'.

*In fact much research has shown that social and psychological factors are much more important in explaining mental illness than are medical factors. The way in which family structures under capitalism create impossible situations for their members, tells us more about schizophrenia, for example, than do theories about an individual's genetic make-up.*

Nor is mental subnormality just an innate condition. While it is true that many patients in subnormality hospitals have received brain damage or other physical or mental injury in their early childhood (or at birth), many have not.

### Barracks

In England alone there are 198 hospitals for the mentally subnormal, 17 of which have more than 1000 beds. There are 157,650 people classified as mentally subnormal in these hospitals, 25 per cent of whom live in wards of 50 or more beds. Even at the better hospitals one night nurse might have to look after up to 100 patients from 8pm to 7am.

There is often little privacy or personal dignity for those who have to make their whole lives in these wards. Often there is no personal clothing, toothbrushes, face flannels and the like. There are rarely proper cupboards and wardrobes for personal possessions. Beds are usually barrack-room style—in one ward at another large hospital near Bristol 50 beds are pushed together.

### Brutalising

The priorities of the capitalist system mean that those who need the best care and opportunities possible in society receive the worst. 'Training' and 'education' for subnormal people is often a matter of simple repetitive assembly jobs for manufacturers. Even in this corner of society big business tries to screw as much profit out of people as possible. What starts off as 'therapy' all too soon becomes a source of cheap labour.

Under these brutalising conditions it is no wonder that the frustrations of both nurses and patients sometimes break out in violence.

*Press and television pay little attention to those really responsible for these conditions. Nationally, successive Tory and Labour governments have done nothing to stop these hospitals falling into further neglect. Recent allocation of long-awaited money for this area does not meet present needs, let alone provide for future developments. If there is a scandal that needs exposing, this is it.*

by a special  
correspondent



Mental hospital patient: locked away from understanding

If something is not done soon the problems will be almost insurmountable as the numbers of those coming under the heading of 'mentally subnormal' increases. With proper planning

resources and a community-based service, much could be done to reduce overcrowding and the appalling conditions in which patients and nurses live.

Many of the less severely handicapped could easily live outside the hospital setting. For this a properly planned system of local authority hostels in the community is needed. Some would be self-running with few staff, others would require properly trained staff in order to help the process of rehabilitation.

Mental nurses are beginning to see the possibilities and the kind of struggle that will be needed. The fight for decent wages and conditions goes hand in hand with political action to change the system that has produced totally inadequate and criminal living and work conditions for nurses and patients alike.

### Shut away

Mental nurses have been traditionally slow to unionise though over recent years this has changed considerably. Staff in many hospitals are now 100 per cent union members. This should certainly be the aim. Socialists should help this process in whatever way they can.

At the same time the nature of mental illness and mental subnormality should be made clear. One of the results of shutting people away in large hospitals has been to create a gulf between those defined as 'mentally ill' or 'subnormal' and people who live outside.

*Sensational reports of these hospitals play on people's fears and emotions. This must be resisted and a proper appreciation of the issues put in its place.*

## HIGH-RISE RENTS: WHAT THE TORIES PLAN TO DO

	Present Rent	New 'fair' rent
London	£3.50	£7.45
South East	£3.13	£6.49
East Anglia	£2.16	£5.72
West Midlands	£2.43	£5.72
East Midlands	£2.02	£5.14
South West	£2.43	£5.53
North	£2.08	£4.38

These figures do NOT include rates—approximately £2 a week extra.

votes. This type of symbolic opposition is worse than useless. Tenants must demand full opposition to rent rises in every way including non-co-operation with the Housing Commissioners.

Many tenants' organisations have begun to spring up or revive in different parts of the country. In every area of London, tenants groups are meeting to fight the rent rises.

### SLASH STANDARDS

Despite the stirring of opposition by tenants, there is clearly some confusion over how to fight the rent rises. Some tenants' associations are calling only for 'Labour to repeal the Act', or '2½ per cent interest rates', or petitions, or asking the local authority not to put rents up. While these may be reasonable demands to make, tenants should be clear that they will not be enough to defeat the Tory plans.

We should realise that the Tory rent plans are only the latest attack on working-class

living standards. Like the Industrial Relations Act, unemployment, the attack on wages and cuts in the social services, it is all designed to slash our standards in the interests of profit.

Tenants and the labour movement must organise and wage a massive campaign against these rent rises.

First, the impact of the rent rises will be national. Every council tenant (and there are 5.5 million of them) will suffer from next April. Private tenants' rents will be pushed up too, as will the price of housing generally, hitting intending owner-occupiers.

Second, it is much more difficult now to get a wage rise to compensate for rent rises. The attack on wages leaves workers much less chance of covering the cost of living even without rent rises.

Third, the rent rises come at a time of a general political attack that is forcing workers on to the offensive.

If socialists, tenants and trade unionists unite to fight rent rises in the coming year, then we can win the battle.

government



# HOW JAPAN ESCAPED

## THE WEST'S GRIP

EVER since the countries of the West industrialised themselves by looting Africa, Asia and Latin America, all 'backward' countries have had to face the problem of how to modernise and industrialise themselves in the face of international capitalism.

Japan in the 1870s gave one kind of answer to that question—one that is no longer available. Russia in the years after 1917 gave another, which is still the only one to offer any way forward today.

In Japan in the 1870s a section of the feudal warrior class, together with the merchants, deliberately industrialised the country. Japan was the only Asian country to succeed in doing so.

Japan had escaped colonisation through careful self-isolation, and a lack of the riches that had attracted Europeans elsewhere. As a result the Japanese ruling class had not developed the economic links with imperialism as other ruling classes had done, and the country had not been drained of its wealth in the same way. At the end of the 1860s Japan's rulers realised the country's isolation had to be ended so that Japan could modernise before Western influences overwhelmed her.

The way Japan industrialised tells us much about the sort of pressures which face any country wishing to

### Part Seven

resist and catch up with the most advanced powers in an imperialist world. Because Japan started late, she had to catch up quickly, so the role of the state had to be greater in order to force the pace.

An economist has written: 'A major precondition for growth was the existence of a good administration and an authoritarian bureaucratic regime bent on making Japan a modern state and a military power. . . . From the very beginning, the government was the dynamic factor in development. It incurred development expenditures and collected taxes on a scale unprecedented elsewhere.'

### Armaments

'The role of the government in the economy was at that time much bigger than in most European countries or in North America.'

The Japanese government carried out about 40 per cent of capital formation, and kept control of heavy industries connected with armaments, such as iron and steel, despite their non-profit making nature. The industries handed to private owners were often only

profitable due to government help in other ways. Even in peace time arms were more than half government expenditure.

The state had to play this central role if the process which had taken centuries, for Britain, with the wealth of the empire behind her, and generations for other countries, was to happen in Japan in one lifetime.

### War loot

If it had not happened, Japan would have gone the way of India, or of China. For the payments made by China when defeated by Japan at the end of the war of 1894 came to a third of Japan's gross national product, and were paid in foreign currency over two years. According to a Japanese economist, this loot 'made possible the expansion of the army and navy, the extension of the railroad and telegraph services, the establishment of the Yawata iron mill, as well as

## WHAT IS IMPERIALISM?

by STEPHEN MARKS



the adoption of the gold standard.'

Later wars also gave Japan a share of the loot enjoyed by the other European powers in China, as well as the whole of Korea. Japanese imperialism had to telescope two stages—imperialism as looting, and imperialism as the search for new markets and outlets for investment.

Japan got her foot in the door just in time. For any country which came later to industrialise successfully in the same way would be almost impossible. The rest of the world was already carved up by the end of the century, and there was no ruling class left anywhere with enough freedom of manoeuvre. Nor were there any more Chinas 'up for grabs' to provide an overseas surplus.

### Exploited

Most important, the gap between the 'advanced' and the 'backward' has widened greatly since the 1870s. Output per head in the most

advanced country, Britain, was then three times that in Russia, and nearly four times that in Japan. Today American output per head is much more than seven times that in the 'backward' countries.

Even if the government of a 'backward' country has power to mobilise all the resources of the economy, it has to catch up with and overtake nations which have industrialised, as we have seen, by exploiting the wealth of the whole world for many generations. Therefore to catch up with them in a few years, with no more resources than those of a single isolated country, is impossible precisely because capitalism is a world system.

The only exception to this rule appears to be Russia. But there, industrialisation within the limits of one country was only possible at a price: the prevention of revolutions elsewhere, the final defeat of the Russian revolution itself, and the survival of capitalism in the rest of the world.

Another ship is launched in Japan—symbol of the prosperity of the only country to escape Western capitalist domination without revolution



## Shipyards that leave the Clyde bosses in the cold

BY TONY POLAN

WHEN one of the directors of the old Fairfields shipyard, which is now the Govan division of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, was asked why the Japanese shipbuilding industry was so much more efficient than its British counterpart, he replied:

'We spend six months planning a ship, and two years building it; the Japanese take two years planning and six months building.'

The famous 'Fairfields experiment' of the Labour government—a joint venture by private, government and trade union capital to prevent closure of the yard—was an attempt to get to grips with this agonising problem of British capitalism.

It was seen as a 'testing ground', a pioneering demonstration of how backward, decaying British capitalism could start off on a new foot. The emphasis was on productivity, scientific planning of production, and 'co-operative' labour relations.

The great experiment lasted two years. And they certainly came up with some new ideas. A major question was not so

much the need for better equipment—it was one of the most modern yards in Europe—but the efficient use of such equipment and resources.

What they were up against was illustrated when one sharp fellow suggested that the traditional method of starting building the ship from the bows was inefficient, because the engines could not be installed until they had worked their way to the back. Why not, it was argued, start from the back? Then the engines could be put in while the rest was still being built.

### Outrage

This idea was the source of much jubilation, until it was discovered that the Japanese started in the middle—and had two teams working in opposite directions, thus cutting building time considerably.

The 'experiment' was torpedoed by the outraged opposition of the other shipyard barons of the Clyde. Such operations, they squealed, constituted

'unfair competition'. When the four yards were merged into UCS, the Fairfields whizz-kids were booted out and the old Clyde dynasties placed firmly back in the saddle. These were the people whose brilliant managerial skill was responsible, for example, for the John Brown (now Clydebank) yard which was, according to the Business Observer, 'a Victorian slum' compared to Fairfields.

The Clyde shipyards are now even further behind in the competitive race due to the inability of the British employers to understand and grapple with the problems that face them. Japanese shipbuilding employs twice the numbers that the British industry does—but builds almost ten times as much shipping. So, as even the Economist was forced to admit: 'The old cry of lots of cheap labour is wearing pretty thin'.

In fact a Nagasaki shipyard worker's wages are some 35 per cent higher than his British counterpart.

The source of Japanese superiority has been the ability to invest, indeed over-invest, in modern equipment and

technique. Thus at the Hitachi yard, 250,000-ton tankers are now designed entirely by computer, eliminating 3000 man-hours of design work per ship. From the tapes, instructions are given to automatic plate-cutting machines. Already the first few stages of building a supertanker are completely automated, and in an entire shop there may be no-one in sight, just giant bits of steel moved around by magnetic robots.

### Robots

With the increasing standardisation of tankers and cargo-ships, they become as simple to build as any other assembly line product. A super-tanker with a deck the size of 63 tennis courts abounds in repetitive work: the identical panels in the middle section of the hull need 250 miles of welding.

Robots are now being tried out to assemble machinery. They can operate several machines at once, transferring the work from one machine to another, and can do the whole job of assembling

But don't get the idea that if we had a different set of bosses, operating like the Japanese, there would be no problem. The Japanese policy of massive competitive over-investment has led to a situation where, as the Economist said, 'the big companies with expansion plans are currently playing a poker game to see who, if anyone, will withdraw. . . . The maximum demand foreseen for 1975 falls short of capacity by one-fifth. The likely result is a price war that would cut European shipbuilders' finances to ribbons even more than they are already.' Such a competitive war will inevitably take its toll in Japan as well.

The Japanese 'shipyard revolution' has only been possible in a situation of general economic boom. The fantastic growth rate of the past was continually providing new jobs. If your job was automated out of existence, you moved on to another one. With an increasing crisis in world capitalism, international monetary chaos, and the resulting slower growth of trade and markets automation more and more equals permanent unemployment.

In a sane society automation equals a shorter working week and a booming standard of living. Which, bringing us back home, underlines the problem of UCS as one that raises inescapable questions about the way society is run and organised.



## Unemployment -and how to fight it

by Chris Harman and Dave Peers  
Important new Socialist  
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# CLUBBING TOGETHER AGAINST THE SYSTEM

The rediscovery of working class history has produced some great books—E P Thompson's 'Making of the English Working Class' for example. From this have sprung a variety of works on the real history of the workers of this country.

Ruskin College's History Workshop has published a series of pamphlets on working-class life in the 19th century. The latest of these 'Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London' deals with the working class in the years before the 1880s.

MODERN SOCIALISM, the Webbs tell us, began with Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty' in the early 1880s which 'sounded the dominant note alike of the New Unionism and of the British socialist movement.' Stan Shipley's pamphlet\* turns the tables on the Webbs in suggesting that British socialism was not an invention of middle-class reformers but had an active following in the years prior to the 1880s.

The author does this by a study of the workmen's clubs in Central and East London during the 1870s. Within these clubs, he claims, an active interest in revolutionary socialism was kept alive, providing a link between the Chartist movement of the 1830s and 1840s and the new socialist organisations of the 1880s.

## Advanced views

During these years there were many clubs available for the politically active worker in the Metropolis. They were as various as the 'Eleusis' in Chelsea, the 'Commonwealth' in Bethnal Green, the 'Progressive' in Notting Hill, the Walworth 'Free-thought Institute' and so on. They provided centres for political discussion, poetry reading, (Shelley, the 'Poet of Democracy' being the favourite), social gatherings and booze, though not necessarily in that order.

The National Secular Society headed the majority, their members becoming well-known for their advanced views on matters as various as land nationalisation, home rule for Ireland, Scotland and Wales and population control. Indeed they were not immune to the influence of London's revolutionary exiles.

Thomas Okey, a Spitalfields basket-weaver by trade and member of Hackney's 'Hall of Science', (known by its enemies as the 'School of Blasphemy, Political Vandalism and Social Retrogression'), recalled in later years that: 'During the seventies and eighties of the last century indications were obvious both on the platform and in the audience of the Hall of Science that the Marxian Bible, or rather the earlier Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels... had begun to leaven English democratic thought. It quickly made a more potent appeal than mere republicanism and negative freethought to the working and labouring classes of East London.'

## Counterweight

The Soho O'Brienites were among the most long-lasting of the clubs, meeting in Denmark Street for a total of 24 years. After their failure to revive Chartism they became instigators of the National Reform League, participants in the First International in the 1860s and finally, active organisers of the unemployed agitation during the depression years at the end of that decade.

Marx wrote of the five O'Brienites who sat on the General Council of the International: 'These O'Brienites, in spite of their follies, constitute an often necessary counterweight to trade unionists in the council. They are more revolutionary, firmer on the land question, less nationalistic and not susceptible to bourgeois bribery in one form or another.'

The Soho O'Brienites were one group among many, distinguished by their long continuity of activity in working-class politics, expressed in their celebration both of the anniversary of the Commune in 1876 and that of Kennington Common in 1889.

The O'Brienites eventually combined with other clubs in the Manhood Suffrage League, which became not only the most radical of the London clubs, but also the best organised. It is described as: 'An intellectual meeting place for boot and shoe makers, tailors and cabinet makers, and all sorts of artisans who unfortunately did not go into print on the subject to which they returned time and again in debate, socialism.'

This statement gives us some understanding as to the social composition of the clubs. They appeared to attract the skilled artisans, for, 'it was a world into which the educated, and self-educating artisan slipped easily, but where the unskilled labourer would seldom find himself.'

Shipley claims that they were not self-conscious 'aristocrats of labour', and quotes an old O'Brienite, Charles Murray, who once remarked that: 'He knew there was an aristocracy among working men, and he deeply deplored it, but he somewhat consoled himself when he knew that there was an aristocracy in the workhouse.' Although there may have been many less vocal members of these clubs who would not have shared this view the political attachments of the clubs would have made this unlikely.

And that political attachment was throughout these years of a revolutionary nature. Those who came into the clubs with alternative solutions to the 'social question' were quickly put to rout. It is reported that a lecture given by an economist, Professor Levi, to members of workmen's clubs in 1876 was met with 'hisses and shouts', but that unperturbed the lecturer stuck to his guns in affirming 'over and over again that the law of supply and demand would always assert itself.'

The political content of the

clubs was taken seriously, though with an emphasis on discussion rather than organisation and activity, (which tended to be intermittent and spontaneous). 'The club was the artisans university', Shipley suggests, 'subjects tended to be open-ended. A debate on Shelley could develop as the evening wore on to a pulsating attack on the government's policy in Ireland.'

Of great interest in this study is what the author has to say of the demise of the clubs, the suggestion that the 'class war was more in tune with the artisan feeling in London in the seventies than it was in the eighties.' He attributes this to the middle-class influence upon the London clubs in the eighties as well as to the growing acceptance on the part of the working class of the 'inexorable laws of capitalist political economy.'

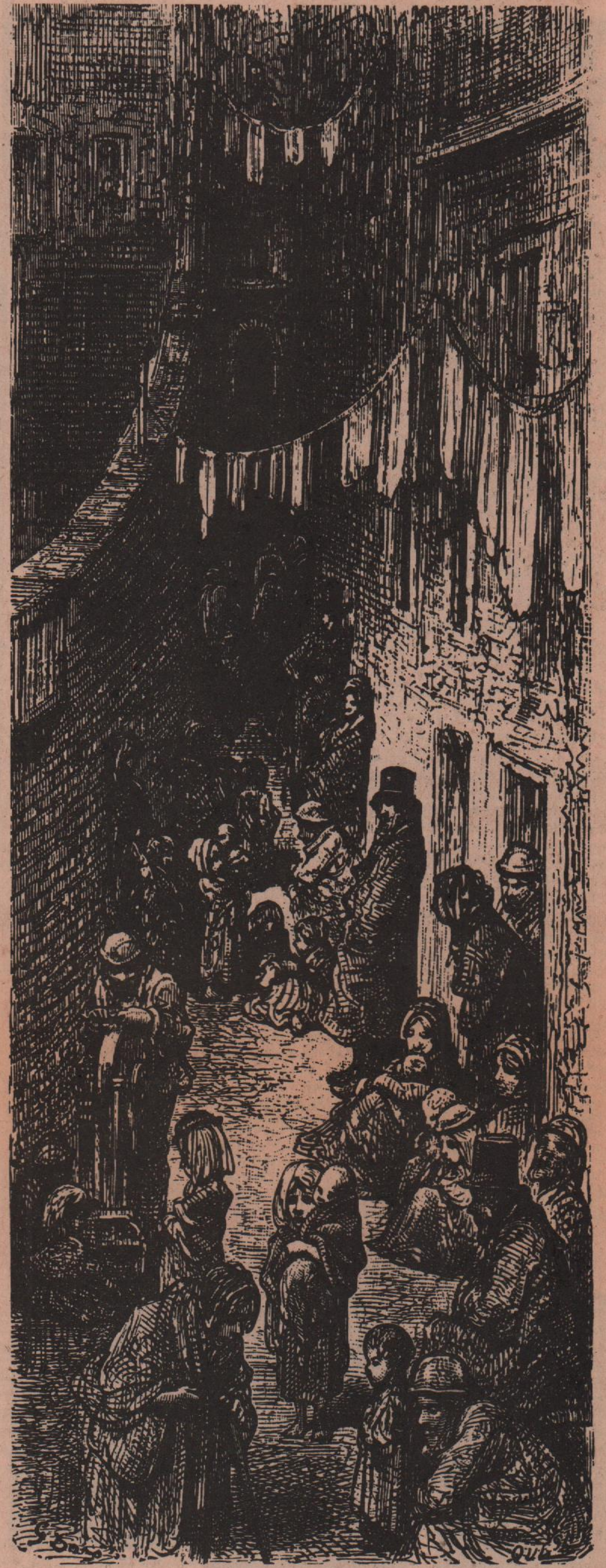
## Vocal militants

But it is hard to regard the 1880s, the period leading up to the dockers' strike and the organisation of the unskilled workers, as a time of acceptance of the capitalist ethos, although the evidence is clear of the middle-class capture of the clubs. How important that was remains a subject for dispute as many of the vocal militants had found their way into the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League and other directly political organisations by the mid-1880s.

Shipley has produced an account of working-class club life in London which not only provides an insight into their membership and activities but which clearly establishes, albeit solely in relation to the metropolis, the link between the Chartism of the 1840s and the socialism of the 1880s. The pamphlet is a welcome blast aimed at those who would have us believe that the working class have a history of docility only intermittently shattered from without by bouts of 'proper' political activity.

\*History Workshop Pamphlet No 5: Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian England by Stan Shipley, 60p. Order from IS Books.

DAVE WILSON



Working-class London in the mid-1800s: clubs kept socialism alive

IF there is a better play on television this year than Stocker's *Copper* (BBC1, last Thursday) then I will happily eat my TV license.

A dramatisation of the Cornish clay miners' strike of 1913, it had just about everything that any socialist could want: commitment to the workers' cause, hostility to the 'rights' of private property, a merciless exposure of the role of the police, all underscored by writing and acting of the highest quality and lyrically beautiful camerawork.

The miners struck for a weekly wage of 25s and recognition of their union. A special hand-picked squad of Glamorgan police, who had cut their teeth in the Tonypandy miners' strike of 1910, were sent to Cornwall to maintain 'law and order'.

When the strikers attempted to stop blacklegs from working the clay mines, the police charged them and beat them with horrifying brutality. They broke the miners' resistance. They went back to work



without winning their demands.

Those are the bare bones of the story. Writer Tom Clarke put flesh on them by the brilliant device of interacting the strike itself with the relationship between a strike leader, Stocker, and a Welsh policeman, Herbert, who was billeted with his family.

Clarke avoided the trap of showing the policeman as a crude stereotype. He made him a sympathetic, realisable character and, in so doing, helped explain the contradiction between the role of the police as a body of men and individual policemen

Herbert came from the mining valleys. He had been a pitman himself. He admitted that miners—coal and clay—suffered from bad pay and atrocious conditions. But in the next breath, proudly flexing his muscles, he would relate with relish how the police smashed the men of Tonypandy.

Stocker could only stare with awe as his unwelcome guest nimbly jumped from side to side of the class fence. It was an illuminating example of what marxists call 'false consciousness', the acceptance by members of the working class of the alien ideas of the ruling class about the impartiality of the state, the legal system and the police.

Because the policeman thought that law and order was fair and unbiased, he considered it his duty to carry out instructions that resulted in pain and defeat for members of his own class.

Feeling himself impartial, but conscious of his uniform, Herbert sought desperately to be accepted

by Stocker and his family. But Stocker, anticipating the inevitable clash at the end, could not respond.

Jack Gold's direction was stunning: the little train chuffing through the weird lunar landscape of the white clay mountains, its carriage filled by ramrod-stiff policemen; the same policemen running in step along the top of a clay mine, knees ludicrously high, looking for all the world like the Keystone Cops, except that they were preparing for violence; the utter silence and disbelief as the wounded littered the village green after the battle.

A memorable occasion. The problem with television criticism, unlike the cinema, is that I cannot encourage you to see it. If you missed it, bombard the BBC with demands for a repeat or investigate the possibility of hiring a copy of the play for showing to your local union or political organisation.

DAVID EAST



# 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 throughout 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 restriction.

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 man'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 IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

**SCOTLAND**  
Aberdeen  
Cumbernauld  
Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Fife  
Glasgow N  
Glasgow S  
Stirling  
St Andrews

**NORTH EAST**  
Durham  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Spenny Moor  
Sunderland  
Teesside (Middlesbrough & Redcar)

**NORTH**  
Barnsley  
Bradford  
Doncaster  
Grimsby  
Halifax  
Huddersfield  
Hull  
Leeds  
Mid-Derbyshire  
Ossett  
Scarborough  
Selby  
Sheffield  
York

**NORTH WEST**  
Barrow  
Blackburn  
Canterbury  
Crawley  
Folkestone  
Merton  
Newham  
Paddington  
Reading  
Southampton

**MIDLANDS**  
Birmingham  
Coventry  
Leamington  
Leicester  
Northampton  
Nottingham  
Oxford  
Redditch  
Rugby  
Telford  
Wolverhampton

**WALES and SOUTH WEST**  
Bath  
Bristol  
Cardiff  
Exeter  
Gloucester  
Mid-Devon

Plymouth  
Swansea

**SOUTH**  
Ashford  
Brighton  
Canterbury  
Crawley  
Folkestone  
Merton  
Newham  
Paddington  
Reading  
Southampton

**EAST**  
Basildon  
Beccles  
Cambridge  
Colchester  
Harlow

Ipswich  
Leiston  
Lowestoft  
Norwich  
Peterborough

**GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES**  
Acton  
Camden  
Chertsey  
Croydon

Dagenham  
East London  
Enfield  
Erith  
Fulham  
Greenford  
Hackney & Islington  
Havering  
Harrow  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hornsey  
Hounslow  
Ilford  
Kilburn  
Kingston  
Lambeth  
Lewisham  
Merton  
Newham  
Paddington  
Reading  
St Albans  
Slough  
South Ealing  
Tottenham  
Walthamstow  
Wandsworth  
Watford  
Woolwich

# Plea for help from prisoner in Ulster

OPPONENTS of internment in Britain can help us along the following lines. We are forming a loose form of organisation to be known as 'Associates of Long Kesh Concentration Camp'.

If you can help would you please write back to the following address: ALKCC c/o CCDC, 39 Falls Road, Belfast 12 and to me at Long Kesh. We will send you communications telling of progress of the Association and letting you know of events in Long Kesh.

We hope that this will be an active Association, with one aim only: to smash internment now.

Pressure by the Stormont government on Westminster helped to introduce internment in August last year. Pressure can and will end it.

The following ideas are an outline of how you can help:—

1. Get together a small group of people in each locality who are absolutely opposed to internment and explain our aims to them.

2. Discuss and act on the following ideas: Contact your local and central government representatives as a delegation demanding their public support.

3. Ask your local trades council, trade union branches and professional associations to publicly oppose internment. Write to your local and national press explaining your purpose and asking others to join you. Propaganda in the capitalist press is vitally important, yet it is virtually nil. Anything done here will be of great assistance.

4. Organise public protests against internment with speakers from as many different organisations as possible.

5. Demand an end to internment NOW.

The next few weeks are vitally important and an international propaganda drive is being mounted. Good luck and thanks.—DES O'HAGAN, Hut 33, Cage 4, Long Kesh Camp, Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

## Black attack

WHAT is the reason for the Immigration

## IS NEWS

IS YORKSHIRE REGION has gone on to a full alert over the miners' strike. Socialist Worker sales have been carried out in a number of mining towns: Castleford, Pontefract, Nottingham, Hemsworth, Featherstone, Wakefield, Barnsley, Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe, Mexborough, Conisborough, Rawmarsh and Tilnehurst, Sheffield, Doncaster, Leeds and Rotherham.

The response was tremendous—about 1000 extra papers were sold. An Action Committee has been established and all members are reacting with enthusiasm. IS executive member John Palmer spent last week on a speaking tour of the region.

**BRIGHTON:** When the local IS branch heard that pickets were to be sent to non-mining areas to picket power stations, they contacted the Kent NUM and offered all possible help. The union was glad to hear from the branch. No other organisation in Brighton had bothered to get in touch.

Brighton IS members met the pickets, arranged food and accommodation for them and put them in touch with trade unionists in the area, including the con-



Bill not being mentioned in the last few leading articles on the struggles facing the working class? In the past IS has shown that the Industrial Relations Act and the Immigration Bill are both politically parts of the Tory offensive on workers.

The union Act is an attempt to integrate unions further into the state and curb shop floor militancy. The Immigration Bill, with its contract labour and threats of deportation, provides a mobile and docile black labour force that can be used to break strikes and divide workers through racism.

Perhaps there's no mention because it is not law. However, neither is the 'Fair Rents' scheme and yet Socialist Worker, correctly, continuously mentions it.

It seems strange to carry articles on the political effects of the illegal strike by contracted black workers in South West Africa and to neglect to compare the situation with Britain.—BOB KORNREICH, Bradford.

● Socialist Worker is planning a series of articles on the black working class in Britain.

## Gloomy reports

JOHN ASHDOWN'S articles on Bangladesh show a pessimism unworthy of a revolutionary paper. On 18 December we read that 'East Bengal will have done no more than to reverse the partition of 1947, exchanging domination by a Hindu ruling class for that of the Punjabi ruling class'.

His sole ray of sunlight on the dark shadows he casts is the 'one hope' contained in the 'guerrillas inside East Bengal'. To Ashdown, this hope appears to have the quality of a bat's chance in hell.

Ashdown omits to mention that the struggle of the people of Bangladesh has produced a unity of Muslims and Hindus, thus breaking the religious sectarianism on which imperialism's 'divide and rule' policy has so long depended. Islamabad has been fighting a religious war: the Bengali people have not.

In his article of 24 December Ashdown again repeats that there is a possibility that 'the guerrillas [will] set out to expel the new invader' but his basic position is summed up in the headline 'Independence for Bengalis postponed by Indian victory' and the statement, 'the Indian army has destroyed the hopes for an independent Bangladesh'.

He appears to attribute India's victory to superior strategy and military know-how. The struggle of the NLF of Vietnam against the much better-armed US forces has shown us—and socialists should never have had any doubts—that military might is not the decisive factor against a determined people. The Indian intervention could never have been successful without the support of the great majority of the Bangladesh people.

The Indian-Mukti Bahini victory generates the struggle of the Bangladesh people against the Indian ruling class.—JIM SMITH, Edinburgh 4.

Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. Type or write on one side of the paper only. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

venor of the local power station. They showed them all the local coal yards, wharves and depots.

The pickets spoke to men at Newhaven and Shoreham docks, at Brighton B power station and Corralis coal depot. Shoreham dockers promised to refuse to land coal. Management argued that coal at Shoreham should be unloaded for safety reasons but as the wharves are next to the power station, the dockers refused.

Last Friday the IS branch held a public meeting on the miners' strike which was attended by 60 people, including miners from Betteshanger pits. Speakers included Laurie Flynn from Socialist Worker.

**SWANSEA:**—More than 100 people gathered in Dynevor School Hall on Friday to hear Merfyn Jones (Swansea IS) and Dr Phil Williams (Chairman, Plaid Cymru—the Welsh Nationalists) debate the question, 'Wales—Which Way to Socialism?'

Speakers from both sides emphasised the need for work within the local communities and in local struggles, but differed in their attitudes to whether the 'national' or the 'international' perspective was the correct one. It seemed strange that in the

light of the discussion, the Plaid weekly, Welsh Nation could achieve only an average weekly sale of 8000 copies among the 48,000 Plaid members, whereas nearly 1000 copies of Socialist Worker are sold in Swansea each week by an IS branch of 48 members.

The deletion of a programme based on Welsh 'socialist' traditions at the last conference of the Plaid came in for heavy criticism. Both sides however agreed over the priority of fighting unemployment and the necessity of the miners to win their strike.

The largest applause of the night greeted a Welsh worker's assertion that the problem could not be looked at on a purely local level, but that the system to be fought was the same as that 'which shot eight of my brothers dead in Rhodesia today'.

Merfyn Jones concluded that the Plaid were infatuated with parliamentarism, whereas the real enemy lay not in Westminster but were the 5 per cent of the population who control 85 per cent of the wealth. The solution to the problem lay not in insularity, but in forging a revolutionary party which could fight and win socialism for all nations.

# WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive or be phoned before first post Monday morning. Notices are charged at 5p per line. Semi-display 10p per line. Cash with copy or, if phoned, by first post Tuesdays. No insertions without payment—invoices cannot be sent.

## MEETINGS

**HORNSEY IS:** Duncan Hallas speaks on The Meaning of Marxism. Tues 1 Feb 8pm, Duke of Edinburgh, Fonthill Road, N4.

**ALL IS DELEGATES to NUS Conference:** pre-conference meeting, 6pm Friday, North London Poly: Kentish Town Bldg.

**HULL IS public meeting:** Eamonn McCann Ireland—The Socialist Way Forward, Thurs 3 Feb, Bluebell pub, 8pm.

**EDINBURGH IS:** The Permanent Arms Economy, 3 Feb 7.30pm, Ruskin House, Windsor Street. Non-members welcome. Speaker: Donald McKenzie.

**SUNDERLAND IS public meeting:** Support the Miners' Strike, Wed 2 Feb 8pm Trade Union Club, Frederick Street, Sund.

**SWANSEA IS:** Duncan Hallas: The Miners and the Tory Offensive, 7.30pm Friday 4 Feb, Mond Building, Union Street.

**WANDSWORTH IS public meeting:** The Army, the Press and Northern Ireland Thurs 3 Feb, 8pm, upstairs bar, The Spotted Dog, 72 Garratt Lane, SW18.

**PUBLIC MEETING—NUFTO Hall, 14 Jockey's Fields (off Theobald's Road, opposite Holborn Public Library—nearest tube Holborn), 8pm 4 Feb, to protest**

against the holding of 14,000 political prisoners in Ceylon without trial. Learn about the repression since the crushing of the rebellion last April. Speakers to be announced.

**ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE public meeting:** Hammersmith Town Hall, Monday 31 January. Speakers include Bernadette Devlin, MP, Jack Henry and Alan Nielson, Hammersmith Trades Council

**LONDON IS branch secretaries meeting:** Saturday 5 February, 2.30pm, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES MUST ATTEND.

**KINGSTON IS public meeting**  
Wally Preston, editor of Advance, on The Power Workers' Claim: The Need for Solidarity with the Miners Trades and Labour Club, 9 Grange Road, Kingston Thurs 3 Feb 8pm

**WIGAN INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS 'HOW TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT'**  
Speakers  
Jack Spriggs, AUEW convener Fisher-Bendix  
George Harrison, AUEW convener Ruston Paxman Diesels  
Malcolm Marks, AUEW Fisher-Bendix  
Singer—Alex Glasgow  
Thurs 3 Feb 8pm  
Clarence Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan

## NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST REVIEW

No 2 contains The End of American Domination—the devaluation of the dollar. The Specific Oppression of Women. Towards a Feminist Revolutionary Movement. Chile—the Bloodless Revolution? Marx and the Paris Commune. Rosa Luxemburg. The Greening of America. From IMR Publications, 16a Holmdale Rd, London NW6. Price 22½p post free.

In memory of **STEPHEN MCCARTHY** who died on 26 January 1971. We have tried virtually everything, so far without success... But we won't give up. —McCarthy family, friends and supporters





# CAR MEN LINK WITH MINERS' STRUGGLE

by Steve Jefferys Chrysler Strike Committee

**SCOTLAND:—**The 10,000 carworkers fighting to end Scotland's 'cheap labour' image are battling on.

The strikers, from British Leyland, Bathgate, and Chrysler, Linwood, held a joint demonstration with the miners at Whitburn, West Lothian, last Saturday.

Stan McEwan, the Bathgate shop stewards chairman, linked the carworkers' and miners' struggles. Both are offered rises within the government's seven per cent norm—so both are fighting the Tories as well as their employers.

Willie Lee, of the Chrysler strike committee, also called for greater solidarity and warned of the dangers of productivity deals now that unemployment in Scotland had passed 150,000. A Chrysler workers mass meeting on Friday voted to continue the

strike after the stewards, returning from a meeting in London with Chrysler management, had recommended this. Of 6,500 at the meeting, only 150 voted against.

The management had refused to increase the offer of £4 for a year's agreement, but had gone into details of a long-term settlement, bringing 'parity' on Chrysler's terms—that all future wages talks would be group-wide. The right wing on the strike committee held that improvements would be gained by negotiating over this proposal and won the day.

## Betrayals

The danger of a Chrysler joint negotiating body, even if the union side were composed only of convenors, is that the union officers, with their history of betrayals and sell outs (as at Ford last year) would have a bigger say than now. If wage talks were synchronised through the Chrysler group the workers would also lose the advantage of 'leapfrogging' one claim over another.

The Chrysler terms also include a betrayal of the lower-paid workers at Linwood, for they would end across-the-board payments and would nearly double the differential between grades three, four and five and the top grades.

The management also proposed delaying 'parity' for even the top grades until 1976, including an 18-month period with no wage rises agreed at Linwood, and other rises depending on what workers at Chrysler's Ryton factory could win.

This would suit Chrysler, for Ryton employs only a third of the number of men as Linwood and only produces one Chrysler model. The weakest link in the chain would therefore be bargaining for the strongest.

# Union out to cool Austin strike

**LONGBRIDGE:—**The Austin factory has long been regarded as the last bastion of the piecework system in British Leyland. 12,000 pieceworkers there have refused to even consider management's much publicised plans for measured day work, even though it was imposed on day workers six months ago.

A hundred and thirty-four sewing women have been on strike for more than two weeks over their insistence on a 15 per cent piecework rise as opposed to management's offer of a rise of 20-25 per cent if they accept measured day work.

But the works committee and the convenor, Dick Etheridge (who is a member of the executive committee of the Communist Party), are showing a strong desire to cool the struggle down already. A special meeting of the joint shop stewards was called last Friday, with management, incidentally, agreeing to pay in full the wages of the 600 stewards who attended.

## Climb down

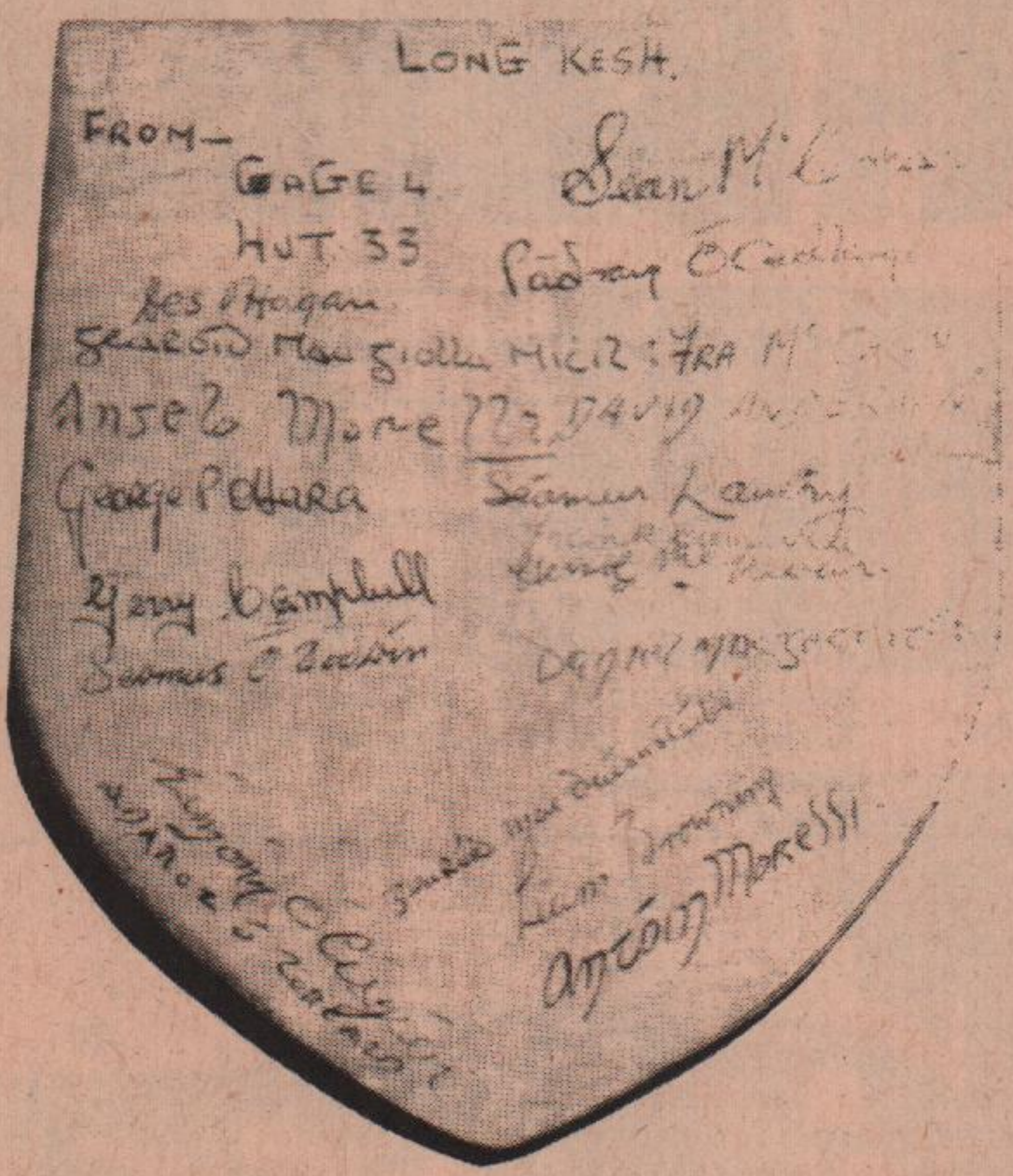
No discussions could be held in the sections on the business beforehand, because the subject was not even announced. At the meeting the works committee managed to push through acceptance of a more flexible attitude to management in negotiations.

Etheridge and his supporters have been freed from the mandate to oppose measured day work and are now drawing up alternatives to the piecework method of payment.

In this climb down the works committee has received the backing of the local AUEW officials. The Birmingham district organiser, Sidney Crosswell, was reported to have called at an engineering confederation stewards meeting last week for unions to drop their hostility to measured day work.

But pieceworkers at Austin will not accept the retreat lightly. Already key sections have been through long battles to secure piecework increases in the face of management obstinacy.

Such workers will not consider last week's vote to be the end of their fight. Rather they will see it as evidence that the works committee cannot be trusted to fight their battles for them.



## Thanks from Britain's concentration camp

THANKS for your help—that was the message with this plaque sent to Socialist Worker from inmates of Britain's concentration camp at Long Kesh in Northern Ireland.

Hand-carved and signed on the back by some of the prisoners, it was their way of thanking the paper for

its systematic coverage of events in Northern Ireland, its support for the republican movement in its struggle against the British Army and its condemnation of internment without trial.

Signatures include that of Des O'Hagan, who has an important letter on page 10 this week.

# Machine tool makers fight closure plan

WORKERS at the Churchill Machine Tool Company at Broadbent, near Manchester, are fighting plans to close the factory and make 1,100 men redundant. Management want to transfer the work to the Coventry factories of parent company A P Herbert.

## Strike in its 23rd week

ASHTON-in-MAKERFIELD:—23 men are in their 23rd week on strike at the Millingfords factory. Conditions and wages in the factory were always bad, and the strike began when the management announced that they would not recognise the Engineering union (AUEW) and that the shop steward was to be made redundant.

Throughout the strike police have guarded the factory, threatening pickets regularly while protecting blacklegs. In one incident a scabbing lorry knocked down two pickets and a policeman—but no action was taken against the driver.

The strikers need financial help if their fight for basic trade unionism is to be successful. Donations should be sent to Brian Eden, 9 Leyland Green Road, North Ashton, nr Wigan, Lancs.

Stewards have reacted strongly and have formed a liaison committee to co-ordinate opposition to the closure. They have negotiated with stewards in Coventry and agreed that no drawings or records from Broadbent will be worked upon by trade unionists there.

It is expected that a similar agreement will be reached about machines and materials.

Churchill's workers are not allowing equipment, stocks or stores to leave the factory, and are refusing to let a finished machine out for a customer unless work is begun on another machine.

Machines which need work done outside are only allowed out if guaranteed that they will return to the factory and spares are only allowed when they are needed to maintain machines previously bought from Churchills.

Churchills have orders worth £2½m which they hope to transfer to Coventry. But all sections of the work force are determined to stop this and the closure of the Broadbent factory. An occupation of the factory is already being discussed.

# TALKS OVER PRINTERS' PAY OFFER

UNION leaders representing 180,000 printing workers met the employers of the British Federation of Master Printers and the Newspaper Society last week.

The employers have offered a 7.4 per cent increase from May, amounting to £1.62 on skilled rates. Each of the three major unions involved has submitted a different claim, Natsopa of £4 on the basic, Sogat of £4 for men and £4.50 for women and the NGA of a hefty 32 per cent plus improved overtime rates and shift premiums.

## SHELVED

The catch to the NGA's seemingly large claim is that it allows for the 'absorption' of up to 50 per cent of any negotiated increase into existing house rates and merit money. Also absent from the NGA's claim is the demand for a fourth weeks holiday, which has been shelved after prolonged and unsuccessful negotiations, and for a shorter working week at a time of rising unemployment within the trade.

The employers' offer comes as no surprise. To win any more than a measly increase at this time will require militant action and a lot more unity on the shop floor.

# Laggers' long fight for pay parity

by Dave Southern

FOUR THOUSAND lagers—insulation workers—came out on a one-day strike throughout Britain last week in support of a parity claim. The men are members of the General and Municipal Workers Union and are demanding parity with transport union members, who earn 16½p an hour more.

Lagers in the North East have already been on strike for 10 weeks over the claim and this strike has now spread from Tyneside to Hartlepoons.

The lagers realise that national organisation is the key to success. Branch committee delegates from all over Britain are meeting for two full days a month to determine policy, and they have made it clear that they, not the union officials, will decide the return-to-work terms.

They are also pressing for a special section of the union specifically for the lagers, since they have no confidence in the bureaucrats at present firmly entrenched in the union.

On Tyneside the local union officials appear to be worried by the spread of the unofficial movement, and the GMWU official for the area, Andy Cunningham, is pressing Lord Cooper to make the strike official—to stop the parity claim strike snowballing.

The lads in Tyneside are urgently in need of cash after 10 weeks without strike pay. They realise that with UCS, Fisher-Bendix, Plessey and the miners still on the cards funds are limited, but this too is a struggle that desperately needs funds and messages of support. They should be sent to: Dave Southern, 1 Roman Avenue, Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 4AA.

# Naval depot jobs threatened

by Brian Ebbatson

TEESSIDE:—Workers at the Royal Navy spares distribution depot at Eaglescliffe have reacted quickly to the announcement that the depot is to be closed and work moved to Hartlebury in Worcestershire.

A mass meeting of the 390 civil servants and 540 industrial staff was held last Friday in Stockton High Street, where stewards and local Labour MPs reported on the situation.

Labour MP David Reed complained only of the government's indecent haste in pushing through the closure. Other MPs called for a campaign to reverse this decision.

But they defined such a campaign in terms of winning the support of the local

Tory council and other such organisations rather than involving ordinary trade unionists on Teesside at present unemployed or threatened with redundancies.

Tom McKenzie, the transport union (TGWU) convenor at the Eaglescliffe depot, is in favour of setting up a trade union committee to fight unemployment on Teesside. Another TGWU member suggested that the transfer of spares should be prevented. Some women workers have openly suggested a sit-in strike, but the

majority feel that the present tactics of lobbying should be exhausted first.

Peter Walker, Minister for the Environment and Minister with special responsibility for the North East, visited the region on Friday. 'It is our aim to bring as much work as possible to the North East,' he said. This pledge was given exactly one week after the Eaglescliffe closure was announced.

The work is to be transferred to Hartlebury, in Walker's own constituency. Announcing that he had saved 730 jobs there by taking them away from Teesside, he told an audience of his own constituents, 'This is great news'. The local press described him as 'jubilant'.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

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



# Socialist Worker

## Speed-up stops the trains

TRAIN and parcels services at London's Paddington Station have been hit following a strike by 600 workers involved in a dispute over a management speed-up plan.

Management Services Review has been recording parcel figures at Paddington since last November. The aim is to reorganise the station and reduce the number of jobs in the parcels section by 56.

Station representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen have insisted on the right to check MSR's figures. Trouble

SW reporter

started when four NUR reps in the 'Down Parcels' office were refused permission to book on for late turn and were sent home. The first phase of the reorganisation was then put into operation.

A statement by union reps this week attacked press reports that the dispute was over demands for overtime pay. 'This

is completely false. This action has resulted from a prolonged management attitude of complete disregard for and contempt towards elected staff representatives and gross violations of the recognised machinery of consultation and negotiation.'

A mass meeting on Sunday decided unanimously that there would be no return to work until the first phase of the reorganisation is withdrawn and management agrees to a procedure for union consultation.

## Troops step up Ulster terror

by Eamonn McCann

BELFAST: While miners on picket lines in Britain have been getting their first real taste for many years of the vicious methods which the forces of the state use to protect the interests of big business, people in Northern Ireland have been receiving it in much heavier doses.

Outside the Magilligan internment camp last Saturday soldiers whooping with delight waded into men, women and children with such gusto that even British pressmen were stunned.

In Newcastle, Co Down, on Sunday the British Army baton-charged crowds on the sea front for no apparent reason other than the fact that they were there.

On Monday night in the tiny Ardoyne area of Belfast more than 100 men were dragged from their beds and detained in the Hollywood barracks. In Etna Street every male over 15 was taken.

### Face charges

On 20 February Bernadette Devlin MP, Frank McManus MP, Michael Farrell, Ivan Cooper MP, and others are to appear in court in Belfast on charges that carry mandatory six month prison sentences. Bernadette Devlin warned at a meeting organised by the official republican movement in the Derry Bogside on Saturday that the authorities have drawn up a list of 80 women whom they intend to imprison without trial.

There is not a single Catholic worker left in Northern Ireland with a good word to say about the British Army. Most incidents of brutality no longer even excite comment in the pubs. They are part of the pattern of everyday life.

## Nalگو group fights registration

SUPPORTERS of the national and local government officers union (NALGO) action group will be lobbying the union's national executive on Saturday when Vic Feather, the TUC general secretary, addresses them on the Industrial Relations Act.

The group has been the main force within the union opposing registration under the Act. Walter Anderson has threatened to withdraw NALGO from the TUC if sanctions are taken against the union for registering.

A motion at last month's executive committee opposing registration was defeated, but past president Neil Maclean persuaded the committee to postpone the decision until after hearing Vic Feather.

The final decision on registration is to be taken at the union's annual conference.

# 'FUTURE SURE' FOR FISHER-BENDIX SIT-IN

KIRKBY:—'Your future is assured.' That was the message from Jack Spriggs, convenor at Fisher-Bendix, to a mass meeting last week on the 16th day of the sit-in strike held to stop the factory closing.

Eight hundred workers voted with just one against to continue the occupation and to show that they agreed that they could save their jobs. And this was in spite of the fact that, as they

SW Reporter: inside Fisher-Bendix

went into their first week without pay, the sacrifice would be tremendous.

The Fisher-Bendix men and women are fighting back as the unemployment figures on Merseyside have risen to almost 55,000. There is 20 per cent unemployment in the 'development area' of Kirkby and more redundancies are imminent on Merseyside.

Sir Jules Thorn, chairman of Thorn Electrical, which took over Fisher-Bendix last year, has been trying to pull the wool over the workers' eyes by telling them that the previous owners, Parkinson Cowan, told them they would lose their jobs.

But Thorn took over the washing machine and radiator factory with the clear intention of profiting from its machinery—and making the workers redundant. They are now taking a firm line against Sir Jules and his twisting of the truth. That line is—NO REDUNDANCIES.

The same attitude has been made clear to Labour leader Harold Wilson. He is worried by the outbreak of grass-roots militancy in his own constituency and is attempting to bridge the gap between Thorn and the occupying workers.

Wilson has recognised the strength of the workers' case by travelling three times to Kirkby for talks. But he is trying to use their struggle without committing himself to it and has not visited the workers inside the plant.

To win, the struggle must spread. The occupiers' only real support is coming from fellow rank and file workers.

On Merseyside every workplace visited has pledged support, often in the form of weekly levies. On Wednesday's mass demonstration called by Liverpool Trades Council, Jack Spriggs shared the platform with a miner and a docker.

### SOLIDARITY

The Fisher-Bendix fight is for all workers to have the right to work with a decent wage. As Jack Spriggs told the mass meeting last week: 'We are fighting for jobs and, if need be, to get more jobs for those on the dole.'

Fisher-Bendix workers are expressing solidarity with workers of CARSA in Spain. This is the firm that has taken over production of the Bendix tumble-dryer in order to produce it more cheaply.

CARSA pays its workers £9-£12 a week. They are now demanding just over £2 a day as well as the right to hold meetings in the factory and to negotiate direct with management instead of through the state-controlled 'unions'.

Support the international struggle by backing the Fisher-Bendix occupation. Money and messages to: Tom Staples, 42 Kennelwood Avenue, Northwood, Kirkby, Liverpool L33 6UF.

## POWER CALL FOR TRIPLE ALLIANCE

RON BROWN, chairman of the works committee of the Southern Scottish Electricity Board, Edinburgh, writes: Joint meetings between the rank and file in the electricity and coal industries have been organised in the east of Scotland by miners' leaders and representatives of the local power workers.

A rank and file committee of power workers' representatives was set up in Edinburgh just before Christmas. It believes unity of different sections of workers was necessary to sustain the fight for decent wages and conditions, and called for a triple alliance of power workers, engineers and miners to defeat the Tories.

Since then the Engineers Union leaders have retreated from putting up a national fight, and there is the danger of a sell-out from the national leaders of the power workers' unions. There are four unions in the power industry, but for too long the so-called left leaders of the Engineering and Transport Workers unions have allowed the right wing leaders of the Electricians and the General and Municipal to make the running. We must demand that the 'lefts' renounce any betrayal.

But it is a demand that makes sense only if backed by the strength of the rank and file.



Miners and students confront a boat with a cargo of blackleg coal at Rowhedge docks, East Anglia.

### STAFFS

In the ballot before the strike only 48 per cent of miners in the area voted in support of industrial action. But now the men are 100 per cent solid. They have been joined by miners working in 20 small private pits and by some clerical workers who have refused to go through picket lines. In most pits the NUM safety men have ignored the advice of the union and have struck.

At Shelton iron and steel works, pickets turned back all but a handful of 100 lorries that turned up to pick up coke. At Birchen Wood coking plant, pickets have kept out lorries and have prevented any movement of the 38,000 tons of coal there.

The Norton pit has been surrounded with barbed wire. Pickets there were disgusted with Vic Feather's refusal to organise support for the miners and have sent a telegram to him demanding action, not sympathy.

### WEST DRAYTON

Further harassment by the Social Security officials has been reported by Coventry miners who are manning continual picket lines at West Drayton coal

distribution depot in Middlesex. Their wives back home have been refused Social Security payments unless the men attend themselves.

### YORKSHIRE

Support for the miners' struggle is growing. Workers at ICI Fibres in Doncaster have organised a weekly levy. 'Support for the miners in here is really remarkable', said John Grime, TGWU steward.

Huddersfield ICI are also collecting, as are a number of steel works in South Yorkshire. Immingham dock workers decided not to unload any coal ships once shown a miners' pay slip, according to John Martin of Brodsworth NUM.

Miners themselves have been mounting 24 hour pickets at the Thorpe Marsh and Keadby power stations, successfully turning back oil deliveries. 'Pickets are confident that Thorpe Marsh cannot last much longer', W E Sayles, Goldthorpe NUM branch secretary said.

Last week press and television worked overtime to make the picketing of Coal House, the Doncaster headquarters of the Coal Board, into a national issue. They concentrated on exaggerating 'acts of violence' in order to smear the miners.

What really happened was that members of COSA, the clerical staff union in the coal industry, resigned from the union in order to blackleg on the strike. But many COSA members (including office girls) were on the picket line alongside NUM members.

The decision has now been taken to leave the bulk of the Coal House picketing to COSA members. NUM members are being sent to cover docks and power stations.

### FIFE

Picketing has continued all week, with the emphasis shifting from power stations to private industry. Nairn's linoleum factory in Kirkcaldy, one of the major employers in the town, has been covered since the middle of last week, when it was discovered that coal was being smuggled in under tarpaulins. The bosses there seem determined to wage their own war against

## Digging in for a long fight

the miners, and coal is only getting in because of police protection.

Police provoked and attacked 450 miners who were picketing the Coal Board offices in Alloa on Monday. The men were trying to prevent clerks going in to do work.

Dunfermline miners are to back a public meeting called by the International Socialists next Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Woodmill miners' club.

### NOTTS

More than 300 police, many of them brought in from Leicester, were used to harass the Gedling colliery picket line last week while the management of the pit refused even to discuss with the pickets how many deputies should be allowed in.

Arthur Palmer, of the Gedling strike committee, said that it was clear that the police had deliberately provoked the pickets. One picket, Steve Abbott, complained that he had been kicked and thumped by police while he was standing with his hands in his pockets.

### SOUTH WALES

The strike is 100 per cent solid. The whole community is behind it. At the British Steel Corporation, in Port Talbot, pickets from four lodges are manning the gates, stopping coke getting out, coal and oil going in. BSC management claim 4½ weeks of coal left and 79,000 tons of coke. The coke situation is crucial, since without coke no iron can be produced. BSC needs 20,000 tons of coking coal on a ship in Swansea docks at the moment.

South Wales miners have agreed to provide coal for schools and hospitals. Coal for schools is being sold by the NCB to a private contractor, millionaire

### ESSEX

Up to 250 miners from the Barnsley area moved quickly and effectively into the East Anglia region to squash the leaks of imported coal which has been slipping in through the various non-unionised and weakly organised parts of the South East.

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