

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Tory fine on Transport Workers is crucial test for unions

DON'T PAY!

HEROIC VIETNAMESE FIGHT ON

by Chris Harman

THE FORGOTTEN WAR in Vietnam has been pushed back into the headlines this week much to the embarrassment of Nixon and his government.

For two years the Americans have attempted to give the impression that the war was hardly ticking over and that the Vietnam problem had been solved. They boasted of 'Vietnamisation' of their war effort.

American troops, apparently, were being withdrawn and the Saigon puppets were quite capable of defending themselves.

This myth carefully concealed the reality of a massive American presence in terms of aircraft which continued to pour death and destruction onto the villages and paddy fields.

The US airforce bases in Thailand are bigger than ever, and massive computer systems are used to pour a record tonnage of bombs into Laos.

The US is still determined to maintain its stranglehold on this corner of Asia by one means or another. Indeed, Nixon had been hoping that his talks two months ago in China and next month in Moscow would bring pressure to bear on the Vietnamese to give up their fight and accept continued foreign domination.

Blow

Now the Vietnamese people have given a firm answer to his manoeuvres. They have proved once again that there can be no peace in the area until they are free to determine their own future—and the precondition for that is a complete end to the American presence.

The successes of the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front forces show that there is no real popular base for the Saigon government. Only the most corrupt and parasitic section of the South Vietnamese ruling class supports it.

The massive US bombing is necessary because much of the South Vietnamese army is not prepared to fight to defend such a government.

Socialists in the West must give full support to the NLF and the North Vietnamese in their military campaign to defeat the Americans. Such a defeat would be a tremendous blow against the richest and most rapacious ruling class in the world.



The Falls Road children arriving at Euston Station on Saturday. Picture: Mike Cohen

Factories back holiday for Belfast children

by SW Reporter

LONDON trade unionists gave a big welcome on Saturday to 15 children from the Falls Road area of Belfast. They arrived in Britain for a nine-days' holiday financed by factory and pub collections in the Ealing area.

The children all have fathers or brothers interned in Britain's concentration camps in Northern Ireland for the crime of opposing foreign troops in their country.

The holiday has been organised

by the Ealing branch of the Anti-Internment League. During their stay, the children will tour London, visit the Zoo and go on a river trip.

Opposed

Workers from AEC-Leyland bus and truck factory and from Lyons Maid gave generously to the collections. And there was a fine response from Indian workers in the area.

by ROGER ROSEWELL

Socialist Worker Industrial Correspondent

THE £5000 fine imposed on the giant Transport Workers Union last week by the Tories' Industrial Relations Court is a major challenge to the entire trade union movement. The heavy penalty comes just one month after the government's anti-union Act became law.

It is a direct attack on the money paid by working people to build their own organisations to defend themselves against the employers and improve their wages and conditions. It is crucially important that the TGWU fight the court's ruling, be prepared to mobilise its enormous industrial strength and win the backing of all other unions.

The fine followed a complaint to the Industrial Court under the anti-union laws by a St Helens transport firm called Heaton. Liverpool dockers—members of the TGWU—had blacked containers from Heaton.

The dispute was caused by the development of container packaging. Instead of cargo work being done by dockers, it is loaded into containers at transport depots inland and then craned on board ships.

Dockers have complained that this trend will destroy their jobs. They demand the right to do the work at the depots themselves.

Blacking

Heaton asked the Industrial Court to order the dockers to lift their blacking of the containers. Sir John Donaldson, the court chairman, backed their appeal.

The TGWU refused to attend the court and give evidence, in line with TUC policy of non-co-operation with the Industrial Relations Act and its machinery. In its absence, the union was found guilty and ordered to stop the illegal blacking.

The dockers refused to obey the Tory judge and his decision that meant they could not fight to defend their jobs.

Then came the reaction. Donaldson declared the union to be 'in contempt of court'. If the TGWU does not pay the fine, then the court has the

What must be done...

MILITANT trade unionists should fight for the following demands:

1. Non-payment of the fine. The TGWU should call official strikes if its funds are seized.
2. Maintenance of the blacking and continued boycott of the National Industrial Relations Court.
3. Solidarity action from the TUC. Break off all talks with the Tory government.
4. Continued total non-co-operation with the Act by the TUC.
5. Black Heaton in reprisal.
6. Full support for a one-day strike on 1 May.

power to impound all its funds.

The fine is the first major test for the trade unions under a law designed to weaken militancy. It gives employers the advantage of direct state intervention any time workers successfully oppose them.

If the fine is paid it will amount to an act of surrender to the government. It will encourage more employers to use the Act and demoralise those workers who have fought it over the past year and a half.

Payment of the fine would undermine TUC policy and strengthen the influence of those unions that want to use the Act.

The TGWU must stand firm and refuse to pay the fine or to allow its funds to be frozen by the agents of the employers. The union, with 1½ million members, has the power to smash the legislation.

General secretary Jack Jones now has the opportunity to turn his fine words of opposition to the Act into positive action. Every TGWU member must fight to make sure he does.

If there is no resistance to this challenge by the government, then other unions will be next in the firing line. That is why the entire trade union movement must come to the aid of the Transport Workers.

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WORLD NEWS

BRIEFING

Indian Left Communists reap defeat

JOHN ASHDOWN reports from Bombay

THROUGH India's long crisis of the sixties, West Bengal remained in the eye of the storm. There the major strikes were fought, the great demonstrations took place, and open political warfare on the streets led to the slaughter of countless militants.

The terrorism of the far left and the gangsterism of the right tore the great city of Calcutta apart. Throughout the struggle the main leadership of the movement was in the hands of the Left Communists (CPM), which was more concerned to yoke the movement to its tactics in the West Bengal assembly than to create a mass revolutionary movement.

One result was the creation of a far left terrorist movement of young people (CPML). Once that happened, the CPM, in the state government, turned the police and army on its former supporters in defence of its own 'law and order'.

Gangsters

Now the CPM has begun to reap what it sowed. For it did not build a disciplined revolutionary workers' party, but simply a leftish middle-class opposition, entirely focussed on winning and keeping parliamentary power at state level. Its mass movement was not seen as the instrument of power, but kept in reserve for demonstrating in favour of the CPM in the government.

The state elections have shown who can play this game best. Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party has swept the polls in an unprecedented victory.

The Congress Party gangsters, having slaughtered the militants of the CPML, then turned on the CPM. Defeat at the ballot box came only long after the CPM had been brutally pulverised with physical violence.

The middle class of West Bengal, terrorised by the street warfare and the economic decline of the state, has been charmed by the leftish slogans of Mrs Gandhi and the aggressive nationalism of the Indian Army's invasion of Bangladesh. It has



Mrs Gandhi: not as nice as they thought

swung massively against the CPM.

For five years the CPM dominated the West Bengal assembly. Now it has been reduced to 14 seats (with six close allies) of a total 280.

In the old assembly the Congress Party had 55 seats; now it has won 216. The Right Communists (CPI), close allies of the Congress Party, have more than doubled their score with 35 seats.

In Calcutta, West Bengal's biggest city, the CPM has lost all the seats it previously held.

The CPM will say its defeat is simply the result of Congress Party gangsterism. There was certainly enough of that. Congress Party thugs took over polling stations to manufacture the vote, shooting anybody who protested. About 10 people were murdered on polling day, and countless others beaten up.

But that is only half the story. The other half is that the middle-class supporters of the CPM changed their minds, and they did so because when it comes to a straight parliamentary alternative there is no reason to back a small local party when you can back a big national one.

Violence

Of course the parliamentary massacre of the left is better than a physical one. The CPM leaders have at least been given the chance to learn a few lessons about the parliamentary road to socialism. They are lessons the Congress Party did not need to learn—organised violence was the precondition for getting the 'right' result at the ballot box. If you stick to the constitutional forms in such circumstances, left always loses.

But there is little likelihood that the CPM leadership will learn any lessons, except perhaps that Mrs Gandhi is not as nice as they thought.

On the Bangladesh issue, the CPM supported her passionately. Much good it did them.

More likely, perhaps, the CPM will split, with much of its leadership moving back towards the Right Communists. For the rank and file, yet another period of confusion and demoralisation seems likely. Mrs Gandhi has reason to be grateful to the Communists of India for her massive triumph over the left.

Italian police clamp down on revolutionaries

FIVE members of the Italian revolutionary organisation Avanguardia Operaia have been charged with 'diffusion of false information'. They appear in court on 11 April and could receive up to three months' imprisonment.

The charges follow a statement issued by the organisation after the recent death of left-wing millionaire Feltrinelli. The statement declared that Feltrinelli had

been murdered, and that his death was part of a series of similar events ever since the explosion in a Milan bank in December, 1969.

The organisation argued that even though fascists may have actually committed the murder, it was the Italian middle class which was really responsible.

Though the statement was issued in the name of the organisation only, the authorities have arbitrarily selected a number of members to charge with the offence.

The charge of 'false information' implies that the authorities know the 'truth' about Feltrinelli's death.

But these charges are only part of a general stepping up of repression in Italy. Attempts are being made to discredit the revolutionary left by suggesting that it is linked with the fascists.

Provocateurs are active in some small revolutionary groups. Eleven members of Lotta Continua are facing trial on a charge of issuing leaflets in support of terrorism.

It is not only revolutionary groups that are the victims of the repression. Since 1970 the student movement has made great progress, especially in the high schools. Now many students are facing suspension and expulsion for their political activity.

Most important of all, the repression is increasing in the factories. Employers are more and more using the police and the law courts to enforce order in the factories, to break strikes and go-slows, and drum up charges of violence.

Profits

In the big Pirelli factory in Milan, 15 revolutionary workers have been suspended and may be sacked. In view of the coming elections, the trade unions are anxious to protect their reputation of respectability and are taking no action in solidarity.

Since 1963 the Italian middle class has faced falling profits, and the situation was made more acute by the gains made by Italian workers in the big struggles of 1969 and 1970. Now, in face of international competition, they are determined to regain their former level of profits.

Hence the offensive against the working class and the revolutionary militants. Whatever the result of the coming election, Italy faces a new phase of struggle.

Gesture

The biggest union offenders in this respect are the GMWU (£2 million in 1970), the NUR (£2 million in 1970), BISAFTA (£1½ million in 1968), and SOGAT (£1¼ million in 1967). The Civil and Public Servants Association has withdrawn many of its investments since 1970.

But for unions to withdraw investments is really only a moral gesture. South Africa won't go short of capital while it continues to promise fantastic returns.

A TUC resolution passed in 1971 which has had little publicity has more teeth. Trade unionists must make sure they don't let the TUC throw this important resolution in the dustbin—it concerns four million exploited black workers.



Feltrinelli: murdered

Trade unionists ready to fight apartheid

by W Enda

A RECENT Trade Union Conference on Southern Africa, sponsored by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, was attended by 40 trade unionists. Subjects discussed ranged from the Ovambo strike (which is still going on) to how trade unionists can prevent sanctions on Rhodesia being removed after the Pearce Commission delivers its report.

As far as South Africa was concerned, discussion centred on how to prevent trade unionists from emigrating, and on how to isolate all-white South African unions from the international labour movement.

A NATSOPA member told of efforts to take away union tickets from members who emigrated. SLADE delegate Mr T Burgess reported that a resolution to his union's forthcoming conference would demand the expulsion from the International Graphical Federation of the South African Typographical Union, which excludes Africans from membership.

Black members of SLADE would not

be eligible for the jobs advertised by the South African print industry and SLADE will not tolerate such discrimination against its members.

Delegates agreed to get similar resolutions through their union branches and trades councils. They were also asked by the Anti-Apartheid Movement to report if any of their members were asked to handle Rhodesian goods. With this information, propaganda and blacking could be organised.

Socialist Worker readers are asked to help.

A watch is also to be kept on South African teams sent over to recruit workers. Leaflets appealing to workers not to emigrate are available from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1.

John Gaetsewe, of the South African

The TUC Resolution

THE 1971 TUC passed a strong resolution on Southern Africa, which they have since done nothing to implement or publicise. It included:

An immediate call to the government to stop arms sales to South Africa.

To break off all connections with Smith and to strengthen sanctions against Rhodesia.

Full General Council support for any worker who for reasons of conscience refuses to work on arms for South Africa.

Urging trade unions to withdraw their investments from companies with South African interests.

Publicise 1969 resolution discouraging emigration to South Africa.

Breaking trade union relationships with white-only trade unions.

NINETEEN hundred dock workers walked off their jobs when the British liner Queen Elizabeth II docked in New York on 24 March. The dockworkers were co-operating with a picket line organised by the Anti-Internment Coalition to demand the end of internment in Northern Ireland and the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

Supporters of the IRA, both Provisional and Official, members of the American Committee for Ulster Justice, Saor Eire Cumann, and the International Socialists took part in the demonstration. John Bowers, the union's local president, said that the union supported the demands of the demonstration and would respect the picket line.

Maire Bradshaw, chairwoman of the coalition, said: 'We are picketing the Queen Elizabeth II to show Britain that we condemn the policy of torture and murder in Ireland. More than 1000 Irish workers are being held in two concentration camps and a prison ship in Belfast harbour.'

'Britain says the more than 15,000 troops are in Ireland to 'keep the peace'. We saw how they kept the peace in Derry on Bloody Sunday when they gunned down 13 innocent civilians.'

'We demand that all the prisoners be released immediately and that Britain get all her troops out of Ireland.'

After delaying the unloading of the ship the demonstrators disbanded so that the workers could return to their jobs. It was impossible to completely stop the unloading. The ship's crew would have done the job and the dockers would have lost a day's pay.

The demonstration was organised by the Anti-Internment Coalition, which was formed by many groups and individuals to unify support in New York to demand the end of internment and withdrawal of British troops. The Coalition has already held a successful march to the United Nations and is planning a march and rally in Central Park on Saturday 13 May.

LAST YEAR more than 40 IS members attended the fete organised near Paris by the French revolutionary group Lutte Ouvriere. The group is organising a similar fete, combining politics with entertainment, this year on 20 to 22 May.

Anyone wishing to attend or to have more information should write to International Sub-Committee, Dept K, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

THOUGH Ceylon is out of the news, the repression continues. The government is torn between an urge to destroy all opponents and alarm that the measures it has already taken will harm the tourist industry. Tourism is a big growth point in Ceylon with the present fall in air fares.

It has now leaked out that between 30 and 50 people were killed or wounded in the Vidyodya internment camp last November. In parts of north-west and north-central provinces the curfew has had to be reimposed. Evidently there is still some guerilla activity in those areas.

The commander-in-chief of the American Sixth Fleet has visited the island, and at the same time the tempo of arrests has been stepped up.

MacNamara of the World Bank has arrived and approved Mrs Bandaranaike's efforts to safeguard the country for international finance capital.

The government has been manufacturing incidents to give it some excuse. Posters have appeared all over the island saying: 'On the First of May we are coming and the struggle will begin'.

These are obviously being put up by government agents who hope to catch some foolhardy people. If nothing happens they will be able to argue that the rebels are not to be believed.

Other 'incidents' have occurred rather conveniently for the forces of the state. Only one MP has done enough to get himself arrested. All the other so-called revolutionaries are still respectably installed in parliament.

But the barricades in the main cities and the machine-gun posts guarding the Radio Ceylon installations and other public buildings show the fear felt by the corrupt ruling class that governs Ceylon.

Invitation to a party

control of price indexes. Establishment of workers' committees with control of hiring and firing.

Creation of a commission elected by workers to control working conditions.

Lutte Ouvriere state that they do not expect the Party to turn into a revolutionary organisation, but if it will commit itself to these minimum class demands, Lutte Ouvriere will support it in next year's elections.

If the Party fails to respond, then it will have to contend with revolutionary candidates presenting a clear alternative to the present regime.

THE French revolutionary group Lutte Ouvriere has issued an open letter to members and supporters of the French Communist Party. A million copies have been distributed in Paris and most of the other big towns of France.

The letter asks the Communist Party, which has recently published its programme for government, to commit itself to a certain number of policies. These include: Immediate imposition of the 40-hour week.

Minimum monthly wage of £115 and £11 increase for all other workers.

Sliding scale of wages with workers'

Socialist Worker

For Workers Control and International Socialism, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2 8DN

Ireland: the struggle must go on

ALL the journals of official opinion in Britain and a good number of those in Ireland have been trying to give the impression that the struggle in the North of Ireland is over. The British press, leading Labour spokesmen, the Catholic hierarchy, Jack Lynch, John Hume—all make it seem that, were it not for evil minded men in the IRA, peace could at last return to the province.

Even some sections of the Catholic population in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry are responding to the propaganda barrage. In this situation, it is imperative that socialists and trade union militants in Britain are clear about one thing: the struggle in Ireland is not over. The grip of British big business, its Tory government and its army of occupation is as strong as ever. And the results of that grip—high unemployment, low wages, appalling housing conditions, sectarian bitterness, remain unchanged.

For the mass of the population, Protestant as well as Catholic, whether they realise it or not, there is no real way forward until they kick out the British troops and begin to run things for themselves. Heath's 'concessions' do not represent any sort of move in this direction. The Tories have merely replaced one form of control and exploitation by a different form. In the past they relied upon the Unionist machine and the Orange order to dominate the Six Counties.

The heroic resistance of the nationalist section of the population made it impossible to continue along that path. So now Heath is trying to broaden the base of Tory rule by making concessions to the Catholic middle class. But this will in no way improve things for the rest of the Catholic population.

That is why the leaders of the IRA are absolutely correct to insist that the struggle goes on. If those who have been fighting in one way or another for three years now lay down their arms, they will throw away everything they have gained so far.

Socialists in Britain must be under no illusions. The efforts of the IRA to defend the Catholic community and to throw out the British troops are just as justified under direct rule as they were under rule from Stormont. That is why the International Socialists will continue to give unconditional support to them in their activities.

A real alternative

In the past we have criticised the political ideas and some of the military tactics of the IRA. We do not intend to stop making these criticisms when we think it necessary. In some ways they are more important now than they ever were before. As sections of the Catholic middle class desert the struggle and try to persuade people in the ghettos to follow their lead, the lack of a genuinely working-class based revolutionary socialist organisation becomes more and more clear.

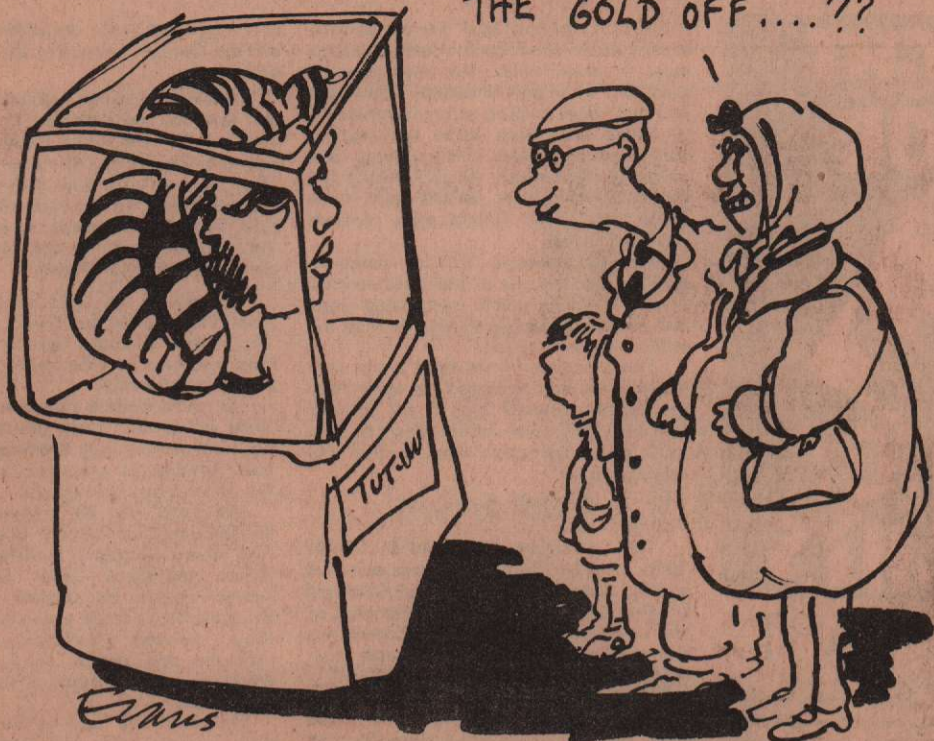
Only such an organisation could provide real support for the struggle in the North by linking it up with the struggles of workers in the South of Ireland. Only such an organisation could begin to offer a real alternative to the mass of bewildered and confused Protestant workers at the moment marching behind the banner of William Craig in a desperate attempt to cling to their old privileges.

Again we believe that the present situation shows more clearly than before that some of the military tactics used by both wings of the IRA are counter-productive. For instance, the Provisionals' tactic of bombing factories and shops is not going to force British imperialism in any way to relax its grip on the economy of the Six Counties. Big business is not going to give control of its investment to the Irish people just because a small part of it has been physically destroyed. But such actions do reinforce the already intense hostility of Protestant workers to republicanism, and the fact is now being used as an excuse to give up the struggle by the more faint hearted sections of the Catholic population.

It has always been our belief that the more the republican movement in the North of Ireland has made progress, the more the inappropriateness of many of the ideas and tactics propounded by its leaders would come to the fore. We believe that the partial set-back it has received since direct rule was imposed shows this. Without the building of a socialist organisation that attempts to lead the struggle against British domination, such set-backs are inevitable.

But in Britain the main task remains to expose the hollowness of Heath's 'concessions' and to make the case for continued solidarity with those who are struggling. There is a danger that the tremendous movement of opposition to British policy in Ireland will now decline. It is a danger we must do our utmost to resist by renewing our efforts to get the truth about the Irish situation across to the working-class movement of Britain.

WONDER WHO THESE KINGS AND SUCH GET
THE GOLD OFF....??



COTTONS WARNS

Hard Times

MEMO to all the bleeding hearts in industry always bleating about the parlous state of their finances due to the avarice and greed of the workers: Profits of industrial firms reporting in the first quarter of this year showed a rise of 15.5 per cent above the previous year.

Information comes not from some scurrilous left-wing journal but from the Bosses' Daily Bible, the Financial Times. The rise was nearly double the increase of 8.1 per cent recorded for firms reporting for the same period last year and compares more than favourably with the jump in profits of 13.7 per cent for the final quarter of 1971.

So contrary to the gloomy picture painted by the daubers of the CBI and their government pals, the big boys are doing very nicely, thank you. So slap in those wage claims, brothers and sisters—nothing less than 30 per cent.

Copy of memo to TUC leaders anxious to talk with Skipper Ted and his crew about 'reasonable' wage settlements and the 'national interest'.

LOOKS like working for the High Tory Daily Telegraph gives reporters galloping schizophrenia. On 24 March, Industrial Correspondent Blake Baker wrote a page one story headlined 'Britain round the corner on unemployment'. The same Mr Baker had a page 10 story headed 'No sign of spring drop in million unemployed'. You pays your fourpence and you takes your choice...

Waterlogged

'AN ACT for amending the Law relating to Conspiracy and to the Protection of Property, and for other purposes' has been posted up in Yorkshire waterworks.

Workers first knowledge of this elderly Act (13 August 1875) was before the big TUC demonstration



MRS SNATCHER: Can I be excused?

against the Industrial Relations Bill last year. It had been quickly 're-discovered'—and re-printed—by the Waterboard.

'Where a person employed by a municipal authority... upon whom is imposed by Act of Parliament the duty... of supplying any city... with gas or water... wilfully and maliciously breaks a contract of service with that authority... to deprive the inhabitants of that city... of their supply of gas or water... he shall on conviction... be liable to pay a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds or to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three months, with or without hard labour'.

Any employer in the industry who fails to display the Act in his works 'shall incur on summary conviction a penalty not exceeding £5 for every day during which such default continues...'

But the Act has not before been on display in the living memory of any worker in Yorkshire. If we assume that it has not been on display since the turn of the century, the unfortunate Waterboard bosses are liable to pay a fine of about £129,575.

IN A popularity poll staged by Madame Tussaud's waxworks in London, Enoch Powell tied for fifth place in the 'Hate and Fear' section with Dracula. They finished behind Adolf Hitler, Mao Tse-tung, Richard Nixon and Jack the Ripper.

Insanitory

WHEN Education Minister Margaret Thatcher came to Brighton to attend the Oceanographic Exhibition she could not find time to meet a deputation of parents and councillors who were attempting to inform her about the conditions in primary, infant and junior schools in the town—notably Whitehawk School, where temporary classrooms built in 1935 are still in daily use, and

Moulscob School where the local Tory council are so worried about insanitary conditions that they have banned all press photography.

Both schools are on working-class housing estates, suffer from serious overcrowding, insufficient toilet facilities, and makeshift accommodation. There was no deputation from the town's public school, Brighton College, which is also attempting to raise money for essential items. At the moment the school is raising funds to buy short wave radios at £200 a time for all the school Yachting Club's boats.

AS our critics frequently tell us, the trouble with the International Socialists is that they don't take things seriously enough. Our cynicism extends even to poor old steam radio. According to the Sunday Times, last week's radio version of the magnificent *Close the Coalhouse Door* was produced 'by Tony Cliff... chiefly for laughs'.

Branching out

SPARE a thought for the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Two members of the RUC's Special Branch were held at gunpoint in the centre of Strabane by the British Army. It happened during a car check in the main street of the town. The two RUC men, in plain clothes, were stopped and searched.

They had no identification but one had a revolver, enough to stir the suspicious minds of the Tommies, who promptly stuck him up against the wall in their usual summary fashion.

They were released after being identified at the RUC barracks 150 yards away. A large crowd cheered the proceedings with some enthusiasm.

Knock it off

MRS KATHLEEN CREAMER of Abbots Langley, Herts, has a problem—damp in the bedroom of her five-years-old council house has ruined the furniture and carpets. The walls stream with water that strips off the wallpaper.

Mrs Creamer called in the man from the council to complain about the problem. His advice was simple—lay off sex. He told Mrs Creamer: 'You should not engage in any excessive physical activity which could lead you to perspire. That will cause condensation.'

So be warned, if you have a condensation problem in the home, tie the old man's pyjama cord to the bedrail and send for Mrs Whitehouse, not the plumber.



HOW THE WORKERS CAN DEFEAT THE ACT

HOW do we fight the Act? First we must demand that the trade unions stick to the TUC policy of non-registration, non-co-operation and opposition to legally-binding agreements.

But that is not enough. We must insist that the unions protect their members by shifting the attack from the individual on the shop floor to the trade union itself and its officials.

The Act does not attack the individual striker but only those who call, organise or finance industrial action which the law considers unfair. If every strike in support of trade union principles, conditions or wages were to be made official, then the union or its officials would become liable to prosecution.

The Act leaves it up to the individual employer to take proceedings. Most would think twice before taking on the giant Engineering Union.

As the Act is aimed more at creating a climate of opinion against militant action rather than using physical coercion, official union backing of strikes would strengthen and not weaken the shop floor.

Blacking and sympathy action are 'unfair industrial practices' even if the original dispute is considered 'fair'. It is often up to individuals to implement blacking, so it is important that official union backing is given to members not to

touch blacked work.

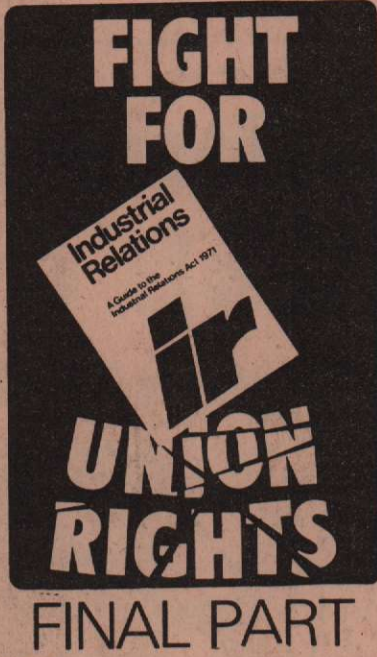
A picket in an unregistered union who 'persuades' a lorry driver not to cross a picket line can be liable to prosecution. To avoid this, all lorry drivers should be given specific instructions from their union, mainly the TGWU, not to cross picket lines. This again moves the attack from the individual trade unionist to the union as a whole.

How do we fight the attack on the closed shop? Unions that register can secure negotiating rights for groups of workers and then obtain an agency shop. These unions should be expelled from the TUC and lose the protection of the Bridlington Agreement.

Complain

Trade unions should defend and expand the closed shop. Where it exists, non-unionists should not be employed and existing union card-holders must not allow their dues to lapse. The check-off system must be opposed and no man or woman employed without a union card. There must be regular inspections of union cards and industrial action taken whenever a 'non' is found on the premises.

The Act also gives special powers to employees for dismissal. Only certain categories of workers can complain to the courts if they have been unfairly dismissed—and then there is no legal obligation on the employer to reinstate



This section is aimed mainly at shop stewards. Official union policy should be to defend its members by industrial action where necessary. We must also oppose the 60-day

cooling-off period and secret ballots, except where provision for such measures exist in union rules. No fines must be paid and attempts to deduct fines from workers' wage packets strongly resisted.

There have been harsh laws against trade unions before. For a long time unions were actually illegal. During the last two world wars, strikes were made illegal, but that didn't stop workers going on strike.

The Betcheshanger colliery strike in Kent in 1941 is one of the most famous. A strike led to 1000 men being fined and three union officials who backed the strike were sent to jail.

The men would not start work until the officials were released. The court then ignored the unpaid fines of the strikers. It would have taken several years to have made them all serve time in the tiny county jail.

Withdrawn

The notorious Arbitration Order 1305 used in the last war was smashed in 1951. During a dock strike in February of that year seven leading members of the unofficial Port Workers' Committee were arrested and charged with conspiracy to contravene Order 1305.

Thousands of London dockers struck and the strikes, involving up to 9000 men, were repeated every time the men appeared in court. A large demonstration outside the Old Bailey was not un-

connected with the subsequent verdict of Not Guilty. In August the order was withdrawn.

These two incidents show how easily the law can be defeated by organised workers. But the union leaders, whether left or right, are not spoiling for a fight. They want to sink their differences with the employers. In the final analysis they have the same interests as the employers—the maintenance of the system that gives them their privileges.

Central to the fight against the Act must be the fight for union democracy. Trade unions should defend their members' interests and be under the control of the membership.

We must build a rank and file movement inside the trade unions that will fight to democratise them and will support candidates prepared to fight for the policies outlined above.

We must also be prepared to fight independently of the official union structure where necessary in defence of our fellow members. Local Councils of Action should be formed by elected delegates from trade union branches and shop stewards' committees to co-ordinate and spread solidarity action wherever prosecutions under the Act take place.

Above all we need to build a revolutionary party that can provide a firm and principled lead to the working class in the struggles ahead.

Union 'left' fears action

JIMMY MILLER is correct in his statements (18 March) to the effect that it was rank and file militancy and solidarity, not only in the NUM but also among other sections of the working class, that led to the victory of the miners' strike, partial though it may have been. Unfortunately he fails to face up squarely to the lessons that have to be learned.

He finds it difficult to understand why Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon behaved like 'men of straw' and failed to actively mobilise their members. The only reason he can think of for their inactivity is that they were afraid of losing the support of their members, yet all over the country thousands of members of the TGWU and the AUEW gave us their active support during the strike on their own initiative.

The only reason is that trade union leaders like Scanlon and Jones are fond of making left noises when it suits them, but are too timid to translate these noises into action when the crunch comes.

They realise that, once mobilised, their membership could easily move beyond their control. The Tory government could have been smashed if Jones and Scanlon had committed themselves. Of course they want to see the end of the Tories, but their very position commits them to using 'constitutional' methods, not the power of the working class.

Jimmy Miller's faith in the 'left' trade union leaders seems to have been shaken but by no means destroyed. The proposals he makes for militant activity within the NUM fall back on the old idea that if we elect a few left faces to the executive and amend a few rules here and there then we can sit back and wait for the transformation.

The fact that our reliance on this strategy led us to the position we were in before the strike is totally ignored. Left faces and noises did not prevent the butchery of the coal industry in the past and there is no guarantee that it will ever do so in the future.

If the strength of the left that was demonstrated at a rank and file level during the strike is not to fade away and become just another memory we must begin now to build a rank and file movement within the NUM that will link up the fragmented pockets of militancy and frame a coherent, seriously argued programme for real fighting policies and total democracy within the NUM.

Our minimal demands should centre round the necessity for making all union officers and executive members directly accountable to the membership. We should campaign for the regular election and re-election of all full-time officials, who should be subject to recall if they fail to carry out the democratic decisions of the

LIVELIEST LETTERS ON THE LEFT



Jimmy Miller

membership. They should be paid the average wage of the members, which would ensure that they had a direct interest in defending and advancing the interests of the members.

Executive members should be elected on the same basis and if they themselves were to work a couple of shifts a week in the pits they too would be more closely in touch with the working and living conditions of the rank and file. If they too were exposed to the risk of disease and redundancy they would not be so keen to put their signatures to every productivity deal that the NCB lays before them.

A programme including such demands and many more would not only ensure that the NUM adequately defended the conditions of its membership, but it would also give it the strength and courage to move on to the offensive against such reactionary, anti-working class governments as the present one.—MAURICE BENNETT, Grimethorpe colliery, TERRY BRISTOWE, Dodworth colliery.

AN END TO KOW-TOWING

JIMMY MILLER is wrong when he says that the picketing of deputies was an empty gesture. This picketing was a rejection of 30 years of kow-towing to the National Coal Board and meant that this time we were calling the tune.

I believe that the magnificent mass picket of miners and other workers at Saltley (which really clinched the strike) would not have been possible if we had not been prepared to show our solidarity and determination at our own pits. Further, the picketing of the deputies and of Coal House in Doncaster did in fact demonstrate rank and file leadership which really scares the bureaucrats of government, Coal Board and the unions.—W BENTLEY, Doncaster.



COMMON MARKET—I'M NO OPPORTUNIST SAYS MR BENN

From the chairman of the Labour Party

THE CURE for your nausea at my demand for a referendum on the Common Market (25 March) which you describe as 'opportunist' is very simple. Look at the facts.

I have consistently argued for referenda as the logical extension of democracy since May 1968, when I made a speech on it in Swansea. I also called for it in my Fabian pamphlet, *New Politics*, published in September 1970, introduced a Bill a year ago to provide for it, wrote to every constituency Labour Party and trade union to

urge it last summer, and raised it again at the Shadow Cabinet, the night before Mr Pompidou made his announcement. The NEC of the Labour Party now officially supports it.

Right or wrong this has been my view over a long period. I have never argued against the Common Market on the grounds that it eroded parliamentary sovereignty. The powers of parliament derive from the electorate as a whole.

Relax. Your stomach need never have been troubled.—ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN, MP, House of Commons, SW1.

Thanks for the memory: Fine Tubes

ON BEHALF of the Fine Tubes Strike Committee, I should like to express our thanks to you and all those who assisted in the organisation of the Fine Tubes benefit concert and the accommodation for our members in London that weekend. I would also like to thank the artists who so kindly gave their services to make the concert such a success.

We know that it took a terrific amount of hard work to organise such a weekend, and the amount realised is really something. We express our thanks for this and it will go a long way to alleviate some of the distress of our members.

We are deeply indebted to the International Socialists not only for this wonderful weekend for our members but for the way you have assisted our delegates when travelling all over the country. Please convey our thanks and regards to all.—C WILLIAMS, Secretary, Fine Tubes Strike Committee, Plymouth.

Why does the Mole do such dirty grubbing?

I AGREE with Roger Protz's review of Tariq Ali's new book (18 March). He is right to stress how pathetic the sectarianism of the International Marxist Group has become.

What he says will make good sense to 'readers familiar with the turgid pre-occupations of the IMG and Red Mole'. But how familiar are your readers with this nonsense?

It seems to me that many readers may be puzzled as to why such papers can contain, side by side, vigorous articles expressing views very close to the revolutionary socialism of Socialist Worker, and even more vigorous (not to say vicious) pieces tearing to bits every slight move of the International Socialists.

This kind of thing can discredit the whole of the revolutionary movement, as you suggest. And although its perpetrators may be 'political pygmies' against whom ridicule may have its uses, the fact remains that they can mislead and pervert many

good socialists, as the history of the Socialist Labour League has shown.

So why doesn't Socialist Worker explain the causes of such sectarianism and patiently demolish the lies that are put out to sustain it? Surely weeds which are not pulled up are liable to flourish?—MARTIN SHAW, Durham.

WE, the Martin O'Leary Republican Club, Cage 3, Long Kesh Concentration Camp, wish to appeal to our fellow socialists for any books, pamphlets or periodicals or records of working-class songs and music.

Despite the efforts of the camp apparatus, we are determined to educate ourselves in socialism. Many people in the Six Counties will be in a state of euphoria following Mr Heath's 'initiative'.

In these circumstances it is essential that socialist counter-propaganda be powerful enough to expose the realities of the situation. Please send anything you can spare to us through the CCDC, 39 Falls Road, Belfast 12.

Sorry but we'll keep taking the Milk of Magnesia. It was politically safe to advance the idea of referenda in 1968, after the Labour government's bid to join the Common Market had been rejected. Mr Benn was a member of that government and is not known to have voted against entry then. And he joined that government, as Minister of Technology, when Frank Cousins resigned from that position in principled opposition to Labour's attack on the trade unions.

Opportunism? Mr Benn, as chairman of the party, supports the Labour line of opposition to the EEC 'on Tory terms'—a typical piece of opportunist sleight-of-hand. The Tories have not been slow to ask what major differences there are between the Tory terms and the former Labour terms.

What questions would Mr Benn put on his referendum paper—Yes or No to the Market or 'Are you in favour of a united socialist Europe controlled by the workers but opposed to the big business cartels and super-exploitation of the EEC that both Labour and Tories support'? Elucidation, please.

As far as the 'powers of parliament' are concerned, we suggest Mr Benn orders his May Day issue of Socialist Worker now. It may change his mind, but we wouldn't put any money on it.—EDITOR.

Letters to the editor are welcomed. They should be not more than 250 words in length and typed or written on one side of the page only. Copy date for letters is first post Monday. Letters may be cut for space reasons.

GLOBAL IMEX LTD and JOHN STONEHOUSE, MP: AN APOLOGY

In our issue of 18 March we published an item in Cottons Yarns which alleged that Global Imex Ltd and Mr John Stonehouse, MP, planned to trade with Rhodesia and South Africa. We are informed that these facts are quite inaccurate and highly defamatory. We wish to withdraw these remarks and to apologise to Global Imex Ltd and Mr John Stonehouse for any injury to their reputation which our allegations may have caused.

Historic Glasgow rents victory points the way for Britain's council tenants today...

THE Glasgow Rent Strike of 1915 was one of the greatest battles ever fought in Britain over a housing issue. It was also one of the few occasions in which tenants have decisively defeated their landlords. As a result of the strike, the government ordered all working class rents to be frozen during the First World War—not just in Glasgow, but over the whole country.

From the start of the war there had been a huge influx of workers into Glasgow. The demands of the war economy had brought thousands of new jobs, especially in the key engineering industries.

Housing became desperately short. The landlords seized the opportunity to push rents to ridiculous levels. When a further round of rent increases was proposed in 1915, tenants began to organise resistance.

A rent strike started and achieved widespread support. The story of the strike is vividly told in a book called *Revolt On The Clyde*, by Willie Gallacher.

Every method was used to build up support for the strike, and to keep up the united spirit of the women involved. There were meetings everywhere in the streets and back courts of the tenement buildings.

The landlords got eviction orders from the courts, but could not put them into effect. As in Northern Ireland today, the approach of the enemy was signalled by the banging of dustbin lids. An army of women would emerge from the tenement flats and drive off the sheriff's officers, occasionally removing their trousers in the process.

The landlords, unable to achieve any evictions, decided to sue tenants in the small debt court, and have the employers pay the rent arrears directly out of the husband's wage packet.

The courts were happy to oblige. Orders for the arrest of wages were issued, and at the same time the tenants were charged with the cost of the court action started by the landlords.

Fervour

At this point the shop stewards in the local shipyards and engineering factories began to take action. In Glasgow at this time there was tremendous industrial militancy.

In March 1915 the national trade union leaders had made the famous Treasury Agreement with the government. Overcome by patriotic fervour, the TUC leaders had signed away for the length of the war all defence of 'restrictive practices'. They had agreed to skilled work being done by unskilled men (dilution of labour) and to withdraw all objections to overtime, nightwork, Sunday work and even many of the Factory Act prohibitions which protected the health and safety of workers.

This historic sell-out had the result that in Glasgow and other industrial areas, the shop stewards took over effective leadership of the trade union movement. In a series of bitter unofficial strikes Glasgow workers fought against dilution of labour and for wage increases to compensate for soaring food prices.

Power

Many leading shop stewards in Glasgow were revolutionary socialists. As such they bitterly opposed the war which consumed so many working class lives in the defence of capitalist exploitation.

Under this militant leadership, large sections of Glasgow workers used their industrial power to back the rent strike.

On 17 November 1915, 18 munitions workers were summoned to appear in court charged with non-payment of rent. Gallacher describes what happened:

'On the day of the trial Glasgow witnessed a demonstration the like of which had never been seen before. From early morning the women were marching to the centre of the town where the sheriff's court is situated.

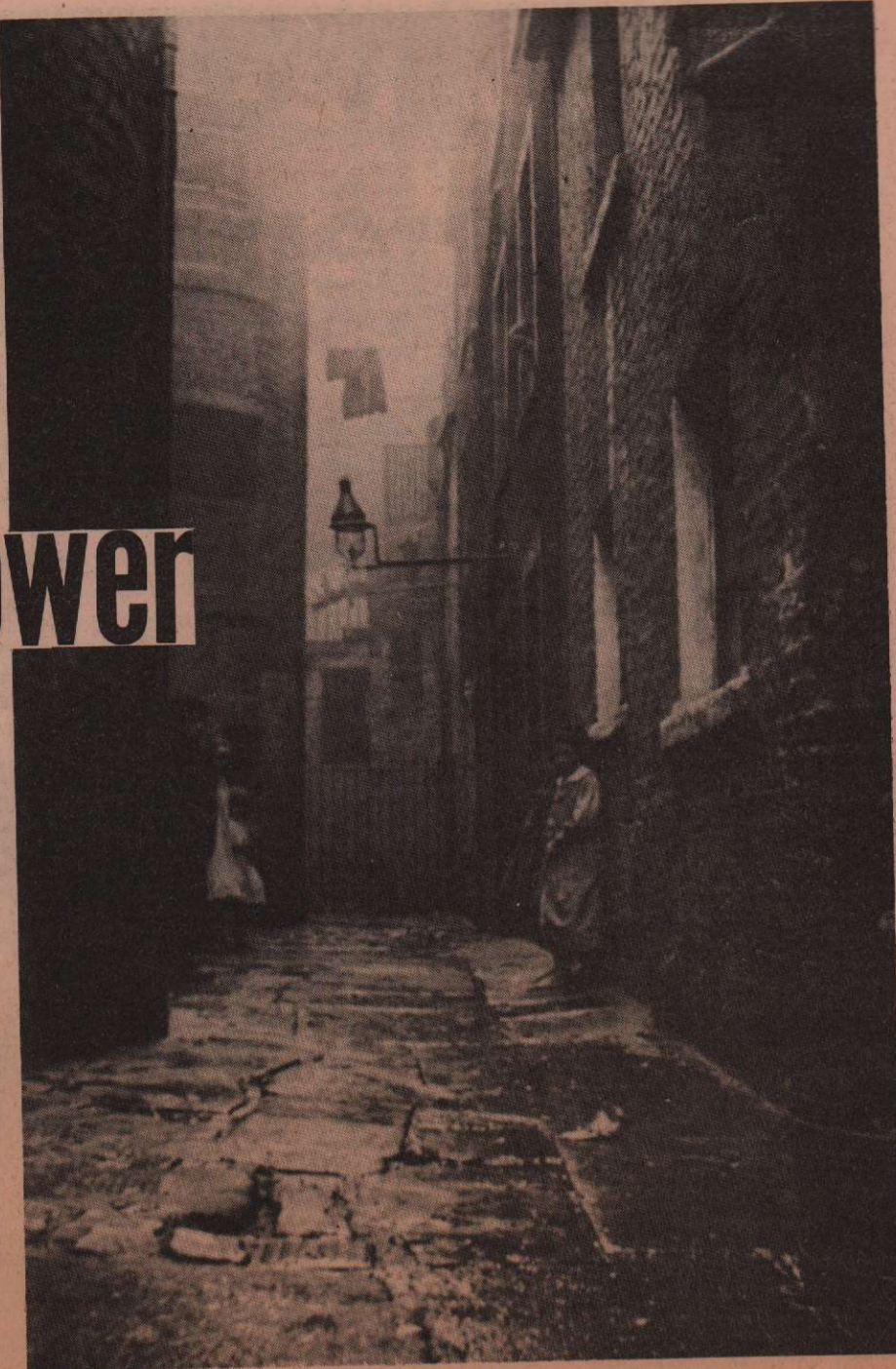
'Even as they marched mighty reinforcements were coming from the workshops and the yards. From all directions the dungareed army of the proletariat invaded the centre of the city. All the streets were packed. Traffic was completely stopped.'

Amid stormy scenes a resolution was passed that unless the government

When strike power smashed the landlords

by JIM KINCAID

Glasgow tenements during World War One: the tenants revolt shook the money-lenders who profited from these monuments to capitalist greed



Now get ready for 10 bob battle

THIS coming year will see widespread resistance to the massive increases in working class rents which the Tories intend to force through in the autumn. The organisation of a national campaign on the rents issue has become an urgent necessity.

In one way such a campaign has better prospects than in earlier years. The government are going to try to make local authorities increase rents

according to a single national timetable. So council tenants all over the country will be hit simultaneously, instead of being picked off one area at a time as in the past.

Also the rent increases proposed for the autumn are really extortionate. At least 50p a week for the average council house, and the maximum for

any individual house can be as high as a 75p increase per week.

If the local authority has brought in no rent increase since July 1971, then the government will insist that it should put up its rents by £1 a week from October 1972.

In Northern Ireland the current rent and rates strike in the Catholic working class areas has proved a spectacular success. Well over 30,000 of the 50,000 Catholic council tenants have steadily refused all payment of rent and rates during recent months. The loss of more than £1 million of revenue has played havoc with the finances of the Unionist government and local authorities.

In many areas electricity bills are not being paid either, and officials sent to cut off the supply have been held at bay by well-organised defensive action.

The Stormont government hit back by cutting off social security payments and by using the legal system to arrest wages. But the number of workers involved is so large, and their solidarity so strong, that the strike remains unbroken despite repression.

The fightback that is going on in Northern Ireland would obviously be a great deal harder to organise in Britain—at any rate in the immediate situation. But the Glasgow Rent Strike shows that it has been done before.

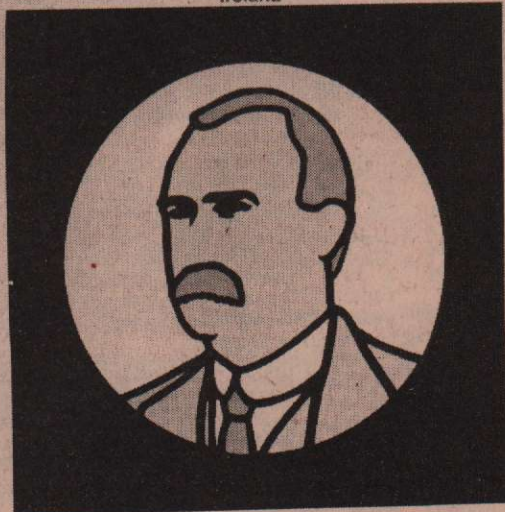
The moral of 1915 is clear. An effective rent strike is a great achievement. But in the end what really counts is the industrial power of workers in key sections of industry.

The Glasgow Rent Strike was won because it also became an industrial strike, though it was possible to get industrial action partly because the rent strike had evoked such exceptional fighting spirit and support. The combination of both forms of strike action proved unbeatable.

International Socialism 51

20p

Ireland



The new issue of International Socialism journal, out this week, could hardly have appeared at a more opportune time. Most of its articles deal with various aspects of the situation in Ireland and throw into perspective the events leading up to the present crisis. The background is presented in two articles, one on the Southern regime by JOHN PALMER, and the other on the Six Counties by PAUL GERHARDT.

The first shows that, despite the pretence of independence, Jack Lynch's regime is fully integrated into the British imperialist economy. Gerhardt provides an extensive factual analysis of the north, showing the real depths of sectarianism in every area of life—something which will not disappear overnight with the replacement of Tory rule from Belfast with Tory rule from London.

BRIAN TRENCH takes up the argument of those who say that because of the Protestant working class's commitment to Unionism they constitute a separate nation to the Catholics and have the 'right' to a state of their own. Trench shows that in fact what the Orangemen are defending is not a 'right to national independence', but their privileges over and against the Catholics, and that any 'Protestant state' must be built upon systematic oppression of the minority. He argues that only a united workers' republic can end the exploitation of all Irish workers, irrespective of their religion, by British imperialism.

Finally, EAMONN McCANN takes up the question of why the revolutionary left in the Six Counties was unable to enjoy the successes that seemed open to it in the early days of the fight for civil rights. All Socialist Worker readers are urged to order copies of this vital issue of International Socialism.

20p a copy, £1 a year from IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Once in the system's grip men can be exploited with ease

EVEN before the new tax regulations directed against labour-only subcontracting (the lump) were introduced on Thursday Britain's building employers had devised their tactics for getting round them.

The new rules oblige main contractors to deduct 30 per cent of the subcontract payments they make and turn them over to the Inland Revenue as an advance on income tax. So-called bona fide subcontractors—those who can show tax returns over recent years—will be exempted from such deductions.

But, as a director of one leading West Country firm of builders and civil engineers explains, you have three choices. You either make sure that your labour master is kitted out as a registered company (cost £25) which liquidates once a year before the inland revenue gets him. You carry on business as usual in the happy knowledge that you move around the country faster than the tax man anyway.

Or, like John Laing on their £13 million St Thomas Hospital contract in London, you engage a sub-contractor directly and allow him to pay secret and illegal bonuses in addition to tax deducted earnings.

Doubtless some labour-only outfits will say they have had a good run for their money and pack it in. But it is far more likely that the lump will reappear in a new and perhaps even more sinister guise.

Illegal

As far as the government and the Inland Revenue are concerned the evil of labour-only subcontracting is a purely administrative one. They care not a damn for its consequences. Their friends the employers are indeed very keen on those consequences.

It is a system deliberately encouraged by the employers and which has caught on because in the short term it gives workers comparatively high wage rates since they pay no tax or insurance.

The lump also leaves them outside the law, since the legal obligation for payment of tax lies on the individual worker and not the firm or the industry which has systematically encouraged non-payment to spread.

At this moment many Irish building workers are heading home in terror of the new law. Others cannot return and live in constant fear that the tax man or any other agent of the state will catch up with them.

They also face an earnings cut because of the 30 per cent deduction on account of tax, either because there is a genuine attempt to comply with the new law or more likely because the labour masters can seize the situation to cheat them of an extra 30 per cent. Some years ago a fine play was



The man behind the lump—R J Carr, boss of Labour Force, which firm offers employers a 'no strikes, no unions' hiring scheme, a form of the lump which the law permits. Recently Labour Force has added some new services—site security, investigations into trade union militants and the like.

shown on television which showed the primitive slavery which the lump brings into the construction industry. At the time it caused a stir, but it was quickly forgotten, like Cathy Come Home. And like homelessness, the lump has since increased.

It has many advantages for the employer. There is no job demarcation whatsoever, the men will work unlimited hours to finish a project in the shortest possible time for the agreed sum and when finished they will melt into the thin air from which they came.

Most important of all, the lump prevents any trade union organisation, since the men are nominally self-employed.

Corruption and fear of the most extreme varieties are erected on the basis of the system.

Labour masters go into the remote parts of Ireland to recruit their lump labour. The men are brought to strange towns where they are boarded in

'rooms' belonging to the agents. They are heavily charged for this favour.

The agents usually take a lump sum from the main contractor for the job and pay the men a fraction of what they are taking. And the fear of being employed outside the law drives the men even further into the master's hands. They can be exploited and robbed with ease after the system has got its grip.

In the event of an accident at work, the lump worker can sue no one for damages. If he is killed at work, his death is not even recorded in the (already large) totals of construction fatalities.

The way the system works itself out beyond all the legal niceties is one of the most terrifying things I personally have ever come across. It is difficult to describe its horror briefly. But last year, for example, a lump worker on the Taylor Woodrow Hampstead Hospital contract broke his leg. An ambulance was called. But the man was so terrified that the National Health would marry up his lack of an insurance card with non-payment of income tax that he crawled off the site and drove himself away to seek some backstairs treatment or, more likely, a 'nature cure'.

Condemned

Building employers have formally denounced this cruel system of employment many times over the years. But they have expanded their use of it with relentless speed.

In June last year the big battalions of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers agreed to rewrite the national working rule agreement so that the lump was expressly condemned. Their member firms proceeded thereafter to open up every possible job as a lump basis.

After the introduction of Selective Employment Tax by the last Labour government, the employers sent Sir R J Carr, boss of the anti-union, lump labour firm Labour Force, on a tour around the country so that he could explain the advantages of his lump scheme and, incidentally, its legality.

The system spread and spread, until nearly one third of the entire construction labour force were working under it.

Its impact on the already desperate standards of construction work was equally devastating. But productivity per unit of output went up—and that clinched the deal.

The construction unions did nothing about it other than bewail their fate.

They never considered the only real way to combat it: a campaign to persuade the industry's workers that an alternative was possible, and a

that's
what
it
means
to be



ON THE LUMP

SPECIAL FEATURE BY LAURIE FLYNN

this taken or can it take the form of reliance on subtle changes in methods of tax collection.

Change depends on the real struggle between the social forces of the working class movement and those of the employers and their state. (It is interesting to note that all the recent events in Birmingham have been in defiance of the law—the Industrial Relations Act.)

Unjust

The lump is a social evil born of purposes and priorities of the construction industry demanded by the kind of society we live in. It will never be eradicated by the Inland Revenue or any other oppressive though respectable state agency.

When Socialist Worker put it to the Inland Revenue that the employers had deliberately encouraged the spread of

A building from their storey blow Aberdeen mates died

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Building workers in Birmingham demonstrating against labour-only contracting. They won. So can others.

BIRMINGHAM: VICTORY ON THE SITES

HOW TO SMASH THE LUMP

RECENT pronouncements by Martin Grafton, boss of Britain's building employers' federation, have focussed the world's attention on an extremely serious problem within the British construction industry. This is not the alarming number of bridges and tower blocks which fall down, the lousy pay, conditions and high unemployment rate, or even the terrible toll of industrial accidents.

Far from it, the employers' current concern is the disturbing number of communist agitators trained, it is claimed, in East Germany, and sent to this country to interfere with the normal civilised progress of British construction.

In fact Grafton's information is very wrong. The agitators have actually been trained in much better schools, all of them owned by members of Grafton's own federation.

The reason he has been making his preposterous allegations is that something very unusual has happened which affects the whole future of trade unionism in the British construction industry.

In Birmingham, over the past year, building workers have organised on a city-wide basis and beaten the local monopoly employer. They have cleared the cancer of the lump off his and all the other main sites and extracted a revolutionary new pay deal.

The pay and conditions deal signed with Bryant's last month involves a 50 per cent rise on basic rates. Craftsmen (formerly on £20) are now guaranteed £30 and labourers £26 instead of £17.50.

Other provisions in the deal provide that the company will observe the 40-hour week clause in the national agreement, that there will be 100 per cent trade unionism on Bryant sites and that hiring and firing can no longer be done at site level. There now has to be the fullest consultation with the stewards.

Announcement of the Bryant terms came last month right at the key point in the national wage talks. Employers had just offered the princely sum of 7½ per cent on the basic when the deal broke.

Bryant had already been summoned to London to explain himself. At the meeting employer after employer told him that he should have used the police, the courts, anything, to prevent such a deal. Bryant replied to the effect that he had done all these things and more, but had been beaten.

He said he had no alternative but to concede. Later the employers issued a statement that they could in no way be associated with the terms of the Birmingham deal.

Pathetic

As a direct result, the employers were forced to jack their national wage offer up to a still pathetic 11 per cent, and at this time they look as if they can swing a settlement. The right-wing leadership of UCATT (formerly the Woodworkers and Painters) wants to settle the £30, 35-hour week claim about £6 short of the money terms and without any shortening of the working week. But the Bryant deal has made it more difficult for them than it has ever been in the past.

In Birmingham itself the new agreement is already having the most marvellous consequences. At Cubitt's job in Ladywood, building a new factory for International Nickel, labour-only workers came out on strike for 'direct employment on terms similar to the Bryant agreement'.

The key aspect of this fine achievement however, is how it was reached, and why in Birmingham.

Two years ago the construction unions had no foothold whatsoever. The building industry was riddled with the lump, low rates of pay, malpractice and corruption. The workforce was trapped in this system, believing that nothing else was possible.

At the time the militant paper Building Workers' Charter had just been launched under the leadership of Communist Party rank and file activists in construction. The paper sought to build a nationally-organised united front in the construction unions on demands for £1 an hour, a 35-hour week, the end of the lump, and democratic control of the unions.

Under its influence a small group of stewards in Birmingham banded together to find a way to gain such demands in the sorry reality of local



Pete Carter

construction. They adopted a new and intelligent strategy.

As Peter Carter, one of those early leading figures, explained: 'When £1 an hour was first mooted, it was, to tell the truth, a bit of a joke. People are conditioned to accept low rates of pay, long hours, lousy conditions and the lump as the only things possible.'

'What we saw as our job was to organise and break this mentality, to develop the fighting strength to tackle the wages question.'

The first issue they highlighted was, of course, the lump. This was explained time and time again as a social evil, something that meant lousy houses for the people who ended up living in them after the builders had gone away with their massive profits.

It was underlined as an evil designed to break trade unionism and hold down wages by creating a fifth column of roving, frightened workers outside the law who would be totally in the employers' control.

Bryant's Woodgate Valley B council housing contract—where the militants had their base—was to be the first testing ground. The battle against the lump was launched there and quickly became a trial of strength over trade union recognition and wages. Labour-only contracting was kicked off the site after a long strike last year.

But the struggle was not kept localised. The Woodgate men saw that the struggle was essentially city-wide. They mounted mass demonstrations against the scab firm Labour Force, and repeatedly called on the city corporation to blacklist any contractors who used the lump.

The next tactic was to connect the question of the lump with the appalling levels of basic pay. The militants were greatly helped in this by being able to

point to the comparatively high rates achieved in local industry, in cars and brewing in particular, by trade union action.

A drive began to break reliance on endless hours of overtime and weekend working.

To persuade the men of the terrible condition they were really in, involved prolonged economic sacrifice. The decision was taken to have nothing to do with the present bonus system or overtime working. The workers went on to basics, taking home £17 (craftsmen) and £12 (labourers).

But the employers did make one enormous mistake. They served an injunction on Carter alleging damage and trespass.

On the following Monday there were 600 building workers outside the court. Seventeen jobs were stopped in the city and Bryant workers were clamouring to join the union. The struggle could now be spread.

Retreat

In the last week of February 1000 building workers marched on Bryant's offices. The wage claim was submitted with one week's grace for the employers.

Bryant's by this time knew the men were prepared to fight on, practically indefinitely.

They caved in. All legal proceedings against Carter were dropped and victimised stewards were given jobs on sites they had been told they would never enter again. Two thousand men got 50 per cent rises on basic wages and the whole shape of the Birmingham building industry altered.

In the national unions too, the Bryant victory has caused tremors. These remain to be developed. Construction trade unionism is every bit as riddled with malpractice as the industry from which it springs. Much is to be done.

But the real test will come in future agreements, and in the way the magnificent militants of Birmingham tackle the real social issues of the construction industry and the society from which it springs. Thanks to their efforts, the opportunity is clearly there.

The shabby work that boosts builders' profits

IT IS not long since the £8 million Gascoigne housing estate in Barking, in London, was talked of as a marvellous project of slum replacement. A fine, model complex of council flats would rise where once there was squalor. A new life would start there for many of East London's young married couples.

The construction work is mostly finished now. And already the dreams lie tattered. Quite simply, the working class people of Barking have been cheated, with the usual efficiency of big business construction. It will not be many years before the 'new, modern Gascoigne Estate is itself a slum.

Late in January the borough architect, Mathew Maybury, announced an unofficial inquiry into work standards on the site. Four weeks after this inquiry had concluded that nothing was amiss, concrete of packet soup strength was being poured into the foundations of the latest part of the site to be built.

The concrete is deliberately watered down to reduce the agreed materials' cost. In defiance of the most elementary building practices and regulations, no concrete is tested for strength.

The contracts specify that pipe and sewer trenches are to be dug to a certain depth. The contractor is paid accordingly for the labour and plant involved. If he can get away with shallower trenches his profits are of course much greater.

On Gascoigne some trenches were dug to be 14ft below ground. The excavator used to do the work simply cannot dig that deep.

Pipes which are supposed to be cast iron end up as soft glaze, with consequent savings on materials for the contractor. Little or no reinforced steel is put into the oversights. Woodwork is in unseasoned timber, cheap but prone to warping after the contractor has gone.

The gutter for one pramshed proved rather difficult to lead into the surface

water manholes. It was quickly connected to the nearest sewer main. In the summer, of course, the stink will be widely noticeable.

This situation has not arisen as some accident. Main contractor for the job is Carlton Construction, a subsidiary of the giant Trafalgar House Investments, heart throb of the financial press and the City of London.

This firm has used every known dubious labour practice—from sub-letting contracts to lump labour outfits, to getting rid of the few trade unionists who tried to organise the site. It has, by means unknown, found itself in the handsome situation where no clerk of works from Barking council ever comes to check the quality of the construction.

The borough architect has repeatedly assured trade unionists who have lobbied him on the state of Gascoigne that there is no labour-only subcontracting and no jerrybuilding. To say the very least, Mr Maybury is misinformed.

The men themselves started to show some concern over the poor quality work and to ask awkward questions about why Barking Council seemed to encourage such a situation, and if all the council's contracts forbid the lump, why was this appalling method of labour widely used.

Then the federation steward was sacked for representing two other men who had booked off and gone for a drink. All three were dismissed.

Happily for the construction business, all is now back to normal on Gascoigne. The scheme will be completed in the spirit with which it was started. Building workers, council tenants and the Borough of Barking housing revenue account (already generously milked by banking and other parasites) alone will suffer.

Maybe it is these minor factors which help to explain the appearance of certain scurrilous leaflets in the area, talking of £8 million swindles, council complacency and alleged backhanders. But these will be greeted with the same bureaucratic silence as usual.

Worker rescued after a six-day collapse of his... Five of his...

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en make it easier for... who supply profit... on with its labour... exploit the lump... force.

Building Workers' Charter

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday 29 April, from 11am to 5pm

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Delegates to be welcomed by Ken Barlow, Midlands Region Secretary UCATT

Information from D Dugan, 22 Duffield Road, Salford 6, Lancs.

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by Colin Barker
illustrations by 'rag'

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UNION LEADER WHO CALLED A STRIKE 'BLACKMAIL'

WITH 150,000 steel workers demanding a substantial pay rise from the British Steel Corporation the industry could soon be a battleground. But one group of men will be absolutely determined to prevent this. They are the leadership of the biggest steel union—the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation—and have a long tradition of close co-operation with the industry's bosses.

For when 500 crane drivers at the Corby steelworks were sacked for going on strike the union's general secretary said: 'This is the right action for the management to take. Blackmail is an ugly thing and it is no less ugly if it is operated by trade unionists. The only way to meet blackmail is to stand up and fight it.'

This outburst was nothing new. The whole history and recent activity of this union has shown it to be dominated by a right-wing leadership utterly opposed to militancy and ruthlessly administering one of the most undemocratic rule books in the whole experience of trade unionism.

The appalling conduct of this regime has been revealed in its complete failure to tackle two of the most serious problems facing its steelworker membership—redundancy and pay.

Since the steel industry was nationalised in 1967 30,000 jobs have been permanently scrapped and 12,000 men sacked. Between May 1970 and May 1971 unemployment among steelworkers increased by 82 per cent and in the past few months this trend has been accelerated.

The union's reaction has been to do very little. On the contrary it is itself much to blame for the hardships its members now face.

Not only has the union negotiated productivity deals that have thrown its own members into the ranks of the unemployed. It has also refused to organise any real fight against sackings caused or threatened by the sale of the profitable parts of the nationalised steel industry to private firms.

MISERABLE

The full extent of the union's devotion to the interests of Big Business can be quickly judged from its recent refusal of a demand by some of its members that it oppose private interests being allowed to buy shares in the British Steel Corporation.

During last summer the union agreed a new pay deal for its 130,000 members. Afterwards the general secretary and leading Labour Party member Dai Davies chatted to the national press saying the settlement was 'reasonable'.

The pay increase was a mere 6.6 per cent and substantially below the year's rise in the cost of living.

The bosses of the British Steel Corporation made this miserable offer in the near certainty that it would be readily accepted. For the union has an almost principled objection to strikes and hasn't had an official dispute for the past 45 years.

The union's hostility to militancy is absolute and is even written into its notorious rule book: 'It shall not be permissible for any member or members to strike at his or their employment without the authority and sanction of the executive committee.'

And this hasn't been given for the past 45 years.

But the union's members do take strike action and whenever this anti-employer attitude is shown the union immediately launches a campaign of abuse and disciplinary threats against them.

The Corby crane drivers were accused of 'blackmail' and their leaders suspended from holding office, while others have

So much for democracy

'Some of the letters urge that a national conference of representatives of our branches would be a more democratic means of determining policy, and on the face of it this would appear to be correct, until it is remembered that an even more democratic means of determining policy would be to consult each individual member of the association on each individual issue that may crop up, and this has only to be stated in order for it to be seen how ridiculous such a conception of democracy really is, and how impossible in practice it would be to carry out the theory which is evidently obsessing the minds of a small section of the membership of our organisation.'

—an extract from a circular issued by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation on 30 August 1944 and signed by John Brown, general secretary.

been condemned as 'makers of mischief' and 'troublemakers'.

The union's opposition to militancy is constantly documented in its executive committee's report. These are full of complaints against strikers and official warnings from the general secretary ordering immediate returns to work.

The union leadership is also opposed to mass democracy. A former general secretary, Sir Lincoln Evans, once explained why: 'We believe in trade union discipline, without which a trade union becomes a rabble. If membership has to be sacrificed in order to maintain it... better so.'

None of the inadequate national and many of the local agreements the union negotiates and insists are carried out in a 'disciplined manner' are referred to the membership for acceptance or rejection. The union leadership simply doesn't allow them any choice in the matter.

Evans once explained: 'It is not leadership which demands that the responsibility for making decisions must be thrown on the mass of men who have had no opportunity for hearing the case argued; it is abdication of it.'

Inevitably, of course, this attitude drifted towards its logical conclusion. If the workers weren't capable of deciding upon the merits of an agreement after it had been negotiated then what was wrong in demanding that they approve the agreement even before it had been decided.

Nothing, it would seem. For eventually the union's rulers brazenly declared:

RULES

'The executive must receive adequate assurances that the principles on which our negotiating machinery rests will be accepted and the decisions arrived at by duly elected representatives observed before any further negotiations can take place...'

- The attitude of the union is:
- The executive will negotiate agreements.
 - These must be accepted in advance.
 - If they are not, disciplinary action will be taken.
 - No strikes must occur.
 - If they do, disciplinary action will be taken.

Naturally, many union members have fought against these policies and its bosses

have therefore constructed a system whereby this too is not allowed.

This process began in the 1880s. Then the biggest steel union was the National Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. It was totally controlled by a gang of right-wing officials who, when alarmed by rising opposition, simply dissolved the union and formed a new one—the Association of Iron and Steel Workers of Great Britain. In 1916 it changed its name to the British Iron and Steel and Kindred Trades Association and recently to the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

Every time the name changed so did the rules.

The union holds no annual conference and the executive committee has power to remove anyone from office or prevent them from holding or standing for office on the vague grounds that they have 'allegedly' violated the principles of the confederation.

The committee also has power to prevent any candidate from standing for election to the executive on the similar vague grounds that it might be 'thought that his conduct has discredited or sought



Steel forgings being inspected

to injure the Association'. The regime, armed with these rules, does not have to prove any allegation. Appeals against the decisions of the executive can be made only to the executive itself.

The regime also has the power to close any branch or order the removal of any officer, delegate or representative.

Steelworkers will face many new problems in 1972. The urgent task of overthrowing the union leadership and making its rules democratic will be one of the biggest.

It can and must be done. Already many militants have met and produced a programme for reform. The next twelve months will be crucial in their fight to return control of the union to its members. That's why they deserve every possible support.

Steelworkers must also begin to organise for a real fight over pay. If this is left to the union leaders then Dai Davies will probably once again announce that a totally unacceptable offer is actually quite 'a reasonable settlement'.

ROGER ROSEWELL

Sit-in workers sold all down the line



Fisher Bendix workers preparing for a protest march

SOCIALIST WORKER reported recently that Fisher Bendix, scene of the great sit in, has been taken over by a firm called International Property Development. This is just the most recent development in a desperate attempt by the City to get rid of troublesome Fisher Bendix.

Like all previous attempts there has been nothing but contempt for the workers who, with their very livelihoods being auctioned around, have had only the slender idea of what their new bosses are really like.

This is the story. Thorn Electrical took over Parkinson Cowan, owners of Fisher Bendix, in May 1971. Soon complete closure plans were announced. Thorn had taken over Parkinson Cowan with the express intention of closing most of the productive capacity down.

The sixties had been characterised by

serious over-capacity in the hot water radiator business, as greedy capitalists jumped on what looked like a licence to print money afforded by the growth in central heating.

By the end of the sixties, after numerous mergers, this situation had almost righted itself and the future looked rosy in profit terms. By buying Parkinson Cowan, Thorn would virtually control the hot water radiator market. It would then be able to transfer production to its other underused factories and sell off the valuable Kirkby industrial site.

All these plans were thrown into confusion by the workers, who were not so anxious that they should lose their jobs just to increase Thorn's annual profit of £37 million. Thorn quickly started to find another buyer.

ine occupation by the workers clearly frustrated plans to sell the factory, but in

March the workers were told that the factory was going to be bought by British Vending Industries.

This company, which supplies Eton School tuck shop with soft drinks, was something of a mess at the time. Losses on the soft drink side were eating up profits from the firm's other business, manufacture of instant teas and coffees.

In other words the workers were asked to accept as their employers a small company with an uncertain record, with a big loss-making division that could pull the rest of the group down and with a management which had no experience whatsoever in running a manufacturing operation like Fisher Bendix.

Perhaps all this put off British Vending themselves, because the next the workers knew was that their new employers were to be International Property Development. The day before the mass meeting of

IN THE CITY



workers approving the deal IPD had issued a press statement saying they had acquired an existing manufacturing operation, with the agreement of all the unions involved.

Not surprisingly, the name of Fisher Bendix was not mentioned—if it was, perhaps the shares would not have doubled in value on the announcement.

It is quite clear that IPD are not that interested in keeping the jobs at Fisher Bendix. They acquired the factory by buying a new private company called Clohurst: it is rumoured in the City that Thorn, anxious to get the deal through, actually organised the setting up of the new company. Clohurst has assets of £1.2 million, £500,000 of it in cash.

The company has the option to buy the freehold of the whole Thorn estate at Kirkby, covering more than 20 acres. The press announcement said that the acquisition of Clohurst would enable IPD to acquire further property in the UK. No mention was made of the expansion of manufacturing operations.

As the Financial Times said: 'Fisher Bendix is likely to be squeezed into a part of its existing factory leaving a substantial footage to be let elsewhere'. The paper then went on to say the shares were a good buy.

Before this acquisition, the only asset of consequence that IPD owned was land in Trinidad.

Again, the workers of Fisher Bendix have been sold like a commodity. Their buyers are a far from financially sound company. They have been sold just so that City financiers will be able to make themselves a fortune, initially, apparently, by running down the labour force.

The whole story is a dramatic example of the callous big business system which uses workers as pawns in a sophisticated con game to make the rich still richer. It is only when the workers use all their power against the bosses that this can be stopped.

T.H. Rogmorton



REVIEW

SEX, BUT NO SOCIALISM

ARTISTS in Eastern Europe have learnt to be discreet about politics. While a sterile and conservative official art dominates the studios and the cinemas, oppositional artists have returned to allegorical novels and privately circulated, carbon-copied notebooks.

Within Russia the thunder of the Bolshoi and the Red Army choir has almost drowned the cryptic and ambiguous silences of the poets and the bleak ironies of the film makers. In the West, socialists have to politically de-code the films and novels which reach us, often via the CIA.

All this makes the flamboyant anarchism of Dusan Makavejev's Yugoslavian film 'WR, the mysteries of the organism' (Academy Two) a particular shock. It calls itself 'a Sexpol film, dedicated to Wilhelm Reich' and uses Reich's life and death to provide its themes.

These include attacks on the failures of the Yugoslavian revolution, the rise of the 'Red Bourgeoisie' and the Cult of the Personality.

Its stars are a murderous Russian ice-skater and a girl sexual revolutionary who declares his revolution is 'a tawdry toy balloon'. And it's edited like a marxist Monty Python, as a stream of images which wrench, manipulate and release, creating a visual structure which echoes Reich's own ideas about the nervous system.

But manipulate it still does and its viewers are browbeaten into a disappointingly right-wing view of America, Russia and Reich. Makavejev extracts from the American dream machine the most apolitical and exploitative aspects of the sexual liberation industry, thereby denying the entire first half of Reich's active life.

GROTESQUE

His American documentary sequences delight in the chaos and extremism of American life. His sexual travelogue is deliberately meaningless, a scrabble of ideas and a scramble of images, no more illuminating than Pathe News.

But it's a grotesque of America and to say America's grotesque is not new or enough. We see people moulding sex-mag editors' penises rather than Black Panthers, we see poets dressed as soldiers rather than wars, we see New York painters who dabble in 'Women's Lib' rather than an actual woman's movement. It's a crazy world and a hopeless one.

Reich's remaining followers, with their anti-communism, paranoia and enthusiasm for flying saucers, seem familiar and amiable enough among nutters. The documentary shots of the smalltown businessmen who knew and feared Reich, the state penitentiary where he died a judicial death and the furnaces which burned his banned books shows just how paranoid-making

A 'marxist' Monty Python - and just as off-beam

This week and next Review deals with the work of the marxist psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich. In the last few years interest has renewed in this socialist who explored the connections between sexual and political repression. This week DAVID WIDGERY looks at 'WR: Mysteries of the Organism', a Yugoslav film on Reich and SHEILA ROWBOTHAM writes on Reich's life. Next week Gerry Dawson reviews a recently published Reich pamphlet 'What is Class Consciousness'.

McCarthy's fifties America actually was.

Just as, in the forties and fifties, Freud's revolutionary ideas were tailored to fit a highly profitable office 'psycho-analysis' service for the anxious American businessman, so in the Sixties, Reich's socialist ideas have been abandoned by his followers who provide instead



A scene from *Mysteries of the Organism*

expensive encounter therapy for the worried flower child.

Reich did argue that this system's ideological forms of power are anchored in the character structure of the individual, that ideology is not only embedded in the mind as false consciousness but could produce physical and emotional effects, tense muscles, perforating

ulcers and a type of person out of touch with their emotions and incapable of sexual release.

But, until his dotage, he specifically argued against the liberal sex reformers who said that all you needed was better sexual techniques, that you could fuck your way to freedom. Instead he

tried to make a materialist analysis of psychology to show how it was that the individual's personality was shaped by the larger controlling structures of society and how one cannot be changed without changing the other.

These ideas are tossed about in a surreal pantomime-style Yugoslavian story which inter-cuts with the American material. It deals with the seduction of a Soviet ice-skater, named Vladimir Illych after Lenin. He is pursued by Milena, a Yugoslavian sexual radical, while her flat-mate enthusiastically has it away with a stream of militia men and a male-chauvinist dustbinman yells drunken insults against the Red Bourgeoisie.

The Leninist ice-skater is furrhatted and pompous, full of patronising Khrushchevite platitudes about Soviet achievements and Socialist Internationalism. He is bewildered by her passionate demands that life itself and men and women's relationship to each other must change after the Revolution, not just the ratio of sputniks to combine harvesters. But when he finally releases his repressed emotions, he becomes uncontrollably violent and, after making love to Milena, beheads her with one of his ice skates.

BANNED

Makavejev wants to attack the worship of Lenin and Stalin in Russia by suggesting, like Reich did about Hitler, that people's desire to subordinate themselves before great leaders is connected with sexual repression, particularly an authoritarian family upbringing.

The film, still banned in Yugoslavia, remains a disappointment in Britain. It ends up viewing sexuality as either painful or ludicrous. Its pastiche of America is so muted and its attacks on Stalin so ferocious that on balance, as one might expect from a Yugoslavian liberal intellectual, it is hostile to socialist ideas.

The part of Reich's life which is of real importance to marxists is amputated in favour of the conventional picture of a mad scientist. The film skates over Reich's ideas, giving the impression, quite acceptable to capitalism, that all that's lacking in Eastern Europe is a few sex magazines and transvestites.

As the publishers of Reich's 'What is Class Consciousness' were told by the Academy box office, who refused to sell the pamphlet, 'People are here for the sex not the politics'. The task of connecting them politically, in real movements, rather than merely juxtaposing them visually, is not made easier by this film.

East, west: no home for Reich

THE PERIOD of Reich's exile from 1938 onwards in the United States is better known than his earlier work as a marxist in the 1920s and early 30s. In 1954 the United States Food and Drug Administration placed an injunction against the distribution of his 'orgone boxes', which Reich ignored.

When his work and equipment were destroyed the authorities included his earlier texts written in Berlin attacking repressive institutions. Much of this earlier work has never been translated into English.

Reich joined the Austrian Communist Party in 1928 after seeing two workers killed in a small town demonstration. When Viennese workers came out in solidarity, the police opened fire and several dozen people were killed.

He had already learnt about the connection between the economic and psychological conditions of workers in a concrete way as Freud's assistant in a Viennese free clinic. Most working-class patients lived in one room, the birth of a child could be a disaster, contraceptive information was non-existent and many women died from abortion. Freud realised the need for free clinics in 1918. The one in Vienna had been preceded in Berlin, where it

had met with far less resistance from the medical and political authorities.

Through his work he began to feel dissatisfied with some of Freud's ideas. He became convinced that rather than defending civilisation against the individual, evil lay in institutions and social organisations. He began to regard it as an illusory hope to transform psychological misery by just opening clinics—the patients were returned to the material conditions which had created the neuroses.

When he joined the Communist Party he was invited to give a series of meetings for workers and students on psychoanalysis. He started fairly formally but soon realised he was talking over his audience's heads. He dropped the academic phrases and made it more down to earth, speaking about living conditions and their consequences in sexual life.

Reich's socialist society for sex advice came out of these lectures. In 1929 six sex education centres were opened with psychoanalysts and obstetricians and agitation began to legalise abortion. In September of that year Reich went to Russia where he met Vern Schmidt whose experiments in child education he describes in 'The Sexual Revolution'. His Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis was published in Moscow.

He was concerned to produce a synthesis between marxism and psychoanalysis and in 1930 he moved to Berlin. There Reich met Fromm and Otto Fenichel, who were preoccupied with the same problem, and he met socialist doctors, students, and members of the Young Communists.

There was considerable interest in sex reform in Germany with 80 different organisations campaigning for various changes. Most of them wanted birth control, legal abortion and an end to the laws against sexual deviation. But they ignored the connections between sex and politics and were suspicious of Reich because he was a Communist.

In an attempt to unite and politicise these organisations he founded the German Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics (SEXPOL) which aimed to abolish the laws against abortion and homosexuality and to disseminate birth control advice. He wished to show how these reforms were connected to other aspects of life under capitalism.

Sexpol had its first congress at Dusseldorf with the blessing of the German Communist Party who had accepted Reich's programme, but the relationship was precarious. Many communists felt that Reich was substituting the sexual struggle for politics, fearing his influence on young workers in the Young Communist League.

In Russia the early debate on sexual liberation was hardening and Reich's insistence on the link between the repression of youthful sexuality and the acceptance of authority, his belief that it was necessary to change the family as well as the organisation of production, were becoming increasingly embarrassing. This, combined with the party's fear of Sexpol as a rival organisation which would challenge the authority of the communists, led to the banning of Reich's works in party bookshops.

In the wilderness Reich found ironically that political arguments about how to organise persistently dogged Sexpol. He opposed the anarchists who were against the existence of any party, he defended Trotsky against the Comintern, although he did not fully agree with him.

His worst fears about fascism were realised. He experienced the disillusionment of the period after the Moscow trials, and the ideological and physical pressure of the Cold War. Imprisoned in the USA for contempt of the court which had judged his orgone box to be fraudulent, he was diagnosed paranoid and sent to a prison with psychiatric facilities, where he was declared 'legally sane and competent'. He died in prison in 1957.

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

<p>SCOTLAND Aberdeen Cumbernauld Dundee Edinburgh Fife Glasgow N Glasgow S Stirling St Andrews</p> <p>NORTH EAST Durham Newcastle upon Tyne Spennymoor Sunderland Teesside (Middlesbrough & Redcar)</p> <p>NORTH Barnsley Bradford Doncaster Grimsby Halifax Huddersfield Hull Leeds Mid-Derbyshire Ossett Scarborough Selby Sheffield York</p> <p>NORTH WEST Barrow Blackburn Bolton Crewe Kirkby Lancaster Manchester Merseyside Oldham Potteries Preston St Helens Wigan Wrexham</p>	<p>MIDLANDS Birmingham Coventry Leamington Leicester Northampton Nottingham Oxford Redditch Rugby Telford Wolverhampton</p> <p>WALES and SOUTH WEST Bath Bristol Cardiff Exeter Gloucester Mid-Devon</p> <p>SOUTH Ashford Brighton Canterbury Crawley Folkestone Gurdford Portsmouth Southampton</p> <p>EAST Basildon Beccles Cambridge Colchester Harlow</p>	<p>Ipswich Leiston Lowestoft Norwich Peterborough</p> <p>GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES Acton Camden Chertsey Croydon</p> <p>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</p>
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IS meets challenge of Tory offensive

STEP UP the struggle against the Tories and their system by building the revolutionary movement—that was the key theme at the annual conference of the International Socialists.

More than 400 delegates packed London's Beaver Hall over Easter weekend to take part in a series of hard-hitting discussions on the vital issues facing the working-class movement—Ireland, the Industrial Relations Act, tenants, youth, women and the black community.

Major emphasis was given to how International Socialists could develop stronger roots in industry in order to recruit more militant workers and forge a determined leadership against the Tory-employer offensive.

Introducing the National Committee's report and political perspectives, National Secretary Jim Higgins reported a substantial increase in membership in the last 12 months.

'Our branches have a much more serious attitude to membership now', he said. 'There is a much greater commitment and an increase in the quality of membership, particularly from trade unionists.'

Because of the improved geographical spread of branches, IS had responded well to the challenges of the past year—UCS, mines, Fisher-Bendix and now the occupations in Manchester engineering factories.

'IS, nationally and in its branches, has proved that it has something significant to offer workers. But we must understand that they have a lot to offer us as well.'

There will be increasing challenges in the months ahead, Jim Higgins went on, and one of the best ways to meet them would be the building of factory branches of IS, to win over more effectively the best militants and challenge the employers and the state at the point of production.

He reported that the outgoing National Committee had been the best in the organisation's history and was a reflection of the increased seriousness of the branches. Work among youth, students and women showed possibilities of take-off without hindering the main emphasis on industrial work.

'IS is evolving into an organisation that can effectively intervene in the growing struggles of the working class,' he added. 'It is not an accident that we have taken advantage of the situation better than any other revolutionary groups.'

'With real application, building on our achievements, we can see massive growth in the next year. We can make inroads into sections of workers untouched by Stalinism and social democracy and can make the biggest advance seen by the revolutionary movement in Britain since the 1920s.'

The struggle in industry

INTRODUCING the session on industry, Roger Rosewell, chairman of the industrial committee, said that the current attack on the trade union movement flowed from the needs of capitalism to raise the productivity of labour.

The present Tory offensive was a continuation of Labour's policies. Both sought to integrate the union bureaucracy into the state machine in order to use it to discipline the rank and file, with the added threat of unemployment.

'The left leaders like Scanlon and Jones do lead some fights, but they cannot do the job consistently', he said. 'This makes the struggle inside the unions vitally important. It is impossible to separate the industrial battle from the fight for correct policies and internal union democracy.'

Roger Rosewell said that the struggles were likely to continue, but with some unevenness, defeats as well as victories. He thought the Tories would attempt to establish some form of incomes policy and perhaps a deal between the CBI and the TUC on threshold agreements.

'Threshold agreements paid for by more productivity is the Tory aim. Many union leaders want that.'

'Both the TGWU and EPTU have refused to ban them. NUPE demands them. The NUM has agreed to try and negotiate one and Scanlon's policy of plant bargaining in engineering will inevitably give employers the opportunity to bring them in.'

'The purpose of productivity deals remains the same: to reduce the number of workers employed so that plant can be used to its full capacity, attempting to avoid a sharp decline in profits.'

He went on to say that the Industrial Relations Act would now begin to bite. Many employers would never use it, others would use it as a last resort, but some, as at St Helens last week, would use it at the first opportunity. Just as important was the fact that the union leaders would use the Act as an excuse to avoid sympathy action and blacking.

'The imposition of fines and other court actions is aimed at compelling the bureaucracy to defend its funds by dis-

ciplining the rank and file. It is also clear that many unions will attempt to cooperate with the Act's machinery, thereby undermining the registration issue.

'Against this background of continuing class struggle, the crisis of leadership is vividly apparent', he stressed. 'We have argued before that an organisation of 20,000 rooted in industry could do much. This remains as valid as before.'

'There is a tremendous vacuum in industry. The Labour Party never organises in industry. It is of little importance there. The Communist Party remains the main left force, but it is incapable of providing leadership because of its relationship with the bureaucracy.'

'One of our main jobs is to work with rank and file Communist Party militants in mines, engineering, among electricians and so on.'



Dangers

'We are the only organised presence. With our small resources we have to intervene with the correct programme, strategy, tactics and muscle. Our ideas have met the test. On productivity deals, in the motor industry, against unemployment, the fight against the Act, on union democracy and occupations, our ideas are the only lead. We must concentrate on maximising the impact of these ideas.'

This required, he said, a greater concentration of our organisational resources, improving the work of fractions in industry and the unions, building support for rank and file papers.

'We must also have the perspective of factory discussion groups and eventually factory branches. Of course there are dangers in this, but workers are not 'second-class citizens' and our organisations must be located in struggle at the point of production.'

Reporting on the miners' strike, John Charlton (Leeds National Committee member) said IS had gone into the strike from a weak base of just a few members in the industry and a legacy of incorrect tactics in previous strikes.

'We had to rebuild our credibility, try to get a rank and file paper off the ground and build branches in the mining areas. Our branches made a tremendous effort, not just in the mining areas but in East Anglia and the South, where we helped the pickets outside power stations.'

'Many miners took back with them news of the role of IS members and previous hostility towards students had changed to admiration, particularly as a result of the support at Essex University.'

Militants

John Charlton pointed out that the initiative for the historic picket at Saltley coke depot had come from IS members in the Birmingham district. He reported that the rank and file miners' conference in March called by IS had been attended by 56 miners from various parts of the country and as a result we could look forward to a rapid growth of a strong rank and file movement around the new paper The Collier which had been very well received. A number of leading militants have now joined IS.

'The Communist Party claimed to be strong in the NUM,' he added. 'But it was very weak during the strike settlement. Because of its uncritical attitude to the leadership, it could not attack the Wilberforce report and its productivity strings. It cannot get off the hook on the question of union democracy.'

'We have moved into the vacuum and made a big impact on the militants. The experience of the strike shows we can build strong rank and file movements in key sectors of industry.'

In a hard-hitting and lively debate on the question of factory branches, delegates rejected the immediate perspective of building such branches.

Hugh Kerr (Harlow), successfully moving a motion in favour of industrial fractions and factory cells, said that independent factory branches at this time could lead to the isolation of industrial members.

'Dividing workers panders to the sectionalism that capitalism thrusts upon us. We need a structure that develops all our members. There will be a time when we need factory branches—when we have

WHAT'S ON NOTICES

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

MEETINGS

SWANSEA IS: Folk singer Alex Glasgow and Chris Davison—Unemployment And How To Fight It. Dynevor School Hall, Sat 15 April, 7.30pm.

VITAL MEETING of all IS members in ATTI in the London area, Fri 21 April, 8pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, E2.

ALL IS DELEGATES to NUS Conference: pre-conference meeting, 8pm, Sun 9 April, Aston Joint Union. Contact SSC for accommodation.

ILFORD Rebel public meeting: Paul Foot on The Law And Order Brigade, Thurs 13 April, Barking Town Hall 8pm. Apprentices, young workers, school pupils welcome.

MAY DAY greetings: reach the biggest audience on the left through Socialist Worker. Copy date 19 April. Display 50p per single column inch, classified 5p per line. Encourage your union branch, Trades Council, shop stewards' committee, works committee, strike committee to book space NOW for our special May Day issue.

THE council tenant and the Tory Housing Bill—5p. An IS in Scotland pamphlet for Scottish tenants. Order from your local IS branch or from M Dougal, 2 Elm Row, Edinburgh.

MAY DAY RALLY—Bring the Tories Down! Why Labour Doesn't Fight. Monday 1 May, 8pm, Islington Town Hall. Speakers include Bernadette Devlin MP, Paul Foot, industrial and international speakers.

IS WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER No 6 now out. Articles on women workers, women's lib, the welfare state. Price 5p. Money with orders please to M Renn, c/o 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

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Delegates voting during the conference debate on Ireland

many thousands of members. The main problem now is the integration of new members.'

NUR shop steward Andreas Nagliatti attacked the Harlow motion and said that without factory branches we would never have 20-30,000 members.

'The key factor is how workers at work stand up to their task. In the factory you can approach debates on issues like racialism and Ireland on the most favourable basis. It is an evasion of responsibility to avoid building factory branches—that is where the power lies.'

Mike McKenna (Enfield) said we needed to fuse the theory of the 'radical intelligentsia' with the practice of workers. Factory branches meant a major revision of marxism.

Colin Barker (Manchester) said Mike McKenna was living in the last century. 'It was ridiculous to say there are no working class intellectuals.'

He pointed out that in many areas many workers had to travel 10 or 20 miles and the factory was the only place where they could be held together politically and industrially.

Isolated

Colwyn Williamson (Swansea) said the revolutionary party was the key way to break down the divisions between workers and other sectors. 'You don't overcome them by separating off workers—neither will you hammer intellectuals into shape. Factory branches are illogical. We must transcend distinction between intellectuals and workers.'

Birmingham building worker Gerry Kelly said: 'We need to build industrial fractions in which intellectuals can aid the workers. We need factory branches in the long term but at present they would recruit people isolated from the politics of the organisation.'

But Coventry car worker Dave Edwards said that it was more important to belong to a Chrysler car branch than to a 'cell'.

'We need to intervene in industry, not just to make propaganda. We must build combat arms of the organisation. Factory branches must work under the discipline of the town branch, but we must intervene in factories with political ideas.'

WOMEN: EXPOSING THE MYTHS

DISCUSSING the report from the women's sub-committee, conference decided that the main emphasis of work should be towards working-class women. A successful Coventry resolution that IS' main propaganda should 'have the aim of exposing and counteracting the myths spread by capitalism about women and, through relating these myths to women's everyday lives, show the validity of socialist

The Irish struggle: which way ahead?

INTRODUCING a report on Ireland, Chris Harman said that the abolition of Stormont was a decisive point in the Irish struggle that opened up great possibilities and great dangers.

'Direct rule is a paradox. It was brought about by the military activity of the IRA but far from being a victory is only a change in imperialist rule. Britain has been forced to abandon a structure that impedes imperialist domination of the whole of Ireland.'

'Britain is trying to integrate the middle class leaders of the Catholic community into the state structure. SDLP see themselves as lieutenants of British capitalism.'

'But direct rule makes the issues clearer. There may be a lull in military activities, but it is bound to reappear. Oppression continues. Sections of Catholic workers will take up the struggle again, but they don't yet see the connection between unemployment and imperialism.'

He stressed that solidarity action in Britain must continue unabated. The Anti-Internment League has a vital role to play in making clear that direct rule is imperialist rule.

It was not possible for any of the existing republican organisations in Ireland to turn themselves into a real workers' movement. Their opposition to imperialism is not based on class issues.

'The perspective must be to build an independent workers' movement. We put no conditions on the republicans fighting imperialism, but we must be critical. We are speaking to thousands of Irish workers in Britain. Some of the tactics of the IRA are a substitute for overthrowing the system.'

Our attitude to such incidents as Aldershot were not based on morals, Chris Harman pointed out. 'But Aldershot and the shooting of John Taylor are not the way to destroy imperialism. An integral part of building the workers' movement in

Ireland is to criticise the republican movement and its inability to defeat imperialism in Ireland.'

Brian Trench said unconditional support for the IRA means an understanding of the oppressive role of the British Army. We had to support the armed struggle against their oppression.

He said that the distinction between offensive and defensive action was false. 'The IRA has the overwhelming support of the Catholics. It does have a mass base and we cannot impose conditions on how it fights.'

Eddy McWilliams (Stoke), moving an amendment to condemn Socialist Worker, said there was a colonial war in Ireland, with 20,000 British troops present. There was a massive fight back, involving rents and rates strikes as well as an armed struggle.

But Tony Cliff (National Committee) said our attitude of unconditional but critical support for the IRA meant we had to be critical when we thought they were wrong. We could not leave the criticism until the struggle was over.

The Stoke amendment was defeated and the conference went on to pass a motion reaffirming unconditional but critical support for the republican movement, to demand the release of Irish political prisoners in Ireland and Britain, to call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops and to campaign for the right to self-determination of Ireland, free from imperialist domination North and South.

The resolution added that the only successful way to end both imperialist domination and the rule of the Irish middle class in the South was the creation of a united socialist workers' republic of all 32 counties. It welcomed the growth of the Socialist Workers' Movement in Ireland and pledged in Britain to develop the work of the Anti-Internment League.

ideas.'

An amendment from Hornsey added four demands to be fought for:
1. All demands for a minimum wage to apply to women. 2. The right of women to work. No redundancies as an alternative to equal pay. 3. No job evaluation to establish the case for equal pay. 4. No night work or shift work as a prerequisite for equal pay.

It also called for an exploration of the possibilities of producing an IS women's paper.

The delegates rejected a motion that said it would be wrong to set up alternative groups to the Women's Liberation Movement. Most speakers described WLM as a middle-class movement hostile to political ideas that could not be won to socialism.

Students prepare for vital conference

THIS YEAR'S National Union of Students' Conference is the most important it has ever faced.

The government is attacking all forms of spending on education, health and welfare. In education, its long-term goals are simple. It wants to double the numbers of students in higher education to service the needs of industry, but without increasing the cost.

To do this without provoking a massive student revolt, the Tories first decided to establish controls over student unions and to turn them into safe social clubs where funds would be spent on respectable athletic purposes rather than on supporting striking mineworkers or African liberation fighters.

Faced with such attacks the policies adopted by the National Union of Students are absolutely crucial.

The NUS leadership mobilised the membership on the narrow basis that their funds were in danger. In fact Tory objections centre on what uses the funds are put to. Theirs is a political attack, directed at political autonomy.

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions was formed to argue for a political response.

At this year's conference it faces a tough fight. The executive and the Communist Party are well-organised and ready with clever motions which will allow them to make left noises while doing nothing except conduct under-cover negotiations against the express mandate of two conferences.

The liaison committee is running a campaign for the election of its representatives to the executive on a revolutionary basis.

TENANTS' ANGER GROWS

by Hugh Kerr

DIRECT ACTION is the only way to defeat the Tory Housing Bill. That is increasingly the message coming home to council tenants.

The rents of roughly half Britain's council tenants rise this week by at least 50p a week. The other half will face rent rises of £1 a week in October to comply with the Bill, which by then will be law.

Already tenants in many areas, angered by the prospect of their rents doubling over the next few years, have begun to organise to defeat the Tory plans.

Cumbernauld tenants in Scotland faced with rent rises of up to £1 a week are organising to withhold the rent increase. In Hemel Hempstead, where 1500 tenants demonstrated outside the Town Hall, they are withholding the rent rises and have forced the council's Labour group to agree to rescind them if they win the local elections in May.

Cheltenham, a Tory bastion, will be faced by a rent strike from council tenants. In Winchester thousands of tenants are taking action. Crawley tenants are holding mass meetings in every area of the town, are calling for a rent strike and are being backed by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, which has promised industrial support.

DITHERING

Other tenants are organising direct action in Edinburgh, Durham, Portsmouth, Stevenage, Dewsbury, and Colchester. As more and more are hit by rent rises and realise the vicious nature of the Tory Housing Bill, so the campaign is growing.

But some things are holding back the campaign. Many Labour councils are dithering over whether to co-operate with the Bill. Some have already given in to the Tories and are increasing their rents this month. Others have put them off until October to protect themselves at the local elections in May.

The Labour Party nationally has given no lead. A document sent out from Transport House said: 'The National Executive has now given serious consideration to the likely effects of the Bill after October 1, 1972. The effects will be different from authority to authority and therefore the Executive has decided that it is not possible to give advice to local authorities on a national basis.'

This week-kneed attitude has led to confusion among Labour councils, which was reflected at a recent meeting of London's Labour councillors. Eight Labour councils were in favour of refusing to co-operate with the Bill, six had decided to implement it and five were undecided.

Tenants cannot rely on Labour councils to fight for them. Tenants must begin now to organise in their areas for direct action, including rent strikes. They must involve the trade union movement in the campaign at every level, and must link together nationally to force the Tories to retreat.

THE RENT BATTLE

Council ready to ignore the law

AFTER months of little more than verbal opposition by the Labour Party to the Tories so-called Fair Rents Bill, a Labour council has declared that it is going to ignore the law.

The Labour-controlled council at Castleford in Yorkshire has stated that it will refuse to put up its council house rents by £1 in October.

Councillor Fred Pennington, vice-chairman of the housing committee, said that in his opinion the principle was more important than any legal point.

'The 7000 council houses in Castleford belong to Castleford,' he said. 'Not to the Tory government.'

He said he hoped that other Labour councils would follow the lead taken by Castleford. He was not very worried that the government might appoint a commissioner to take over the administration of the council's housing department since he thought that it 'would embarrass the government more than us.'

Councillor Pennington said that the Bill had to be fought. 'It's just like the Industrial Relations Act—if you let them, then they'll get away with it.'

Country opposition

OPPOSITION to the Tory Rent Bill is not confined to cities and large towns. Council tenants in the quiet rural mining area of Denby Dale in Yorkshire are to form a tenants association and to pressurise the local Labour-controlled council to fight the Bill.

At a meeting last Wednesday in Scisset, organised by Huddersfield International Socialists, Dick Williams of IS called for the formation of tenants associations to fight the Bill.

Councillor Senior, chairman of the Denby Dale Urban Council Housing Committee, called for tenants to force definite commitment of opposition from all councillors in the local elections.

Against the Glosters

BRISTOL: On 13 April the 'Glorious Gloster' Regiment will march with bayonets fixed through Bristol to mark its return from the Lower Falls area of Belfast.

The Bristol Anti-Internment League has taken a strong public stand against the parade. As a result one of the organisers has been threatened by a group calling itself the Bristol Ulster Defence

Brigade. The AIL has now decided to call a national demonstration in Bristol on Saturday 15 April to protest against the Glosters' parade. It has appealed to all sympathetic groups for support. Details are available from John Gray, 139 Holland Road, London W14, or Austen Morgan, 80 Kingsdown Parade, Bristol 6.

I.S. History Group Conference
THE BRITISH REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE WARS
11am Sat 22 April, at Rouses Hall, University of Warwick, Coventry.
Morning: Joan Smith
The Unemployed Workers' Movement
Afternoon: Jim Higgins
James Hinton, Richard Hyman
The Minority Movement.
Anyone wanting accommodation on either Friday or Saturday nights should write to A. Hatchett, 69 Arden Street, Earlsdon, Coventry.

ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE
March and rally in Bristol
Speakers: Bernadette Devlin
Eamonn McCann
Saturday 15 April
Assemble 1pm the Downs
full details: John Gray
139 Holland Road, London W14
01-603-3085

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Roger Rosewell on the Industrial Relations Act and the Working Class, 8pm Thurs 13 April The Spotted Dog, Garrett Lane, SW18.



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Socialist Worker

BOSSSES BATTLE TO DISLODGE SIT-IN WORKERS

Shoe women hold the key to jobs fight

by Margaret Renn

NORFOLK: The Fakenham shoe factory of Sexton, Son and Everards has now been occupied for more than two weeks.

Forty-five women workers have taken over the works, in a converted church, and asked the most pointed question that could ever be asked in such a place: 'What moral right does Jack Taubman (the new owner) have to come into a place like this and dispense with 45 jobs. We challenge his right.'

The factory is part of a company which Mr Taubman acquired when dwindling profits had landed it in the hands of the receiver. At the beginning of the year the total work force in the main factory in Norwich was around 700, and redundancies were planned in an effort to make it more profitable.

ASTMS (supervisors) and NUFLAT (shoeworkers) members decided to occupy in order to save their jobs—but they made one fatal mistake: Instead of occupying immediately, they agreed to wait for the stewards' committee to give the word.

It never did, and when the new owner moved in with promises to maintain 500 jobs open, the workers voted to accept. The carrot of redundancy payments is hard to ignore in an area where unemployment is well below the national average.

The women at Fakenham were not so complacent. They stood by the decision to occupy and when they were served with their redundancy notices they took over the plant. Now the boards outside the factory declare that it is 'under workers' control.'

It was the unwillingness of the unions to do anything that forced the women to occupy and give themselves the chance of winning something. They are still fighting without the official support of their union, NUFLAT, and they have refused to let the officials past the door since the sell-out in Norwich.

They have demanded that the union recognises their dispute and states publicly that it fully supports them. NUFLAT members in Norwich have started organising financial collections, and should force the officials to act. The women are now using their skills to maintain the occupation by making leather goods such as bags and belts, which they sell to raise money.

Machinery was moved out by a manager into a warehouse across the road—but the women found the key and moved it back. No further attempts have been made to move the machinery.

The women are fighting for the right to work, and must be actively supported in their fight. They have demanded guarantees that the factory remains open for several years.

They don't work for pin-money—they work because they have to. They have helped to explode the myth about women workers being passive, non-militant and disinterested in union affairs.

Donations and messages of support to: Mrs Nancy McGrath, Sexton, Sons and Everard, Fakenham, Norfolk.



Picture: Tony Skipper

ASTMS member Mrs Nancy McGrath at the occupied factory in Fakenham: she has the key to the machinery, a vital bargaining weapon in the fight to save their jobs.

MANCHESTER: As factory occupations spread, employers have been looking with signs of desperation for ways of prising loose the workers' grip

At James Mills, Bredbury, where the sit-in is now three weeks' old, the managing director, Cedric Wilson,

SW Reporter

has been removed by his masters at GKN in the hope that this will take the edge off shop floor militancy.

Most bosses are expressing their anxieties in less subtle ways. Police were called in by the bosses at Mirlees factory at Stockport to prevent a film crew showing workers pictures of previous occupations.

But the most direct legal challenge to the sit-ins so far was the legal action by the directors of Sharston Engineering, a small factory with few traditions of militant union organisation.

Agreed

When the bailiffs arrived to serve writs on the men occupying the factory, they found it guarded by workers from other plants. They were unable to get in to serve their writs, and the only casualty was a bailiff who got his foot trapped in a fire door. Eight men were trying to close it at the time.

Shortly afterwards the managing director, Mrs Dubost, agreed to negotiations with the union officials. She agreed to what seemed a partial climb down.

All the men were reinstated in their jobs, including four who were to be made redundant. But she later claimed that in return the officials had signed an agreement not to push the claim any further. The workers, in contrast, say that they will only be holding back from further action on the claim for a week or two.

The Sharston case was significant because of the way the judge, Sir Thomas

Burgess, gave voice to the fear that nags every employer in the area.

'In the case of a small family firm with 30 or 40 employees, it is not too difficult to make sure that men will leave the factory,' he said. 'But what do you do when you have a factory occupied by 500 people? Then two or three thousand police and firemen would be needed, with possibly tear gas and so forth.'

For the moment the role of the state is to try and starve the men out by refusing lay-off money, although it is the managers who are refusing to let them work. But the spirit of the workers at all the occupied plants is high. At Ruston Paxman Diesels, near Wigan, workers voted 1400 to six for an occupation.

Lawrence Scott and Electro-Motors has locked out 2000 workers at its Norwich plant following the occupation of its Manchester factory.

Need

The AUEW seems less anxious than the employers to spread the battle. Although the engineering struggle has been going on for more than two weeks, it is only now that moves are being made to organise a local levy for the men suspended by their employers.

This all underlines the need for the struggle to be run by the stewards throughout the area at regular weekly meetings.

All settlements negotiated with employers should be publicised. Agreements have a tendency to emphasise cash rather than a reduction in hours, but some important victories have been achieved, and their full disclosure by union officials would further strengthen the resolve of workers still engaged in the struggle.

NEWS IN BRIEF

RUGBY: Bernard Pierce, an executive member of TASS (the technical section of the engineering union) was sacked from GEC last November and victimised for doing union work in the company's time.

The entire TASS membership walked out in solidarity and agreed not to strike but to wait for support from the union leadership.

Now the TASS leadership has decided against strike action and offered Pierce victimisation pay instead. It's cheaper.

DONCASTER: At Bentley Colliery, where during the miners' strike two of the four faces developed fires and had to be sealed off, the coal board now wants to

downgrade 45 miners, which would wipe out their pay rise.

Bentley miners are firm in opposition and have the support of the Doncaster panel of the National Union of Miners. The issue will come to a head this week, and strike action may be taken.

DONCASTER: Ford workers are occupying the factory between shifts to prevent machinery or finished work from leaving the plant.

The reason is clearly painted on the factory wall: 'Reward for 30 years loyalty—The Dole'. Last year the plant was scheduled for expansion. Now Ford intend to close it.

Dockers' sacking notices withdrawn

LONDON:—Docks employers Wallace Smith Coggins have withdrawn for a month the notice which would have sent 50 dockers back to the unattached pool this Friday.

This is clearly a response to the enthusiastic rank and file support for the Docks National Shop Stewards Committee campaign against redundancies. This took the employers by surprise.

The London Overseas Traders Employers Association has also agreed to take men from the unattached pool on a day-to-day basis when there is a labour shortage. This is clearly something of a gain for the men involved—it means a great deal more money.

Angry teachers turn their backs on Mrs Thatcher

BLACKPOOL:—Even the superior smile of Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education, was dislodged when 150 teachers walked out in a body as she rose to address the 100th conference of the National Union of Teachers on Tuesday.

The long-smouldering resentment of delegates finally burst into flame at the grovelling of their executive (including such well-known Communist Party figures as Mr Max Morris, just elected as their new 'militant' vice-president, and London member Mr Sam Fisher) before the Tory hatchet-woman.

These angry teachers followed the lead of the Rank and File organisation, now clearly emerging as the only genuine left-wing group within the union and a really significant force to be reckoned with. They were joined by another large group of delegates who absented themselves to attend a mass protest meeting arranged by the Surrey county delegates to coincide with Mrs Thatcher's conference appearance.

Tactics

The teachers were incensed by her damaging onslaught on state education, in particular her attempt to sabotage the comprehensive schools development.

With the final absorption of the Communist Party's leaders into the right-wing executive establishment it fell to the Rank and File group to organise the traditional extra-conference delegates meetings to plan tactics. In an attempt to damp down on militancy, the right-wing

SW reporter

leadership of the NUT's London Association made a last-minute cancellation of their pre-conference meeting.

Rank and File sprang to action, booked a room at the Blackpool Trades Club and produced posters and leaflets which were distributed around the dozens of hotels in which the 2000 delegates were staying.

Ultra-right

The result was a packed, enthusiastic meeting that set the pattern for Rank and File activity for the week. Militant motions have been rated high priority on the agenda. The executive, whose main object is to attempt to draw the teeth from any progressive proposal involving action, was forced to concede to vigorous action on nursery provisions and even strike action over slum school buildings.

The dead hand of the executive, now united from Communist Party to ultra-right, attempted to smother any real militant turn by the device of invalidating progressive motions by the issue of numerous policy 'memoranda'. No less than six were thrust on a somewhat bemused conference—on salaries, the Industrial Relations Act, teacher participation, size of classes and the James Report on teacher training.

The executive produced a policy memorandum which swallowed the employers' salaries structure with five separate grades aimed at dividing the ranks.

A tremendous battle is being waged by the Rank-and-File-led left against this betrayal connived at by the Communist Party leaders.

An attempt was made by Eric Peagam of North London to introduce an emergency motion to express solidarity with the TGWU, fined £5000 by the Industrial Court. Although it failed, the ground was prepared for a really big fight to force the NUT, whose executive had already recommended non-registration, not to co-operate in any way with the Industrial Relations Act.

Building workers protest against 'lump'

MANCHESTER:—3000 militant building workers from the North West marched through the city centre last week in protest against the 'lump' (labour-only contracting) and in support of their claim of £30 for a 35-hour week. At the same time more than 10,000 building workers in the area stopped work.

The demonstration, which was official, ended with a mass rally in the city's Co-Op Hall. It was organised by the North West regional council of the recently-formed Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT), which organised a huge demonstration on Merseyside last month.

Published by the International Socialists, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2. Printed by SW (Litho) Printers Ltd [TU all depts]. Registered with the Post Office.

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