

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

TORY



Carrington: landed £½m.



du Cann: £20,000 profit



Davies: put the Boot in

HIGHWAYMEN

Dockers' leader defies the law...



RAILMEN: BIG 'YES' VOTE NEEDED

THE TORIES' legal machine has moved into action again over the railmen's fight for a living wage. Ballot papers are now being sent to all British Rail's workers in the three unions.

The single question on the paper is: 'In the light of British Railway's pay offer (of which you have been informed) do you wish to take part in further industrial action?' The paper will have two squares marked 'Yes' and 'No'.

The paper will be accompanied by British Rail propaganda putting their side of the pay dispute.

Socialist Worker, which fully supports the railmen's struggle, hopes that there will be a resounding 'Yes' vote to continue the battle against the Tories and their law.

'I'd rather go to jail than appear before the NIRC'

THIS is Walter Cunningham, a forklift driver at Hull docks and chairman of the port's shop stewards committee. He refused to appear before the National Industrial Relations Court when it granted an injunction to a firm called Panalpina whose containers are being blacked by Hull dockers.

Mr Cunningham declared on Tuesday that he would still refuse to go to the NIRC even if served with an official court order. He said he was prepared to risk going to jail.

While the TUC leaders run for

cover rather than fight the Industrial Relations Act and Mr Cunningham's own union has appeared before the NIRC and told its docker members to stop blacking containers, the rank and file puts up the only principled opposition to the Tories.

The stand of the Hull and Liverpool dockers must be backed by the industrial strength of the entire labour movement. Walter Cunningham and his brothers are fighting for our rights. We must use our power to make sure that the NIRC cannot impose fines or sentences on them.

THE TORY PROPAGANDA MACHINE is going full blast in an attempt to whip up hostility towards the unions and turn attention away from the people really responsible for the assault on our standards of living. Prime Minister Heath spelt it out to the Scots Tories last weekend when he said the government must stand up to any section of the community that behaves contrary to the 'interests of the nation as a whole'.

Ministers like Tony Barber and Maurice Macmillan have repeatedly declared that the government is faced by a small minority determined to hold the country to ransom. A favourite Tory theme of recent weeks has been that the unions, in attempting to win improved wages and conditions, are 'modern highwaymen' holding 'the public' at pistol point.

The picture the Tories and the newspaper barons paint is one of a vast mass of people whose interests and lives are threatened by a totally unrepresentative minority.

It is an accurate picture—if you spend your time gazing into those fairground mirrors that turn tall people into fat dwarfs. The reality of life in modern Britain is somewhat different.

Ten million working people are members of trade unions. That's quite a 'minority', Mr Heath. Another 12 million unorganised people make up the rest of the recognised work force of Britain.

HANDFUL

Add on to that 22 million the numbers of children, old people and housewives—who to the Tory mind don't constitute workers—and the vast, luckless 'general public' that Heath and company claim to represent dwindles somewhat.

And at the top is a handful, the rich and powerful, the 8 per cent of the population who own 80 per cent of the wealth, that the Tories are in power to support. The whole aim of government policy—anti-union laws, a wages ceiling of 7 per cent, unemployment, soaring rents, fares and welfare charges—is to increase the already massive amounts of wealth going into the pockets of the rich.

Here are the real highwaymen, the tiny minority who live off the wealth we create, while 10 million working people live in real poverty.

But let's take Mr Heath at his word. Let's assume he is concerned about minority groups using their monopoly power to increase their share of the wealth at the 'public's' expense.

Here are the case histories of a few modern highwaymen that our honourable prime minister may wish to deal with.

Take Lord Carrington, the Minister of Defence and owner of 700 acres of land in Buckinghamshire. The noble Tory has not been slow to get in on the fantastic racket in land prices. He is developing 105 acres to make way for a motel and 500 houses and expects to make a cool £½m profit on the deal.

Take Mr Edward du Cann, ex-chairman of the Tory Party and MP for Taunton. He

S W Political Reporter

is the former chairman of Central and District Properties.

On 27 January du Cann bought 90,000 shares in Central and District at 128½p each. He sold 65,000 of those shares on 3 February for between 204p and 215½p, netting £20,000 on the deal. Central and District's shares had risen as the result of talks of a possible takeover.

There was a takeover—by a bankers called Keyser-Ullmann. The chairman of this firm is... Mr Edward du Cann.

Take Mr John Davies, the Trade and Industry Minister. Kicked out as Director General of the Confederation of British Industry in 1969, he was snapped up by merchant bankers Hill Samuel.

Hill Samuel masterminded the attempted takeover of Glaxo by the Beecham drug combine. When it was pointed out that such a merger would give Beecham more than a third of the market, John Davies, now a government minister, refused to refer the matter to the Monopolies Commission.

Then Boots stepped in with a counter bid that Beecham could not match. Enter the same John Davies to refer the Boots' bid to the Monopolies Commission. While the Commission ponderously considers the matter, Beecham will use the time to raise more cash to outbid Boots.

This is just a glimpse of the dealings and morality of the top Tories and their links with the City and big business. Power for them is the power to grow enormously wealthy while they scream abuse at working people who demand a basic wage of £20 a week.

Don't be fooled by the Tory propaganda. Don't let them divide us with their hypocrisy about 'the nation'.

We must unite our ranks and redouble our efforts to sweep aside the reactionary Industrial Relations Act, a law designed by the Tory highwaymen to increase their robbery and looting.

If the trade union movement can defeat the law and the government behind it they will be acting in the interests of the real community—the community of working people who create the wealth and the profits.

WORLD NEWS

BRIEFING

VIETNAM: BACK TO THE GOLDWATER ERA

by Ian Birchall

PLANTING mines in Haiphong harbour was not Richard Nixon's brilliant new idea. It was first proposed by none other than Barry Goldwater during the 1965 presidential election.

Lyndon Johnson denounced it at the time, and always opposed those military advisers who urged him to do it. That Nixon has finally followed Goldwater's advice is a vivid illustration of the bankruptcy of US policy in Vietnam.

The mining will not work, even in military terms. A CIA report in 1969 said that even if all seaborne supplies could be stopped 'the disruption to imports would be widespread but temporary. Within two or three months North Vietnam and its allies would be able to implement alternative procedures for maintaining the flow of essential economic and military imports.'

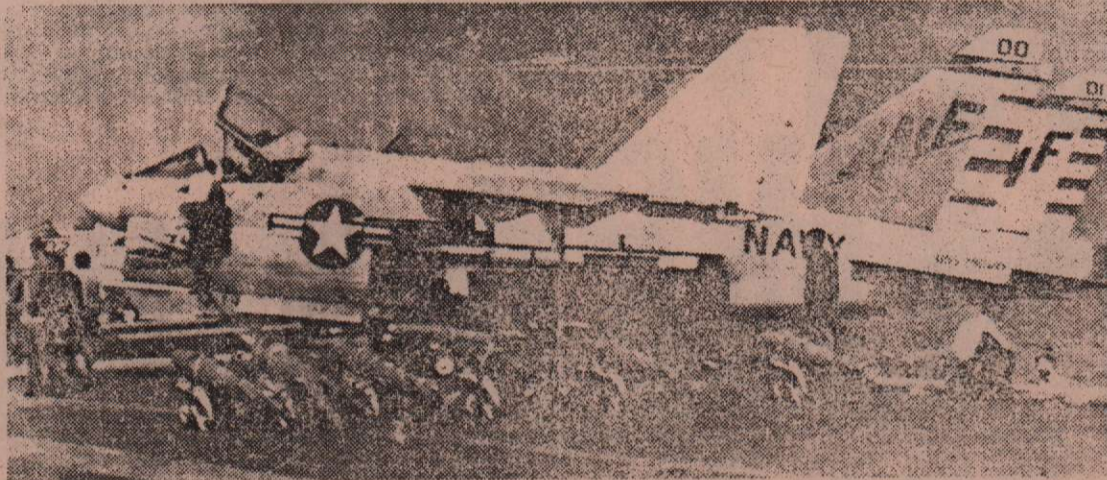
But much more important, Nixon cannot save the South because there is in effect nothing to save. The South Vietnamese ruling class has given up trying to rule—it is frightened, demoralised and in total collapse.

First to flee

Half the inhabitants of Qui Nhon—capital of Binh Dinh province—have fled, though the town is not yet under attack. When asked who were the first civilians to flee, the Bishop of Qui Nhon, told a journalist: 'The members of parliament and the rich'.

Martial law has been introduced in Saigon: the police now have the right to arrest without warrant. The extension of conscription will probably mean the closing of all universities and secondary schools in South Vietnam.

Two out of the four military regions have had their commanders removed and new ones



Gifts from the world's richest people to some of the poorest: bombs being loaded into an American plane aboard the aircraft carrier Midway in the Gulf of Tonkin.

appointed. Society is grinding to a halt.

There was much speculation last week that Nixon's blockade would lead to a situation resembling the Cuba crisis of 1962. In fact neither Russia nor the US could risk such an approach to the brink of nuclear war.

In 1962 the US was a relatively tranquil country: the black movement was still predominantly pacifist, and student militancy had not yet appeared on the scene. The only opposition to Kennedy came from reasonably well-mannered pacifists. Today a similar confrontation would entail grave risk of serious social upheaval.

Even the most hardened devotee of Russian foreign policy must have been somewhat disillusioned by the events of the past week. Russia failed to make even a small gesture of protest at

the American aggression.

On the Tuesday morning after Nixon's speech announcing the blockade, the Russian team negotiating a wheat agreement with the US requested that their meeting take place as planned, though the US officials had been expecting it to be cancelled. On the Friday morning when the mines became active, a Russian naval mission was on a conducted tour of the White House.

The past week has shown just how false is the argument, put forward by some socialists, that Russia's possession of nuclear armaments is justified because it helps her to resist US imperialism. Russia's involvement in the nuclear game makes her all the more powerless to help the Vietnamese, all the more involved in a set of priorities that make her take a conciliatory attitude to the US.

In this situation revolutionary socialists must once again raise the slogan 'Victory to the National Liberation Front.' Victory for the NLF will be a victory for the ordinary people of Vietnam—workers and peasants—who want a life free from US bombs and the corruption of their own middle class.

It will be a victory too for the workers, the blacks and the students in the US who—even when it is not their conscious intention—are making it impossible for the US to stay in Vietnam.

All classes

But we must be quite clear what such a victory will be. The NLF is not a revolutionary socialist organisation. Its 1961 programme called for 'a government of national and democratic union . . . composed of representatives of all social classes, of all nationalities, of the various political parties, of all religions. Patriotic, eminent citizens must take over for the people the control of economic, political, social and cultural interests.'

Indeed, one of the weaknesses of the NLF has been its failure to mobilise the populations in the towns. Appeals to the people of Hue to rise 'regardless of their class, religion or politics' have had little response so far.

Yet Vietnam is a country with a great tradition of working-class struggle. In 1945, for example, workers at the Go-vap tramway depot near Saigon created a workers' council and a workers' militia. The Vietnamese revolution will be completed only when the working class enters the stage again.

Burundi power struggle breaks into tribal war

THE tiny tropical African country of Burundi (population 3,500,000) is locked in a tragic civil war. Ten thousand people are reported killed. Twenty thousand refugees from the Tutsi tribe have fled, with terrible tales of massacres by peasants of the Hutu tribe.

The rebellion was sparked off by the return of the young king—the Mwami Ntare—from exile. The Hutu majority have risen up against their Tutsi overlords and the Tutsi army dictatorship, led by Micombero.

The Tutsi invaded Burundi from the north 400 years ago. They set up a feudal monarchy over the less politically sophisticated Hutu. The Mwami ruled outlying provinces through royal chiefs.

In the late 1950s the Crown Prince led the struggle for independence against the Belgians. He was popular among the Hutu and the royal court disapproved of him. When the Belgians left, the Crown Prince was assassinated by a rival

Tutsi faction as he was about to take his seat as the democratically elected prime minister.

The first five years of independence saw not the strengthening of civilian government, but an increase in the power of the royal court. The old Mwami, who reigned for 50 years, made and broke governments—six came and went. The only two Hutu prime ministers were assassinated.

In 1965 this led to an attempted coup by the Hutu elite. It failed, being put down by an army captain, Micombero, who executed hundreds of young Hutu tribesmen. The old Mwami decided that exile in Switzerland was preferable to threats on his life.

Micombero put the Mwami's 19-year-old son, Ntare, on the throne in his place, thinking that now the army, rather than the court, would rule. But the boy king began to follow in his father's footsteps, placing the army, police and courts under the royal court; he also released Hutu prisoners.

Micombero deposed him, and the army became more autocratic

and more Tutsi. The Tutsi royals were excluded, and more Hutu leaders were imprisoned.

The king had endeared himself to the Hutu peasants by releasing their leaders. He was traditionally respected as a mediator between the peasants and the royal chiefs. Micombero had no such credentials.

As in all African countries, the peasants are poorer today than they were 10 years ago. The old days of court rule seemed good in comparison with the military dictatorship.

Ntare's return appeared as a symbol of hope for the Hutu. The rebellion began, though the king had no motive for provoking it. Micombero killed the king three days after his arrival while he was under arrest.

The enraged Hutu then began killing Tutsi. The army, with help from Mobutu's Congo, remains in the hands of Micombero and the Tutsi elite. It is unlikely there will be any redistribution of power to the Hutu.

ONE of the leaders of the Israeli Black Panthers, Kokhavi Shemesh, recently addressed an audience of young people on a collective farm just south of the Sea of Galilee.

A reporter present was horrified to hear him say: 'It is our aim to make a social revolution in this country, to make a new society, unlike any other in the world, socialist, but not like Russia or China—100 per cent egalitarian.'

'We have to reach a situation where we can fight together with the poor screwed-up Arabs against the establishment. We, the Panthers, are the only people who can constitute a bridge between the Arabs and ourselves on the basis of struggle against the establishment.'

'We are against colonisation, which involves dispossessing the local inhabitants.

Therefore we, unlike Mapam [the local Zionist left], do not distinguish between military and civilian colonisation.'

Shemesh added that, as far as the Panthers were concerned, there was no difference between the so-called left and right in the Zionist establishment. They were all—MPs and top civil servants—members of the 300 top families.

Shemesh said the establishment had fostered racial hatred between Oriental Jews and Arabs, and claimed the Panthers had held meetings with the poorest groups of Arabs in Jerusalem and Nablus. The middle-class Arab leaders have shown little interest in these sections.

The degree to which the Arabs are oppressed can be understood by looking at their working conditions. They have to live in their own villages in Israel or the occupied territories, and find work in the

Jewish-owned factories outside. Often they have to get up at 4am to catch the labour lorries, and get home only at 7pm.

Laws against child labour are being broken. One factory—making Vita soups—is employing Arab girls aged 11 and 12.

The situation is beginning to resemble the Bantustan system in South Africa. Any Arab showing political interests is at once watched and warned. If he persists in pushing socialist or radical ideas he is deported or imprisoned under the emergency laws which are still in force in Israel as a relic of British rule.

But the Israeli Socialist Organisation Matzpen are continuing their work, despite internal difficulties and splits. Eytan Grossfeld, who was put in a lunatic asylum and reformatory, has been released, partly as a result of world protests.

THE TWO left-wing organisations which entered the Italian general election two weeks ago were virtually wiped off the electoral map.

For the Proletarian Socialists (PSIUP) it is the end of the road. They are now a parliamentary party without any deputies in parliament. The Manifesto group, whose deputies were originally elected as Communist candidates, also failed to gain a single seat.

The issue in the election was whether the government should continue to be a coalition of centre-left parties, or whether there should be a new array of forces made up of the centre-right.

Although critics of the Communist Parties, neither the PSIUP nor the Manifesto competed on a platform radically different. As the Manifesto put it: 'The main objective of our political programme is the fight against the employers, against fascism, against the swing to the right.'

Increased repression in the factories, the collapse of the centre-left coalition government and the threat of a fascist revival led to a strengthening of the Communist vote.

The Manifesto failed, not only to get their deputies re-elected, but also to elect Valpreda, the anarchist still on trial on a frame-up charge of bombing a bank in 1969. They failed because they have no roots in the working class, because they didn't campaign around a concrete political programme, and because the Communist Party was seen as the only workable organisation on the left which could halt the 'swing to the right'.

THE RUSSIAN authorities are trying to suppress the clandestine opposition publication *Chronicle of Current Events*. On the night of 6 May the homes of 14 suspected dissidents in Moscow were searched.

One victim of the police raids was the great-granddaughter of Inessa Armand, a veteran Russian Communist and close friend of Lenin, to whom he wrote one of his most famous letters on the woman question. Another was the son of General Yakir, who in 1927 signed a statement in support of the Trotskyist opposition and who was executed during the 1937 purges.

THE INDIAN Minister of Labour has recently announced new proposals to enforce uniform 'machinery for solving industrial relations disputes'. Officially the law's purpose is to lay down rules for settling disputes between India's three rival trade union bodies about which should represent workers in factories where more than one has members.

In practice it is the thin end of the wedge. Earlier the unions had been asked to observe a 'voluntary' no-strike agreement in the interests of national security during the war with Pakistan.

But the real point is that the law is part of Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi's effort to strengthen further the already strong position of her ruling Congress Party. She knows that the unions are a dangerous source of opposition to her allegedly Socialist programme. Curbs on the unions are vital because she hopes to develop the Indian economy through state handouts to a new dependent class of smaller capitalists.

IN TUNE with the attempts by the South African government to restore tribal society among Africans, a Bill is before the South African parliament which will force African women of all ages to get permission from their father or guardians before they can marry.

THE BRUTAL EXECUTION by the Turkish government of three young militants of the People's Liberation Army has produced a sharp response from the many Turkish immigrant workers in Western Europe.

In Frankfurt 300 Turkish workers attacked a Turkish travel agency, smashing the windows with stones. They were violently dispersed by police. In Munich the windows of the Turkish Consulate were broken.

'I refuse to serve in an army which is carrying out a policy of occupation. The Palestinian population is oppressed. I don't think an army can defend its citizens when at the same time it is occupying and oppressing another people and threatening neighbouring countries.'

'To present the problem today as being that of the defence of the Jewish people Israel's right to self-determination is a very dishonest trick. Our problem is Zionism, which is chauvinistic, discriminatory and colonialising.'

—Part of a statement made by a 19-year-old Israeli, Giora Neumann, who is now undergoing his fifth 35-day prison sentence for refusing to do military service. He would appreciate letters and telegrams of support. These can be sent to 219, Bene Ephraim, Tel Aviv, Israel.

The attacks of Zion

by Ted Crawford

Socialist Worker

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NIRC—rubber stamp for Tories

THE LAWYER representing the railway white-collar workers complains that the National Industrial Relations Court has acted 'to all intents and purposes as a rubber stamp for the executive'. In other words it has acted as a tool of the government.

Of course it has. What else could be expected? The government drew up the law. The government appointed the judge and pays his wages. It is unlikely, to put it mildly, that Heath would appoint a man to head the NIRC without making sure that the man could be relied upon in a crunch.

It is no use at all to complain, as the TSSA lawyer did, that the order for a ballot of the railway workers is 'unlawful and unjust'. What is lawful is what the judges say is lawful and the Court of Appeal can be relied upon to endorse the order of the NIRC—the order of the government, that is.

Some right-wing nincompoops in the movement have been arguing that it is necessary to go to the court in the hope of 'building up a body of favourable case law'. In other words in the hope that the judge will give a series of decisions favourable to the unions. This is pure cretinism.

Of course the NIRC may give a few favourable decisions against small employers in recognition cases and the like. But on every big issue—and on most small ones too—the court will back the government and the employers. That is why the government went to such trouble to get the law passed. That is what it is all about.

Look at the decisions to date. Look at the question on the ballot paper. A straightforward, unloaded question would have been 'Are you in favour of continued industrial action in support of the unions' claim? Yes or No'. Needless to say that is not the way the question is put.

The unions' claim is not mentioned in it. The employers' offer is. Then again, who operates the ballot? The employer—British Rail—operates it. BR can speed it up or slow it down as it sees fit. It has ample scope for delaying tactics if it thinks they will help to dish the unions.

Only way to win

This week another vital case is heard, the complaint that Panalpina Transport is still being blacked in the Hull docks. Here the shop stewards have correctly and courageously ignored both the court order to stop the blacking and the TGWU instruction to the same effect. Their chairman, Walter Cunningham, is refusing to appear before Judge Donaldson.

This is the way to win. The only way. If, as is nearly certain, fines are imposed, they should not be paid. If any attempt is made either to seize property or to imprison one or more stewards, industrial action is the answer. Every dock in the country should stop. And the whole movement must give massive financial support.

The case of the railwaymen has proved to the hilt what we have said all along. To recognise the court and to operate the law is the road to defeat. The law can be beaten and will be beaten by refusal to accept the court orders.

Jack Jones, the TGWU secretary, has always claimed to be a left winger. He has already trimmed to the extent of ordering an end to blacking both on Merseyside and at Hull. The NIRC is demanding that he take away the stewards' cards.

Now he and his fellow TUC 'lefts' are going to have to stand up and be counted. Heath and Donaldson have shown that they are willing to fight seriously for the interests of their class. Every militant has the right to demand that Jones and the other 'left leaders' show the same determination in the interests of our class.

More at stake

With the official leaderships if possible, without them if need be, the fight against the law must go on. This is not a struggle that can be avoided. It is a bread and butter question, a question of jobs and redundancy, a question of wages, a question of working conditions.

There is even more at stake. Three hundred odd years ago, the capitalist class in this country were faced with a hostile government representing the interests of an older ruling class. That government, the government of Charles the First, sought to impose new and onerous laws that were against the vital interests of the developing capitalist class.

Charles had no difficulty in getting favourable decisions from the judges. Leaders of the capitalists like Pym, Hampden and Elliot refused to obey the law. They were imprisoned but they stood firm. They demonstrated that they were every bit as determined as the government and the judges. They demonstrated that their class was fit to rule. And they won.

Our class faces the same challenge. To defeat the law is to defeat the Tories and open up the way for the defeat of the whole system of private profiteering and exploitation.

THIS CHAP'S COME FROM THE UNION TO WITHDRAW YOUR CREDENTIALS SID...



The contempt of the Daily Telegraph

CONTEMPT comes in two forms. The first is when a trade union ignores a court decision and is fined £55,000 for it. The second is when the Daily Telegraph argues the government's case while it is still before the court and gets away with it.

While the National Industrial Relations Court last weekend was still hearing pleas before reaching its decision to force railwaymen to work overtime, the Telegraph was arguing in an editorial that the court should order a ballot to 'help build up some case law, based on precedent, for the efficient working' of the Industrial Relations Act.

Well, I certainly cannot accuse the Telegraph of wrapping it up. They meant what they said. The railmen, regardless of the merits of their case, should be used as legal guinea pigs.

Target

Naturally the Telegraph is on the side of the commuters and it does not like to see them having to stand on their own two feet waiting for trains that do not arrive.

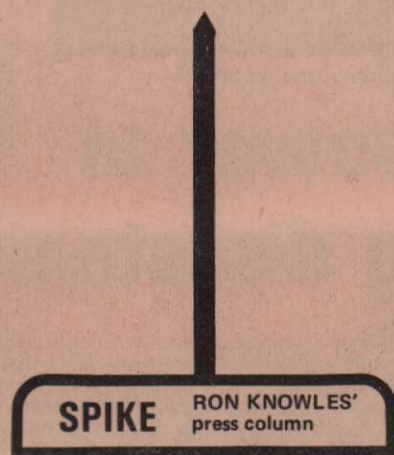
It brings out the instinctive fury the Telegraph reserves for unions. The fact that the target of their editorial blast was a group of workers whose wages many commuters would disdain as expenses did not embarrass the Telegraph in the slightest.

The following day the Telegraph weighed in with another anti-union leader. Its theme was that the law is the law and must be rigidly obeyed—particularly by shop stewards.

The Telegraph did not seem to find the logic of this argument at odds with its complaints against the railmen's rigid adherence to British Rail's laws.

In the Mirror there was a laugh a line from Woodrow Wyatt—if you like sick jokes.

Since the railways board is planning to axe 10,000 jobs in the coming year,



he mused, could they not finance the whole claim? 'If British Rail can do the same job with a smaller work force, fine. That means productivity is going up, the country is better off, and there is more to share among the workers that remain.'

Notice his phrasing—'workers THAT remain', not workers WHO remain.' Railmen, in Wyatt's view, are clearly objects, not people.

This, no doubt, is why he does not

concern himself about the workers who do NOT remain.

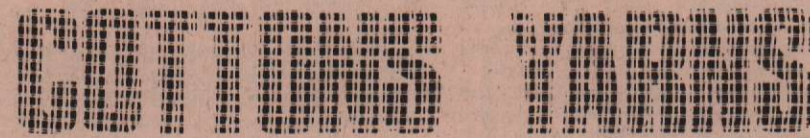
The most offensive comment on the dispute came, not surprisingly, from the Sunday Express.

Alongside an editorial which declared: 'The issue is . . . who runs the country—a parliament responsible to no one?' the paper carried a cartoon depicting a TGWU member and a railman holding a suitably cowed group of respectable citizens at gunpoint. The caption read: 'No! No! No! Let's try again, now, who is running the country?'

Earlier in the week The Times published one of its sycophantic supplements lauding the commercial and industrial attractions of a country—in this instance, Spain.

But among the several thousands of words on the progressive industrial steps Spain was taking there was not the slightest mention of the regime's repressive laws against organised labour or the thousands of workers rolling in Franco's jails.

Perhaps, with an eye on recent labour events at home, The Times considered there was nothing remarkable about trade unionists in jail.



ANGER and consternation among the social democrats of Tottenham when the local paper published in good faith the following advertisement: 'Bruce Grove Labour Party present their GRAND SELL OUT FAIR, lots and lots of goodies for sale—furniture, clothes, books, records and principles, etc. Admission 2p at Tottenham Trades Hall, Bruce Grove.'

Distressed Labour hacks bombarded the luckless paper with complaints, but couldn't stop a large number of people turning up at the Trades Hall on the appointed day. Seems there's quite a market in discarded reformist principles these days.

IMPARTIALITY of the law: A man was crushed to death after a firm had twice been warned that a conveyor belt was dangerous. Wolverhampton's magistrates were told. The firm, tyre makers Goodyear, were prosecuted last year for not having machinery, including a conveyor belt, securely fastened, but in spite of this a man was dragged into the conveyor and crushed to death. The firm pleaded guilty and was fined £100.

Bosses defy the law and cause a

death: £100. TGWU members defend their jobs: £55,000.

THE disgusting amoral habits of greedy, grasping proles is often contrasted by the press with the high business ethics of the employing class. The bosses of the southern region of the British Oxygen Company seem to be letting the side down.

Worried by the intrusion of the Calor Gas firm into the cylinder gas market, BOC bosses have issued a news sheet to all employees asking for their snooping help in dealing with the beastly Calor rotters. Employees from all departments are asked to keep a look out for Calor salesmen and to note down on a specially provided 'Calor Activity Card' full details of their customers.

The reward for all this part-time gumshoeing by the workers? More money, bonuses, promotion? Not quite. 'To encourage you to report what you see and what you hear, vouchers for books of Green Shield stamps will be awarded.'

While the workers are about it, they should find out if Calor pays better wages than BOC and change employer. Or would BOC consider that an 'unfair industrial practice'?



Pit prop profiteers mine fortune with numbers game

TWO of the major mining equipment manufacturers who supply the National Coal Board are involved in a sophisticated 'numbers game' which cost the board millions of pounds a year in stock it writes off and replaces with 'new' stock at higher prices.

And the NCB has no procedures for dealing with the situation and has made no attempt to stamp the practices out. These are the main conclusions of a confidential report now circulating in the NCB head office. Prepared by members of the Board's Operational Research Executive on their own initiative, the report is their fourth attempt to get some action.

The way the system works is detailed as follows in the report. Manufacturers contract to supply powered supports—walking pit props—and to supply parts which the NCB holds in stock. The part units are identified by the manufacturers' serial number, which is in turn coded by the NCB.

But the manufacturers constantly make slight and often unjustifiable changes in the engineering design or just change the part number in the drive to sell more and more of their 'new, improved' products. The NCB orders them and pays up.

This leads to the incredible situation where the Board renders stock parts obsolete and buys in 'new' stock for no reason other than that the manufacturers have re-numbered what is exactly or almost exactly the same component.

Immense

Firms also supply different NCB regions with identical parts under different numbers. This means that when Scotland informs Wales that a certain stock has fallen 'dead', Wales cannot recognise it as something they use and need more of simply because the manufacturers give components different regional numbers. Wales therefore buys more parts from the manufacturer and Scotland writes them off.

The extent of the operation is immense. Between 1966 and 1969 alone one firm, Gullick, 'ceased to use' 8477 part numbers which it introduced in that same period. These were replaced with new components.

Only the manufacturer knows how many of these modifications are nothing more than new numbers.

Gullick has also been allowed to introduce very expensive and totally unnecessary additions to the supports it supplies to the NCB. Its phase IV valve gear has been modified for use on high pressure systems, which the NCB does not make use of. The report estimates that this quite superfluous modification alone could cost the Board £1 million a year.

Spawning

Important legal and safety issues are raised by the whole nature of the operation. The other company named, Dowty, made deliveries of its six leg medium seam chock mark 2 to Fryston Colliery in December 1967, June 1968 and August 1971.

Of the 32 major components comprising the 1967 delivery mark 2 chock, only eight had part numbers in common with the 'same' chock delivered six months later in 1968. There were no part numbers in common with the August 1971 delivery.

All three deliveries were made under the same NCB order specification and under the same certificate of government engineering and safety approval required by law before any piece of equipment is introduced underground.

Dowty is doing one of two things. It is keeping within government approval by changing nothing apart from part numbers, thereby spawning orders for 'new' spares and causing unknown quantities of useable stock to be written off.

Alternatively, if the changes in part numbers do reflect genuine and necessary changes in design, Dowty is introducing new machinery underground without government approval.



ROBENS: behind the bonanza

The ORE report also states that all mining equipment purchased by the Board is considerably overpriced. The NCB's own engineering department estimates fair prices often at 50 per cent below what the firms actually receive—even after a very handsome profit margin has been allowed for.

Dowty and Gullick-Dobson are two of three firms which have emerged over recent years as the sole suppliers of NCB powered supports. Brought into being by the Industrial Re-organisation Corporation at the instigation of Lord Robens, then NCB chairman, all three have since experienced profit bonanzas.

Insurance

In 1969 Dowty took over a small mining machinery concern called Bonser Engineering for £1.4 million cash and a payment every year for five years based on Dowty's UK sales. At the time of the agreement, it was considered unlikely that the payments would exceed £150,000 in total over five years.

Last week Dowty paid over to Bonser the first of the annual payments. It totalled £141,000.

A director of Bonser is Lord Robens' son, Alfred, with his wife as the main shareholder. With good insurance, the 'numbers game' is extremely profitable.

ARTHUR MALONE

Appeal of an old'un

'LESS TALK, more action' should be the order of the day. The struggles of the working class today are practically the same as they were 50 years ago and more. The only difference is that in those days we were blessed with some very sincere, dedicated men.

Today we badly need men of the calibre of Tom Mann and George Lansbury. Today offers the workers a golden opportunity—perhaps the last opportunity—to get down to it and form a 'people's party' and to get candidates in the field now and flood out the so-called 'representatives of the people' in parliament.

Today's struggles are not new to my generation. We had the same troubles in the twenties and thirties and we fought then, just as you are trying to fight today—but we fought then through hunger.

Our fathers fought in the South African War and 1914-18 war and were promised 'a land fit for heroes', a war to end wars. We are still seeking that promised land. My generation fought in the Second World War and we were promised by the great warmonger himself (the V sign man) a better and more fruitful life. We are still waiting for it. Our reward so far is the rubbish heap.

So my advice, before it is too late, is to all you able-bodied workers: get off your backsides and go out and form a new party now, otherwise the slavery that we abolished in the yesteryears will engulf us yet again. We laid the foundations for you, so don't let us down by wasting the blood and sweat that we gave and endured. Yours sincerely, an 'old'un'.—J J FRENCH, London E8.

LIVELIEST LETTERS ON THE LEFT



RONAN POINT: if workers protest, such disasters need not happen

Use your power to stop building disasters

M D SHERWIN is quite right (22 April) when he says that it is negligence in design which contributes to terrible disasters like Ronan Point, but quite wrong when he adds that quality of material has nothing to do with the matter.

The fact is that it is both of these factors, bad design and low quality material, both knowingly applied by the building companies so as to ensure themselves a greater profit, that contribute to the sum total of terrible housing conditions for the working class.

Thus building workers must take a stand and refuse to work on sites where poor quality work is the order of the day. But those who, like Mr Sherwin, sit behind the drawing board must not remain passive either.

They should also be responsible and must inquire as to the nature of the material that will be used in the end

product, accepting a guarantee of only the highest standards before they agree to start the project.

Really it all boils down to the necessity for workers' control.—KATHY SIMS, Ilford.

I FEEL COMPELLED to comment on the strange letter from M D Sherwin on your excellent article on the Gascoigne estate in Barking, London.

Overwatered concrete allows the dissolution of the matrix. I have never seen a slump or cube test taken on this site.

I have never seen a clerk of works check on the work of Coultons Contractors. The standards required on each site are determined by the building regulations and site specification sheets.

For example, on blocks 31, 32, 30, the fall of the drains is 1½ ft less than it should be. Who pays for this discrepancy, the builder? No, it is the poor sucker, the ratepayer!

The flats on this site are pokey with plasterboard walls. The borough architect, Mathew Maybury, when faced with two of his ratepayers, J Newson and D Thwaites, was told by Mr Newson that he would not allow Mr Maybury to design a chicken run.—P H CLARKE (former federation steward on the Gascoigne Estate), Dagenham, Essex.

ARE THE DOOMSTERS RIGHT?

TIM SHALLICE'S article on ecology (22 April) was very sensitive. But I think this topic raises issues he didn't deal with which are crucial for the socialist movement.

In the past, marxists and all socialists have been prominent among those who reject the idea of built-in scarcity as a ruling-class ploy to divert attention from the failures of the existing system. We've assumed that political revolution was basically all that was needed to release the boundless forces of industrial technology for the benefit of all.

There is no doubt that most of the current ecology bandwagon is reactionary ideology: a typical attempt to deny the possibility of rational social action by claiming that our ills are rooted in the nature of biology rather than outmoded social structures.

But Shallice goes on to say: 'There is no good evidence that ecological doom is imminent.' I wonder.

For one thing, it seems clear that most of the minerals and fossil fuels on which industry depends will be exhausted within 20-30 years. It has been calculated that there are nowhere near enough of these resources to support the whole world at the rich nations' standard of living. Even if such resources did exist, the resulting vast

Right politics rule out atrocities

OF COURSE the International Socialists should criticise the IRA at a political rather than a moral level. This is the only relevant criticism from a political organisation.

Revolutionaries attempt to assimilate their morality to their politics. It is only bourgeois politicians who distinguish ethical from political considerations.

However, it is important that we should not appear, even to ourselves, to be somehow above ordinary humanitarian considerations. Rosa Luxemburg once remarked 'that a man who, on the way to a great deed, knocks down a child commits a crime.'

It is, or should be logically impossible for an atrocity to be committed by anyone with a correct political analysis. Our support for the IRA does not blind us to their lapses in humanity, but these lapses are always rooted in political mistakes and it is to these that we must draw attention.—DUNCAN MACPHERSON, Twickenham, Middlesex.

Wrong figures

DUNCAN HALLAS in his centre pages' article of 29 April makes a very brief reference to the Communist Party in its period of operating the 'social-fascist' line. As his proof of the failure of this policy he claims that 'membership fell from nearly 11,000 in 1927 to under 3000 in 1932'.

However, he describes the 'social-fascist' line as operating from 1928 to 1934. In March 1928 membership was 5500 (L J Macfarlane); in December '34 it was 5800 (Inprecorr, vol 15, p 1053). In between 1928 and 1934 there were several ups and downs of membership figures but to say that in this period 'it lost most of its own militants' is patently false. In fact there is a small net gain rather than the 8000 losses claimed.

This is not an attempt to defend the Party's line in this period. However the matter cannot be dealt with in this black-and-white manner as Comrade Hallas wishes to. If he wants to give a serious analysis of a very complex period of history, I would suggest that he selects his statistics so that they do not totally distort reality.—PETE HARVEY, London W1.

MacFarlane gave the membership as 10,700 (ie nearly 11,000) for October 1927. Harry Pollitt reported 3000 members at the 1932 congress. Between the two dates the party lost members at a time of tremendous opportunities for big gains.

increase in pollution would have disastrous effects on climate.

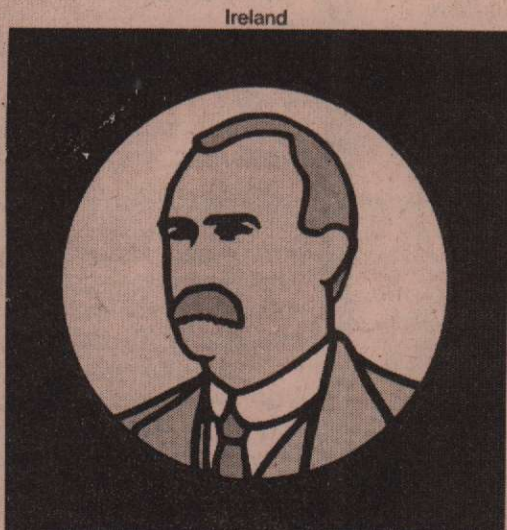
Now Marx's idea of communism was premised upon abundance, and groups like IS have always justified their mistrust of peasant and national revolutions on the quite orthodox ground that socialism must be based on a world-wide development of productive forces to their fullest extent. In other words, just the kind of industrial global society which ecology now suggests is doubly impossible.

Not only capitalism, but industrial society as such would be seen as ecologically destructive: the USSR is as doomed as the USA.

So the idea of socialism taking over where capitalism leaves off would have to go. Groups like IS would have to purge their contempt for peasants, since the best hope for advance would now lie in rural revolutions leading to an evolutionary, non-destructive, inevitably slow development.

But our task is here, and I'm worried that the natural pre-revolutionary strategy of IS and others, based on pushing industrial struggle and wage demands, may reap a bitter harvest if and when it is 'victorious'.—AIDAN FOSTER-CARTER, Hull.

International Socialism 51



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International Socialism on Ireland

JOHN PALMER on how, despite the pretence of independence, the Southern regime is fully integrated into the British imperialist economy

PAUL GERHARDT analyses the facts of sectarian discrimination in the North
BRIAN TRENCH demolishes the 'two nations' propaganda that keeps the Protestant workers on the Unionist side
EAMONN McCANN on why the revolutionary left in the Six Counties had no success within the civil rights movement

GEORGE WALLACE

by James Coleman

US International Socialists

ASIDE from George Wallace himself, several varieties of livestock were present as he spoke at the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit. Noticeable, though not conspicuous in black trousers and grey shirts, were a dozen members of the Michigan White People's Party (neo-Nazi), calling themselves the 'Wallace Youth Movement'.

The 10,000 crowd which streamed into the Fairgrounds to hear Wallace launch his Michigan primary campaign, was different from these sideshow characters. It contained a few people expensively dressed, but most wore cheap suits and open-necked shirts. Their clothes, their faces and hands, and their voices showed them to be a crowd of working people, white-collar workers and small businessmen.

Outside the chain-link fence, topped with barbed wire, 60 radicals picketed. Police kept them away from the gates, and there were no major confrontations. (The Nazis' one black member, controlled by some unknown impulse of self-hate, kept returning to the fence to snap out the fascist salute.)

A greater contrast could not be imagined between Wallace's crowd and the audience attending a 50 dollars-a-place Democratic Party fund-raising dinner downtown (from which Wallace was excluded because he would not pledge to support any candidate the party might nominate). In this contrast lay the significance of the Wallace rally.

Blacks

The crowd was mainly over 35, with a high proportion of white-haired people, but there were also a sizeable number of teenagers. Most of these seemed not to be committed Wallace supporters, but had come to 'check it out'. In the whole crowd of 10,000 there might have been at most 15 or 20 black faces.

The most fervent in the crowd were those drawn by the bussing issue, the integration of schools by taking white or black children by bus to schools outside their own neighbourhoods.

There were attempts to demonstrate labour support for Wallace. There were small groups from several United Auto Workers local branches—plus a group of women whose 'UAW' signs turned out, on closer inspection, to refer to 'United Angry Women'.

But most of those at the rally were of a slightly different stripe from the anti-bussing activists. They felt that Wallace was the first politician in a generation to speak for them. Several of the older people compared him to Roosevelt. 'They called Roosevelt a radical too,' one white-haired woman said. One man mused on the ITT scandal: 'ITT has no more votes than anyone else,' he said, seeming to see Wallace as a crusader against the power of the monopolies.

WHEN Wallace spoke, he played up to these sentiments. Over and over he hit at his familiar message: 'The working people, the business people, the farming people of this country are sick and tired of a faceless bureaucracy running things.'

Again and again, Wallace struck at the unrepresentative nature of American politics, as no other candidate has been willing to do.

'In Washington there are offices after offices where there's an assistant to an assistant to an assistant—and he's getting 40,000 dollars a year—and he doesn't have anything in his briefcase but a peanut-butter sandwich.'

Promises

Again and again, Wallace voiced the sentiment of millions of voters that the candidates—except for himself—are fakers. 'They turn their heads so far speaking on both sides of an issue that they get slipped discs.'

The six major candidates, Wallace said, had been in the Senate a total of 109 years, 'and they're all talking tax reform, but in those 109 years, what have they done about tax reform?'

These are the sorts of questions the voters are asking themselves as they listen to the usual bland promises from indistinguishable candidates.

Wallace hit, too, at the anti-working class attitudes of the intellectual establishment. 'They've drawn their conclusions about me, just like they've drawn their conclusions about you.'

He appealed to the crowd's sense of powerlessness. 'Send them a message,' he cried. 'You are silent no longer.' And he offered a classic 'pressure group' conception

of his own campaign—by voting for Wallace the people would force Nixon and the other candidates to respond to their wishes.

WALLACE has been able to move many politicians in his direction—it was just after Wallace's victory in Florida that Nixon made his anti-bussing speech.

But the character of Wallace's proposals represent no real solution to the problems even of the white, older crowd which jammed the Fairgrounds, much less to the problems of the blacks and the basic-production workers who were absent.

His programme, by now familiar, is to cut back government spending. Although he referred to the problem of unemployment, he has no solution for it, except jim-crack economics to the effect that lower taxes would stimulate buying and therefore create more employment. His programme is against—against hand-outs to 'countries that spit in our face' and to 'welfare slackers'.

Wallace presents the sort of programme which, 20 years ago, appealed only to Republicans and the middle class. The fact that it appealed to a heavily working-class audience in Detroit is evidence not only of the race hatred running under the surface of the rally, but also of the failure of the welfare programme these voters once supported.

Most notable was what was absent from Wallace's oratory. Over and over he repeated that he spoke for 'the working man, the business man, the farmer'. But he

had very little to say on labour issues.

Wallace emphasised the low property taxes in Alabama. But he did not mention his own record on labour issues—the fact that during the 60s, with Wallace as Governor, Alabama ranked 48th in the country in income per person, that Alabama's average payments for unemployment insurance were lowest in the country, that the low level of unionisation means average wages are more than 1.50 dollars lower than in Michigan, that Wallace, as Governor, has opposed all efforts to repeal Alabama's 'right to work' law which supports strike-breaking.

'Chaos'

His rhetoric presents the 'business man' as another victim of 'big government'—so he avoids saying anything very concrete about the huge corporations. His programme proposes to tax foundations, and hints at taxing corporations, but Wallace attempts to convince working men that their interests are united with the interests of businessmen against government bureaucracy. It's a line that may sound good until there's a strike or lay-offs.

And although he referred to the fact that the other candidates, as senators, had 'brought us to the brink of economic chaos', Wallace said nothing about Nixon's programme of wage controls, made no statement on controlling prices, said nothing about the efforts in congress to curb the right to strike, made no reference to the need to organise non-unionised workers.

So although Wallace was able to voice

the frustrations of his audience at their powerlessness and their declining living standards and environment, he made use of his radical-sounding appeal to bolster a programme which would cut back the few benefits which poor people have at present, while offering nothing to replace them and offering no way to improve life for the majority.

On the bussing issue Wallace said very little. The outpouring of emotion against bussing which a large part of the crowd must have expected never came.

The result was that the rally did not display the expected flavour of a right-wing racist hate session. It was in many respects a typical American campaign rally—the people yearning to believe in this one candidate who promises he is different from the rest, he will give them a voice.

THIS WHITE electorate is one which, in this election year, could respond to either a progressive or a reactionary call, provided both dress in populist slogans.

Wallace's success so far indicates the power of independent politics. Yet Wallace is the biggest fake of all the candidates. Equally dependent on his own business support, he is able to give a voice to voters' frustrations but is unable to offer a constructive programme.

The kind of independent politics which could offer a real alternative—based on the common interest of working people, black and white, against the employers and their parties—is not in sight this year.



TRICKSTER WITH A MASK OF HATE

Enough to make old Owen turn in his grave

IT USED to be said that there were three wings of the Labour movement—the Labour Party, the trade unions and the co-operative movement.

Many working people think that bodies with the word 'co-operative' in them have something vaguely to do with their class interests. After all, the movement still officially pays lip-service to the ideals and principles of its founder, Robert Owen.

But modern reality paints a different picture. One of the biggest co-operative bodies in Britain is the Co-operative Insurance Society with assets of more than £5540 million and a premium income of £94 million in 1970.

Massive

Labour relations in the society in recent years have gone from bad to worse. Recent negotiations between the white-collar union ASTMS and the CIS resulted in a massive demonstration of employees outside the society's head office in Manchester.

One reason for this was the management's threat to dismiss the union members unless they signed an agreement which would allow the company to suspend staff without pay during any strike whether or not they were directly involved.

The management justified pay rates—which ASTMS claimed were 30 per cent below those paid by other insurance companies—on the grounds that they were a co-operative venture.

Millionaire

The dispute occurred shortly after the defeat of a strike by the society's premium collectors that had lasted more than two months.

In recent years, the CIS has invested a sizeable proportion of its assets in large-scale property development. It has held 10 per cent of the shares in Oldham Estates, controlled by Harry Hyams, the property-speculating millionaire whose empty office block, Centre Point, insults the thousands of homeless families in London.

Far from being embarrassed by its holdings, CIS has increased its stake since the building firm George Wimpey pulled out from Oldham Estates.

Perils

The CIS appears to be run like any other capitalist insurance company, unconcerned with housing shortages or low wages. It is interested solely in collecting premiums and selling policies to people anxious about the loss of the family breadwinner or the monetary perils of retirement in the welfare state.

And the cash it collects from working people is invested in organisations like Oldham Estates that spotlight all the twisted priorities and corruption of a society that the co-operative movement is supposed to oppose. That rumbling sound from the direction of Lanark must be old Owen turning in his grave.

Terry Ward

Close-up on the man who poses as the people's friend

DOCKLAND'S BATTLE

IT'S a disturbing experience to pick your way through London's dead docks with someone who can begin to tell the true tale of what is happening there.

In St Katharine's you will see a new hotel, yachting marina and offices going up for the rich playboys and playgirls of this society. East India too is idle, the land sold off to the Central Electricity Generating Board to build a power station, office blocks or perhaps even a nationalised yachting marina for those same playboys and girls.

In between times, some of the dead East India dockland has been rented out to a firm called TVX Transport. It quietly does dockers' work, filling containers. Except that the men who do the filling are not registered dockers.

So they do not get registered dockers' wages, nor are they covered by a whole number of other trade union agreements ranging from work practices, holidays and pensions.

TVX will stay in East India Dock until the property millionaires arrive for their piece of the action. Then TVX will move inland.

The new transport technology means that geographical positioning of container depots is relatively unimportant. What matters to the port employers, the giant shipping and stevedoring companies, is that they can be used as a weapon to break trade union wages and conditions and to reorganise a ports industry to the advantage of their balance sheets and stock exchange share quotations.

But where there was only fear and insecurity among organised dockers, there is now a deep anger born of the knowledge that the time of reckoning is to hand. For the docker knows he has been cheated by the cynical ruthlessness of the employers, by successive governments and their courts of inquiry and by the pitiful response of official trade unionism to unemployment masqueraded as 'technological progress'

Break

In London at least, the whole issue of storage and container and transport container firms outside the docks labour scheme has been brought to a head by the recent announcement that Southern Stevedores will close in June. The closure will return another 1250 men to the unattached register. This is part of their strategy to break the dock labour scheme which through the register prevents any single employer from making dockers redundant. Instead, when not needed they are declared unattached, with a minimum wage paid from a levy on the employers' payroll.

Southern Stevedores, third largest private employer on London's waterfront, claims that trade has been driven elsewhere. In fact the three big companies which jointly own it have simply diverted their trade.

Glen Line's Far East trade has been containerised and transferred to Southampton. Furness Withy has a London licence and will be doing the trade under its own name. British and Commonwealth has transferred its

Dockers are pawns in the profits scramble

contracts within the London docks. The firms which have picked them up will not of course be increasing their labour force.

The transfer of work from port to port has long been a favourite tactic of the employers. Recently—with the massive development of containerisation—it has been used ever more often. Now the companies are concentrating their energies on ports outside the dock labour scheme at Dover, Felixstowe and Sheerness for example.

They have also gone inland, building massive new cold storage facilities under the innocent names of subsidiary companies.

Property

They learned all their tactics from an outfit called Hays Wharf.

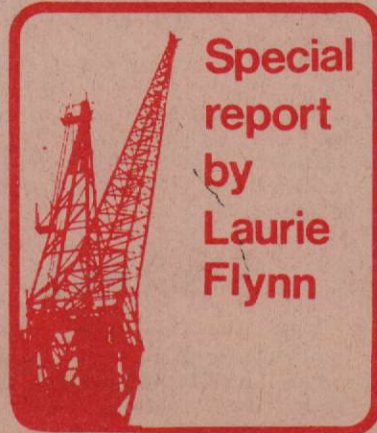
Just four years ago Hays was the biggest single employer of dock labour in London with 2000 men. From 1949 onwards one of its directors, David Burnett, was scheming to build up a massive property holding on the south bank of the Thames in London. The time would come when wharfing activity would be transferred out of London and the property redeveloped with spectacular profits.

Later, as chairman of Hays, Sir David Burnett would be responsible for finding the locations for new, expanded depots out of reach of dockworkers and the money and control over their work which they had won. It took the Labour government and the implementation of the Devlin plan to make the time just right.

Bill Tonge, another Hays director, spent two years selling the Devlin productivity deal to the dockers. Dockers would have job security for the first time, a land of milk and honey, he said loud and often.

Within a year of getting Devlin phase one accepted, Hays Wharf closed down its piece of the dockers' land of milk and honey forever, swelling the new unattached pool.

While negotiating, Hays and all the other employers had promised that no man would be unattached for more than 14 days. By last year 14 per cent



Special report by Laurie Flynn

of all Britain's dockers were unattached, 2000 (nearly a third) in London.

In 1969 the 35 acres of land Hays Wharf owned right in the city of London was valued in the company's accounts at £4.6 million. Now, three years later, the Hays Wharf accounts record that £4 million a year will be earned from its interests in the Tooley Street redevelopment.

This £300 million scheme is made up of gambling halls, conference centres, a hotel, office blocks, flats for city gents, an air-conditioned shopping centre and car parks. The various parties in the deal will have invested a total of £150 million (£55 million in land and £85 million in construction costs and interest charges). For this immense contribution to the welfare of the human race they will get a profit of £160 million—107 per cent.

Millions

Not that Hays Wharf has moved out of wharfing altogether. Far from it. They actually do more now than was ever done at Tooley Street, and even more profitably. The difference is that they do it outside the dock labour scheme.

Just a few miles away from the wharves which it closed to make millions, Hays has opened the UK Cold Storage depot at 4.8 million cubic feet already the biggest in Europe and continually expanding. Add Williams Cold Storage (Thetford), Dagenham Storage, Tees Storage, Ross Chemicals (Falkirk and Grangemouth) and four new depots at Wigston, Warwick, Luton and Bishop's Stortford and the money is pouring in. Labour costs are significantly less, and so are the numbers of workers employed.

This and the preliminary pay-off from the flats, offices and casinos for the wealthy where dockers once grafted in Tooley Street, have tripled Hays' profits in as many years. So it is not surprising that two Hays' Wharf subsidiaries should be selected for London's first container blocking.

Cowboys

This manipulation of new technology to annihilate the dockworker is happening in a hundred different ways all over the country. It involves those haulage cowboys so well backed up by the National Industrial Relations Court. It involves each and every giant firm pouring money into containers and container ships in the drive to maximise profits in a tightly competitive world market.

Under this system the dockworker is simply to disappear. Management consultants have openly talked of 90 per cent reductions in the dock labour force by the end of this decade.

The Ministry of Transport is quietly talking of four new British ports handling virtually all Britain's trade. The new one scheduled for Maplin is programmed to handle a third of the total, with only 140 dockers.

It is of course true that the new technical developments carry within them the seeds of human freedom. In the short term containerisation and

mechanisation could reduce the dockers' working week to a fraction of what it is now. In the long term they and other parallel developments could help create a society where all men and women would be freed from subservience to toil.

But with the goals of containerisation laid down by the same relentless drive to accumulate profits as will decorate London's riverside with unnecessary offices, casinos and housing for the wealthy, that is not at all what is happening.

Progress?

Instead the docker is to be sacrificed to technology. He is to retreat into history, severance pay in hand.

The policy of the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee is an affirmation that this is no longer to go unchallenged, that there is no such thing as progress, hidden hand variety. There is only progress for definite groups of people—for the employer in lower labour costs and higher profits or the worker in shorter hours, more holidays and early retirement on full pay.

The newspapers would have us believe that the stewards' fight to win back for dockers the work now done in inland container depots is causing unemployment for others. Anyone who is serious about their trade unionism and politics must decisively reject this argument.

For the inland container worker is but a pawn in the employers' game to break the dock labour scheme and get rid of the valuable gains it has won for organised labour. If they succeed, the inland worker will be cynically dumped on the scrapheap of unemployed dockers he has been used to create.



The danger, the dirt, the cold, the wet —they earn every penny

BERNIE MORRIS is just rising sixty. Two years ago he took his severance pay and got out of the London docks. With two gammy legs and a bad back, it was an attractive proposition.

Now, two years later, he regrets taking it—for the simple reason that it's gone. 'Two thousand quid is a stack of money until you stop to work out what it is by the week,' he says. 'None of us ever do that until after it's gone. Then we can tell you how many weeks it took to get through,' he adds.

But he has other interests apart from his back and his legs, bent, bruised and finally racked by the physical strain of being a docker. One of those other interests is his chest.

Bernie writes a lot of letters about his chest. They go out to the chairmen of medical panels, to his union, to lawyers—anyone in fact who can help him construct a legal action for compensation for pneumoconiosis, another little-known fringe benefit he picked up as a docker.

Having worked on hundreds of ships for many different employers down the years, he's finding it rather difficult finding someone to sue.

Grafting

For those who remain in the docks industry, it's all different now of course. No longer do the men have to submit to the brutal indignity of the hiring hall (or as the more polite language of this country has it, the muster point) where the employer had his pick.

No longer is the docks a by-word for premature age, a working community riddled with rheumatism and back complaints from standing around in the mist and the cold waiting to be hired, and then, if lucky, slaving, grafting and sweating deep in the hold of a ship before coming back into the cruel cold air.

Until you get behind the rhetoric, you could be forgiven for believing that paradise had recently broken out

in dockland. Different.

For the men in London's Royal day starts at 7. That means a 5.3 journey to work rain, they will barge and hard arrival.

Some will barge on the shinned down to the barge. 12 feet away toe holds four a ladder.

Sub

Then they making the cargo. It might be some they have to really out, as cement or wood in sub-zero temp.

With the ban the outside of driver cannot see it as he swings. There is, as they for error. The avoiding it lies gives silent sign happen.

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THE POWER GAME



by Colin Barker illustrations by 'rag'

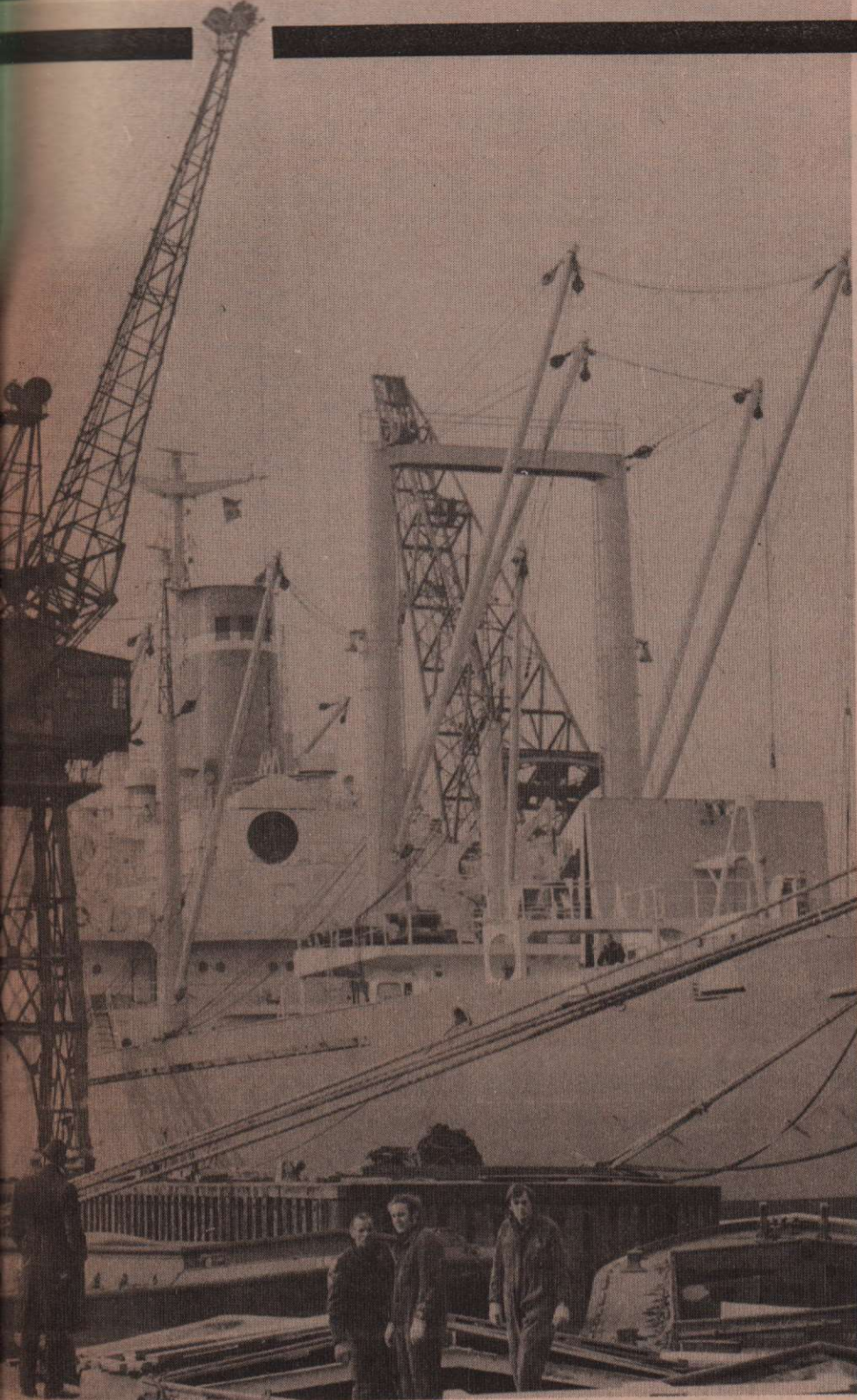
Forget the fairy tales the CEBG and trade union leaders have told you about the efficiency of the electricity supply industry and the wonders of productivity deals. Here are the facts the bosses don't tell you—in a useful rank-and-file handbook in the fight for better wages and working conditions and to save jobs. 25p, plus 3p postage



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FILE FOR SURVIVAL



IN THE HEADY DAYS of 1966, Jack Jones persuaded the Labour Party executive to include a pledge to nationalise the docks in Labour's election manifesto. 'Don't let there be any illusion . . . this is complete nationalisation without any loophole whatever,' Ian Mikardo, chairman of Labour's port study group, announced enthusiastically in March of that year.

But the Labour government had set up the Devlin Committee of Inquiry into the dockers' pay claim shortly after the 1964 election victory. The Devlin inquiry was to blossom into a scheme to reorganise the docks from top to bottom. Backed by the licensing system introduced in the 1966 Docks and Harbours Act, the emergence of giant new monopolies would be encouraged and financed by the government with a whole fistful of investment grants.

So too was the financing of new ports outside the control of the National Dock Labour Board scheme, a reform granted in the post-war period to hold dockers in the jobs they were leaving for more regular and human employment.

A new technology, new methods of organisation in the world cargo trade, turning it from a labour intensive to a capital intensive industry, would complete the scenario for the assault on the dockers.

Slashed

The Devlin dynamite, like all productivity deals, came dressed in all the clothes of progress. Not only was nothing said of consequential unemployment, the employers even gave so-called guarantees against it.

Now five years after the introduction of phase one of the scheme, registered dock labour force has been slashed by one third to 43,000 with 7000 of them claimed by the employers as 'surplus to requirements' and earmarked for redundancy.

Devlin's declared aim was to introduce factory systems and factory attitudes in dockland. Productivity deals would pave the way to flexibility and mobility of labour, the reduction of manning levels and that most desirable of all goals for big business—higher profits through wage and employment cuts.

To get to grips with the dockers, an offer to eliminate some of the

Devlin's 'Milk and honey' leaves a bitter taste

major injustices of their working lives would have to be made. Employment security, pensions, sick pay and half-decent amenities would be phased in. Decasualisation was the key.

Top level co-operation from the trade union movement was achieved by Labour's dishonest pledges to nationalise the industry backed with the union leaders' own inability to tackle the whole question of technological progress for whom and at whose expense.

Soon Labour was claiming that before the ports could be nationalised, they should first be rationalised, a fine piece of card playing.

In September 1967 phase one of Devlin's 'land of milk and honey' scheme was brought in. For the first time in three generations of organised dock labour, there was a real measure of job security, plus sick pay, and other welfare amenities.

Bitter

As yet no ceiling was put on earnings, nor were the fixed manning agreements of the Dock Labour Board Scheme. That would come later.

Then the softening up for the bitter end of the pill began. Trade started to be diverted round the country, new ports were developed and the inland container business expanded at a massive rate.

Implementation of phase two came first in London and Hull. Fixed manning went, a ceiling came on earnings. Dockers, just like the miners, faced cuts in their numbers and their level of earnings. In London, the nominally left-wing TGWU branch delegates who were put in after the 1967 strike played a key role in forcing through acceptance of the deal.

Once again the 'milk and honey' arguments were paraded and railroaded through. Then the shrewd workings of the Redundancy Payments Act plus the dock employers' extra enticements to leave the industry took their toll.



DEVLIN: promises



JONES: compromises



MIKARDO: illusions

But the employers were not relying on Devlin alone. In London and elsewhere they were moving to smash the Dock Labour Scheme and its crucial protective regulations against unemployment.

Containers were the key weapon and were used to the full to set up or make use of new businesses outside the ports to do what was rightfully dockers' work.

In this situation the Transport and General Workers' Union had nothing to say officially.

Stewards

But on dockside, people started to learn the lessons, and be driven into a situation where they would have to fight for their very survival. Job insecurity, which Devlin was supposed to end, became more intense than ever before.

In Liverpool they learned from London and Hull's experiences—no unattached register and no recognition of severance payments.

Slowly a national shop stewards' leadership began to re-form, hammering out how to deal with the issues at national level in the face of official union co-operation with the destruction of their industry.

But with the present structure and policies of the TGWU it would not be long before the attempt was made to head off the jobs fight by throwing other issues into the turmoil. That came after the fines in the National Industrial Relations Court, when dockland's fight for survival became a question of 'unfair industrial practices' and compliance with someone else's law.

Now as Jack Jones talks with Employment Minister Macmillan about higher severance payments made up by a nominal levy on containers, there might be compromise—for a time.

The dockers could deal this government a blow as significant as the miners. But short of a clear victory on jobs and containers, the basic issue will still be there—whose progress, at whose expense?

Dockers will tell you attached to T Wallis and Co Docks, the working on the early shift. Rise and a nice long in mist, sunshine or into a hold or a work within minutes

be directed to the side of the ship away from the cranes. They will have to get to the bottom planks with three feet apart double for

Zero

will start the job of ready for the cranes. Nothing relatively easy lift. If their luck is often is, it will be or working on meat

in this position on the ship, the crane workmates inside his pallets in or out. say, plenty of room responsibility for with a top man who directions. Accidents

itself, there are the holds containing a age of cargo to be hatches are thrown hatches start on the first air way ever further levels will be 40-odd hatch level.

very turn there is the serious fall down the to lower levels. There the crane, which can grip on a pallet and quite unexpectedly holds. There are

awkward restricted chambers to be worked in.

Then there are the hazards of the cargoes themselves. Awkward physical customers plus acids, chemicals, fibres of the most noxious variety, anything you care to name. With the odd spillage, a docker can easily be in the way.

Little more than a fortnight ago, the men of T Wallis and Co achieved minimum protective clothing for handling drums of 'anti-knock' petrol additive. A touch of the stuff causes serious surface burning to the skin. Sustained exposure leads to leukemia. Any spillage means the ship must be cleared immediately.

In the plants where it is made, the dockers say the workers are dressed like spacemen. THEY probably say the same of the dockers.

Of course things have improved over recent years, in particular the

employers' profits as total wage costs have been dramatically reduced.

Proper lavatories, showers and canteen facilities have appeared for the first time. For a century the employers treated the men as cattle. Now that the elementary facilities have arrived, they are proudly pointed out as signs of 'progress'.

Injustices

This is the situation that exists behind the elaborate newspaper mythology of wealthy, loafing dockworkers. Actually they earn £41.25 for 31½ hours a week at T Wallis. The days of piecework when the few could earn relatively large sums for short periods by intensive bouts of physical labour are gone forever.

The mythology is drawn from that era without any pause to think of the appalling injustices which were its

most significant characteristics. Neither is there any mention of the tremendous physical price levied on the dock community, every bit as heavily as the miners. The myth is kept oiled and ready for parade to sow confusion, to help in blunting the solidarity of other workers with dockers in struggle.

Because of their significant industrial strength, the dockers are in a position to force the Tory government to compromise. This too is reflected in press attitudes. For the moment the dockers are something of a special case, having co-operated in the run-down of their industry.

It is a tiresome category, 'special case'. A walk out of dockland into the quality of any other group of industrial workers' lives would suggest that it is an urgent task to batter down the compartments and build a movement capable of running society for the benefit of all working people.



Dockers loading a barge—work that is done in all weathers.

With the unions fighting for their lives, a new

series looks at the movement's beginnings

I envy you your work in the Dock Strike. It is the movement of the greatest promise we have had for years, and I am proud and glad to have lived to see it. If Marx had lived to witness this! If these poor downtrodden men, the dregs of the proletariat, these odds and ends of all trades, fighting every morning at the dock gates for an engagement, if they can combine, and terrify by their resolution the mighty Dock Companies, truly then we need not despair of any section of the working class . . . If the dockers get organised, all other sections will follow . . . It is a glorious movement and again I envy those that can share in this work.

So wrote Frederick Engels, Marx's life-long collaborator, to Marx's daughter at the height of the London Dock Strike of 1889. To socialists of the time, the strike was recognised as an historic event—the symbol of a new movement among the working class—and it remains one of the most famous struggles of organised labour in Britain.

Trade unionism in the 1880s had made many socialists despair. Union membership totalled only three-quarters of a million or about one worker in twenty. The movement was dominated by the narrow and exclusive associations of skilled craftsmen. By rigid controls over entry to their trades these were able to maintain relatively favourable wages and conditions, their members received extensive financial benefits in return for high weekly subscriptions and they showed little concern for the mass of their less fortunate fellow workers.

Their industrial policy was to a large extent based on collaboration with employers. This attitude was summed up in a Boilermakers' song of 1872:

*Capital and Labour seem
By our Maker joined;
Are they not like giant twins
In the World of mind?
. . . So 'tis just and meet
Labour should co-operate,
And to help with all their might
Masters to compete.*

This attitude carried with it a position of extreme political complacency: not only were the established unions committed to working within the framework of capitalism, they took no interest in demands for reforms which might improve the general position of the working class within the capitalist system.

In terms of policy, the TUC throughout the 1880s was a moribund organisation. Well might Engels comment in 1885: 'The great trades unions . . . form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final . . . They are very nice people nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general.'

'COFFIN CLUBS'

Yet there were some signs of change. The late 1870s and the 1880s were the years of the 'Great Depression', with unemployment over 10 per cent for much of the time.

While not the worst affected section of the working class, members of some of the skilled trades were badly hit and their complacency was somewhat shaken.

Some trade unionists demanded that their unions should stop acting as 'coffin clubs' and should spend their money on strike action rather than friendly benefits.

Demands developed for less exclusive policies and for action to advance the interests of the whole class. The suspicion grew that capitalism was not as secure a source of benefits for trade unionists as was previously assumed.

His process was encouraged by the formation in the 1880s of the first explicitly socialist organisations in Britain for decades. The main marxist body, the Social Democratic Federation, attacked the sectionalism and self-satisfaction of the craft unions, and attempted to overcome the resignation and disorganisation of the lower-skilled.

HOW THE WORKERS

FOUND

THEY WERE



The matchgirls of Bryant and May: they got 4s a week, shareholders got 23 per cent dividends

STRONG

THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITAIN'S UNIONS
By Bernard Ross
part one

Particular attention was paid to the unemployed. Massive demonstrations took place, several being met by extreme police brutality.

At the end of the decade, as employment conditions improved, the years of agitation and propaganda by socialists began to pay off.

The most spectacular results were in the East End of London, home of some of the most impoverished and exploited sections of the working class.

An early success was at the Bryant and May match factory in the summer of 1888. The girl employees, working with dangerous chemicals, often developed a disease of the jaw which caused loss of teeth and could prove fatal.

Wages for many were as low as four shillings a week. Meanwhile the shareholders of Bryant and May received 23 per cent dividends.

Details of the situation were published by Annie Besant, editor of a small socialist paper, in an article entitled 'White Slavery in London'.

The company reacted by dismissing three girls who were suspected of giving information to Mrs Besant. To

everybody's amazement, 1400 girls spontaneously stopped work demanding their reinstatement, and further demands for improved conditions were formulated.

So firm was their solidarity that after a fortnight the company conceded their demands, and a Matchmakers' Union was established.

Another notable victory was won by London's gasworkers. Gasworks operated round the clock, and the stokers had to work 12-hour shifts seven days a week.

For many years the pressure of work had intensified as production of gas increased and in early 1889 the men's accumulated grievances led to the formation of trade unions in many of the larger cities.

The most important was the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers, set up in March by Will Thorne, a London stoker and a member of the Social Democratic Federation. With considerable help from Marx's daughter Eleanor and many other socialists, several thousand members were recruited within weeks.

While some workers wanted higher wages, Thorne's priority was clear: 'shorten your hours and prolong your lives'. In June the demand was sent to all London gas companies for the introduction of a three-shift system—in other words, an eight-hour day—without loss of pay.

STOPPAGE

These sudden signs of militancy took the companies by surprise. A solid strike would disrupt gas supplies, for experienced stokers could not be replaced off the streets and this in turn would encourage customers to turn to electricity, which was just being introduced to London.

Ill-prepared for a stoppage, and

eventually convinced of the men's determination, the managements conceded the union claim without a fight.

his achievement could not fail to inspire the dockers. Many lived in the same areas as the gasworkers, and some labourers worked in the docks in summer and the gasworks in winter.

Many of the socialists who helped Thorne organise the gasworkers were also regular propagandists at dock gate meetings. One of them, Ben Tillett, a dockside warehouse worker, had formed a union in 1887 which Thorne himself had joined.

At first Tillett had little success in his campaign to organise dock labourers, even though their conditions had deteriorated during the 1880s.

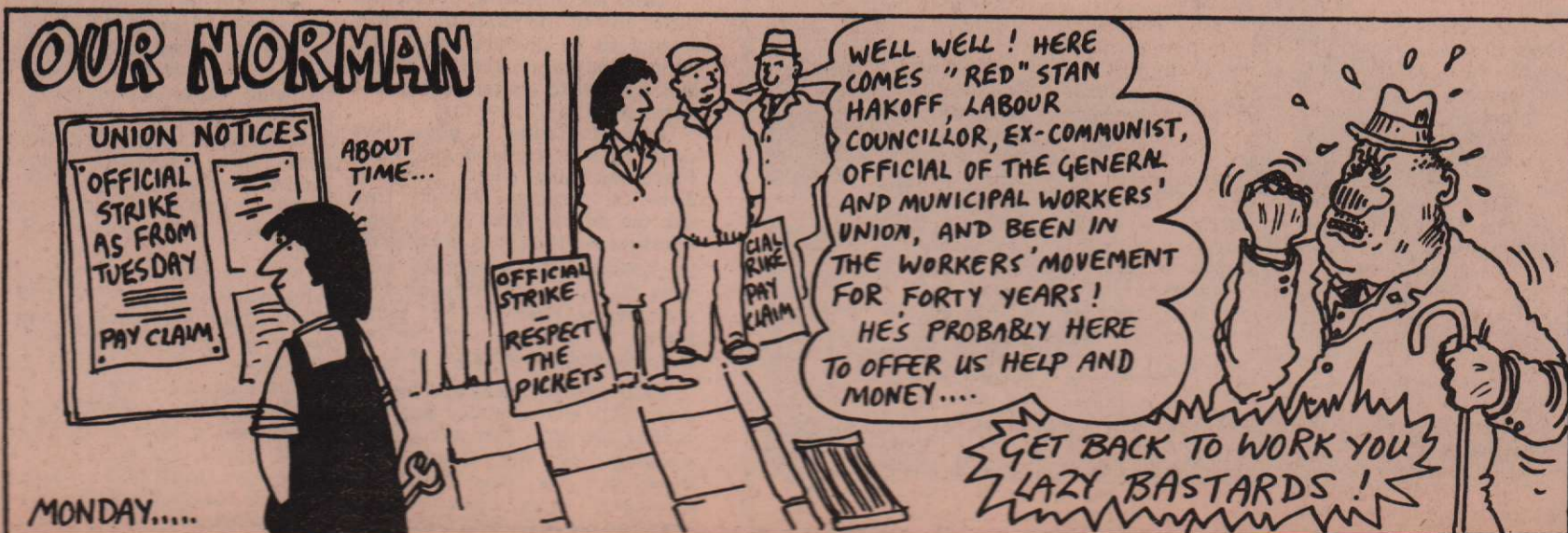
It seemed that the mass of casual dock labour was unorganisable. The only section that had previously succeeded in sustaining effective unionism was the stevedores, who carried out the highest skilled work loading vessels for the export trade.

After the gasworkers' example, however, events moved quickly. A grievance had long been simmering over the bonus system in the West India Docks.

On 7 August Tillett wrote a letter of complaint to the dock employers which was ignored. Then on 12 August, dockers unloading the Lady Armstrong were involved in a bonus dispute and stopped work.

Two days later all the workers in the South West India Dock joined the strike, demanding a minimum wage of sixpence an hour in place of the fivepence paid to most day-workers, and the removal of the objectionable 'contract' system of piecework which caused so many bonus disputes.

The strike for the 'dockers' tanner had begun.



**Next week:
The explosion**

REVIEW

BBC: THE GREEKS HAVE

VIEWERS of *The Lotus Eaters*, the BBC's latest venture into sunsoaked, Sunday night entertainment on television might find the series rather less easy on the eye (and on the stomach) if they knew the background of how it got made.

The series, about a group of fun-loving English exiles living on the island of Crete, was made in the teeth of trade union opposition by workers within the Corporation. Throughout, the BBC showed an arrogant contempt for the union's point of view and a callous disregard for the terrible human suffering of trades unionists in Greece itself.

This is what happened: In 1969, after receiving overwhelming evidence of the torture being meted out to Greek workers by the Colonels in their determination to smash the unions, the International Labour Organisation in Geneva appealed to trade unionists to demonstrate in every way possible their solidarity with their Greek fellow workers.

The report drew attention to the regime's flouting of international labour conventions which Greece as a country had signed and concluded 'In general the junta is aiming at the complete castration of the Greek labour movement.'

EFFECTIVE

One British union which responded was the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians. The links between the Greek and British film industries have always been close, and it was partly due to this that in the summer of 1969 ACTT voted to black all location filming in Greece apart from news coverage.

The blacking was tremendously effective. ACTT say that in spite of hard times in the industry they had no difficulty in enforcing the instruction. The locations of several feature films were changed to other countries and at least one major feature film was abandoned.

Besides the fact that no British films were made in Greece, American films which often use British crews when filming in Europe also changed their locations. It was a particularly effective blow at the regime because location filming always helps a country's tourist trade.

ACTT knew they were having an effect because in due course an emissary arrived at their offices from the colonels to explain that the regime had set up new unions and would they now please lift the blacking instruction.

CHANGED

Then in 1971 ACTT heard from one of their members who had been approached by the BBC that a drama series was being planned which would involve extensive location work in Greece. A meeting of ACTT members in the BBC was held where the point was made that there was no reason why this series had to be made in Crete.

It could be set in any sunny island. The location could easily be changed. The feeling of the meeting 'was overwhelmingly against filming in Greece.'

Alan Sapper, general secretary of the union, wrote to the BBC drawing attention to the fact that there had been blacking of all filming in Greece since 1969, and that all employers had observed it. Would the BBC please consider re-locating the series?

The BBC's response to this was a threatening letter to Sapper (there were no personal meetings. Although ACTT has 2000 members in the BBC the Corporation does not recognise the union and does not talk to Mr Sapper) advising him that he had 'engaged in an unlawful conspiracy to injure the BBC.'

GRANTED

If he did not withdraw the blacking order the BBC would apply 'for an injunction to restrain such unlawful activity'. The letter gave the general council of the union 14 days to make up its mind.

Two days later a letter arrived for Mr Sapper telling him that the injunction had already been applied for and granted by Mr Justice Foster restraining him and others from 'inciting, counselling and procuring employees to commit breach of contract.'

The BBC went ahead with the *Lotus Eaters* which was launched with the



Ian Hendry and Wanda Ventham filming in Crete for *The Lotus Eaters*

A WORD FOR IT

maximum of publicity. They received the full co-operation of the Greek Tourist Board. There is now talk of another series to be filmed in Greece, again in direct contravention of the ACTT order.

Union members within the BBC were not entirely surprised that arguments about the sufferings of Greek trades unionists under the colonels did not carry much weight at television centre. ACTT has been fighting for union recognition inside the BBC for 20 years.

It now has 2000 members mainly in Television Production and Film Technical grades. In February this year it again applied for recognition, pointing out to

the Director General, Mr Charles Curran, that the 1949 Report of the Beveridge Broadcasting Committee recommended that any union which had membership in excess of 40 per cent in certain grades should be recognised in those grades.

The union was prepared to allow independent auditors in to count their members and were confident they could prove membership in the Television Production and Film Technical grades of 80 per cent.

To this Mr Curran replied by asking Mr Sapper, a trade union official of many years experience, whether he had read the TUC handbook to the Industrial Relations

Act. Sapper answered with some sharpness that, pleased as he was by Mr Curran's quite new concern for TUC policy, it did not have anything to do with ACTT's application for recognition and would he please answer the original letter.

There for the moment the matter stands. BBC lawyers are doubtless working out further gratuitous jibes at Alan Sapper and Mr Curran is working out ways to evade recognising ACTT.

There is, of course, good reason for all this. The BBC employs 25,000 people but there is no union sufficiently well organised within it to bring muscle to bear in any negotiations for the majority

of the work force.

A measure of the fear which people feel when criticising their bosses can be seen from the fact that the only dissent expressed in the BBC is found in anonymous news sheets, whose authorship is kept a closely guarded secret. The BBC has its own house union, the Association of Broadcasting Staffs, yet despite its privileged position in the organisation it has never recruited more than 11,000 people, less than half the total staff.

It does not try very hard. One staff member told me he was put under more pressure to join the BBC club than ABS.

By contrast ACTT is a real trade union with firm ideas about pay and conditions. If it were given power to negotiate it would not tolerate some of the goings on at the BBC.

Like the use of short term contracts to whip people into line politically by making them constantly afraid of losing their jobs. A third of BBC's workers in television are on contracts of a year or less.

Or like taking people on in one grade at one rate of pay, 'giving them a chance' by 'seconding them for six months' to do a more difficult job which carries a higher rate and continuing to pay the lower rate.

UPROAR

Or like keeping staff files including annual reports in which every act and misdemeanour is recorded for future reference if an employee applies for another job.

Besides, the kind of uproar caused by the *Lotus Eaters* gave bosses at the BBC nightmares of the kind of trouble they might be in for if they recognised ACTT. Quite a lot of people at the BBC are disgusted by the way events get distorted on television—the censorship of news from Northern Ireland, the venom poured out against strikers, the use of the BBC as an agent to hammer across the Tory government's line.

Some of them are even beginning to question the BBC's right to make programmes with such a blatant right wing bias as *The British Empire*, or to help promote Greece as an idyllic place to live. But as long as they are isolated, fearful of their jobs, afraid to talk to anyone outside about what goes on inside the BBC and, most important of all, with no possibility of effective collective action, such people are no real problem.

This was why the BBC had to break the ACTT blacking order and go ahead with filming the *Lotus Eaters* in Greece. Let the workers get the idea that they have some right to say what shall and shall not appear on our television screens and heaven knows what might happen.

Let them have a half-way decent union and they might even see their way forward to doing something about it.

CARLA GREENE

History from bottom up

HISTORY at school is kings, dates and the doings of the mighty. But at Ruskin College, Oxford, last week a different kind of history, about the ordinary people and viewed from the bottom up, was being argued by more than 2000 teachers, students, trade unionists, children and even a few professional historians.

The event was the tenth History Workshop and this year's subject was the position or rather lack of it of children in accounts of the past.

History Workshop started as a small seminar of mainly marxist social historians interested in exploring problems of working-class history. Its first two meetings were on Chartism and working-class education in the 19th century.

But from the start the Workshop wanted to combine its clear overall solidarity with the working-class political movement with a detailed examination and recreation of working-class people's whole way of life and leisure. The Workshop would discuss fairs as well as Factory Acts and working men's clubs as well as their trade unions.

The Workshop wanted not only to enlarge the scope of its history but to make it less academic and professional. The ex-trade union students at Ruskin often contributed historical papers based on their own experience in their industry. Bob Gilding, for example, who was a

London cooper before Ruskin, could compare his own trade union experience with the struggle for workers' control in his industry in the 19th century and Dave Douglass used his current experience in the NUM to illuminate the history of previous rank and file movements in the pits.

Snowballed

This kind of history has given the Workshop its especially deep-seated political passion. As IS member Terry McCarthy put it in his appeal for funds for History Workshop: 'Most of the trade unionists who get here were slung out of school labelled "thick". For us to write the history of our class is to show that workers are perfectly capable of doing things usually left to "intellectuals". And it is to show how deeply the struggles of the present are connected to the past.'

History Workshop has snowballed in size and is held in a festive atmosphere. History has never been more fun and films, plays and folk songs related to the workshops subject are also laid on by the Ruskin students, who are unsupported in this by the college authorities.

The Children in History weekend has continuous sessions in three separate halls. One could pass from a marxist analysis of toys to a

session on children and sex in modern China and direct from passionate discussion about gypsy schools to a detailed analysis of the linguistic theories of Basil Bernstein.

Especially relevant was Dave Marson's detailed recreation of the school strikes which swept Britain in 1911 and the account by Raphael Samuel (Ruskin History Tutor and the Workshop's founder) of the attempts of 19th century 'ragged boys' and 'street arabs' to avoid school and the truant catchers.

Other highlights were Christopher Hill's masterly account of the way the Puritan revolt against the authority of king and priest provoked the Puritans' children, wives and servants into questioning filial and wifely duty. And Gwyn Williams contributed a hilarious confession of a non-Conformist Welsh youth in the 1930s which began with the en bloc conversion of a revivalist squad to the Young Communist League and ended with him sending a letter of complaint to the Kremlin after reading of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in the *Western Mail*.

The 1973 History, or more properly, Herstory, Workshop is on the role of Women in History and at the present rate will probably have to take place in the Albert Hall. Book now to avoid disappointment.

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 Dumfries Dundee Edinburgh Fife: Dunfermline/ Cowdenbeath Glenrothes Kirkcaldy Glasgow N Glasgow S Greenock Stirling St Andrews</p>	<p>MIDLANDS Birmingham NE Birmingham S Coventry Dudley Leamington and Warwick Leicester Loughborough Mid-Derbyshire Milton Keynes Northampton Nottingham Oxford Redditch Rugby Telford Warley Wolverhampton</p>	<p>EAST Basildon Beccles Cambridge Chelmsford Colchester Harlow Ipswich Leiston Lowestoft Norwich Peterborough</p>
<p>NORTH EAST Bishop Auckland Durham Hartlepool Newcastle-upon-Tyne South Shields Spennymoor Sunderland Teesside E Teesside W</p>	<p>GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES Acton Bexley Camden Chertsey Croydon East London Enfield Fulham and Hammersmith Greenford Hackney and Islington Harlesden Harrow Hemel Hempstead Hornsey Hounslow Ilford Kilburn Kingston Lambeth Lewisham Merton Paddington Reading St Albans Slough South Ealing Tottenham Walthamstow Wandsworth Watford Woolwich</p>	
<p>NORTH Barnsley Bradford Doncaster Grimsby Halifax Huddersfield Hull Leeds Ossett Scarborough Selby Sheffield York</p>	<p>WALES and SOUTH WEST Bath Bristol Cardiff Exeter Gloucester Llanelli Mid-Devon Neath Plymouth Swansea</p>	
<p>NORTH WEST Barrow Blackburn Bolton Crewe Kirkby Lancaster Manchester Merseyside Oldham The Potteries Preston Salford St Helens Stockport Wigan Wrexham</p>		

COMPROMISE

by MALCOLM REID

THE FIVE MONTHS' long struggle at C A Parsons' engineering works in Newcastle ended last Friday when 1400 members of the Technical and Supervisory Section (TASS) of the engineering union accepted an offer by the company. The decision, taken against the advice of the negotiating committee by a five-to-one majority, represents a compromise over the question of redundancy and an abandonment of the fight for the closed shop.

The struggle began in January when 900 redundancies were threatened. The men banned overtime and subcontract work and imposed a four-day week. The company was soon forced to make a partial retreat. It lifted the threat to manual workers, but persisted in plans for office redundancies. The TASS members were left to fight alone.

In March the second prong of the management attack was brought into play. Under a closed shop agreement, it was supposed to sack the few remaining workers in the offices who refused to join a genuine trade union and who were members of a phoney, pro-management outfit, the United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers. But Parsons managed to delay doing this until the Industrial Relations Act was brought in. Indeed, there have been reports (for example in The Guardian of 11 May) that the Tories brought the day of implementation of the Act forward two days in order to help out Parsons and UKAPE.

TUC climbdown

When TASS members tried to enforce the previous agreement by declaring the work of UKAPE members black, the NIRC obligingly issued an order that this action should cease. TASS members refused to accept this and were backed by a special emergency session at the start of the union's conference a fortnight ago. A massive confrontation with the law seemed inevitable.

National support and leadership from the union were essential for the members inside Parsons, as the manual workers in the plant traditionally have not been especially militant and their stewards refused to support the TASS men, as agreed by the national confederation of engineering unions.

But then a fortnight ago the General Council of the TUC agreed on its historic climbdown from any fight against the Industrial Relations Act. It said unions could appear before the NIRC and made it clear that it would not pay the fines of unions who clashed with the law. TASS's case was not put directly to it because of the absence through illness of George Doughty, the TASS representative.

The only members of the General Council to vote full support for TASS were the representatives of the AUEW. Other left wingers, like Jack Jones and Lawrence Daly, were strangely silent.

Four days later, on Tuesday of last week, a meeting took place at the Newcastle plant between the management and national and local officials of the union. Managing director Frank Krause emphasised the serious work situation. He claimed that because of international market expectations, 240 jobs would have to go this year and 200 more next year. He then put



KRAUSE: union must call off sanctions

forward a series of proposals for a compromise settlement.

There would be no sackings this year, but only voluntary redundancy at both the Erith office in Kent—which the company had previously said it was closing—and at Newcastle. Short time working would be introduced on a departmental basis after discussion between the company and the office committee, but this was never to involve less than four-day working for any group. Discussion would begin on manning requirements for next year.

The union for its part, said Krause, would call off all actions against the company—including the closed shop question. If these points were accepted all redundancy notices and sackings for applying union sanction would be withdrawn.

This was the settlement voted on by TASS members last Friday. Unfortunately, the TASS national leadership decided against giving a clear lead to the members on how they should react to the attempt to bargain away the closed shop. When the question was first raised a couple of years ago in Parsons most of the national leaders personally spoke to the rank and file on the need to fight.

Now they made the mistake of waiting for the ordinary members to vote before stating their own position and left it to the office committee to put the case for continuing to insist on 100 per cent trade unionism.

The meeting began with a detailed report by Terry Rodgers, the chairman of the office committee, who explained that the meeting had been called at the request of the new president, Arthur Scott, and the general secretary, George Doughty. He gave an account of background events and moved a resolution

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

WHAT'S ON

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

EDINBURGH IS public meeting: Kick Out The Tories—Why Labour Isn't Fighting. Speaker: Roger Protz, editor of Socialist Worker. Churchill Theatre, Morningside Rd. 7.30pm, Sun 21 May, (Buses 23, 45, 11, 16).

DEMONSTRATE! US out of Indo-China now! Edinburgh, Sat 20 May, assemble in junction of Queen St and Castle St.

IS YOUNG WORKERS AND APPRENTICES MEETING: Sat 20 May, 10.30am-5pm, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Further details from branch secretaries.

SWANSEA IS: An IS council tenant asks: 'Fair Rents for whom?' Public meeting at AEU House, Thursday 25 May, 7.30pm.

KILBURN IS public meeting: John Bell (UCATT) will speak on How To Smash The Lump, the problems of organising in the building industry. The Crown Hotel, High St, Harlesden, NW10, on Fri 19 May, 8pm.

LEEDS IS: How To Beat The Tories. Speaker: Paul Foot, Leeds Trades Club, Upper Fountain St, Leeds 2 (side of Ceylon Tea Centre), 25 May, 8pm.

MEETING of Rebel supporters—IS members involved in youth work. Weds 31 May 7.30pm at 6 Cottons Gdns London E2.

LONDON IS ATTI faction meeting: Tues 23 May, 8pm, at 6 Cottons Gdns, E2.

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Reform or Revolution? Speaker: Chris Harman, Thurs 25 May, 8pm, The Spotted Dog, 72 Garrett Lane, SW18 (near Wandsworth Town Hall).

HACKNEY AND ISLINGTON IS public education meeting: Whatever's Happening To Capitalism? Speaker: John Palmer. Mon 22 May, 8pm, Rose and Crown, corner of Stoke Newington Church St and Albion Rd, N16.

HULL IS public meeting
THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT AND THE DOCKERS' CASE
Speakers: Tony Cliff and Bob Light (TGWU, Royal Docks, London)
7.30pm, Fri 26 May
Co-op Hall, Kingston Square, Hull

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COMING SOON
Wandsworth and Lambeth IS announce
FOLK NIGHT
Sat 10 June. Details later

Hornsey IS Public Meeting
Dockers and Railwaymen
Against the Industrial Relations Act
Tuesday 23 May, 8pm.
Duke of Edinburgh, Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, N4.

PARTY/SOCIAL FOR ALL IS MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS
Sat 27 May
Northern Poly, Prince of Wales Rd, London NW5
in the bar area
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7.30pm, 25p entrance
Organised by Camden IS

NOTICES

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AT PARSONS

INSIDE REPORT ON THE PARTIAL RETREAT ON JOBS AND CLOSED SHOP ON TYNESIDE

calling for the rejection of the company's proposals on ending sanctions until the clause on the closed shop issue was deleted.

He pointed out that the worst fears of all those who had spoken at meetings before the Act became law were being proved true. The Act was intended to weaken workers' organisations and lower their living standards.

'We said it was a blacklegs' charter', he said. 'You now know who the blacklegs are. We said they would be protected. That is what is happening.' He gave the example of how one UKAPE member within 30 minutes had taken over the job of a TASS member sacked for applying sanctions.

He went on to argue that 'if the Act is allowed to work it will mean a qualitative deterioration in your life'. The about-turn of the TUC showed that 'the TUC General Council will sell any union short. The position we are in at Parsons is as much a direct result of the lack of positive support from other unions as of anything else. We believe other unions have not yet woken up to the threat to their own closed shop position.'

After speaking of the enormous support flowing in from other sections of TASS, he ended by reminding people that 'If Krause is right we will be fighting for our jobs again next year. If there is no union as a consequence of our decisions here today, we know what will happen because of what he has done over the last weeks and months when we have been strong.'

Arthur Scott, the TASS president, made a statement before the discussion was opened up to the members. He explained that as far as the executive was concerned, it had policies and was prepared to stand up for them. The law had ordered it to tell its members to de-

sist and it had refused. But some people were claiming that the issue of 100 per cent trade unionism was being used to stop negotiations over the redundancy issue.

That was why the present meeting was being called. He said that whatever the result of the meeting, the union still had a contempt notice hanging over it and a policy of not paying fines. The meeting had to decide whether it was to continue the fight now or possibly to fight again at the end of the year.

The debate was then taken up by the members, with those for and against the deal putting their positions strongly. Terry Rodgers wound up the debate by stating that the office committee would continue to do its best under whatever conditions the meeting imposed on it. He pointed out that the battle being faced at Parsons is being faced by workers in every country in the world.

He spoke of the Canadian situation, where three national trade union officials have been jailed and their members are on strike. He spelt out that to continue the struggle would mean active participation in lobbying, picketing and speaking by every member.

When the workers came to vote, months of intimidation by the company took their toll. Another reason for the lack of fight was that a message of support from the union executive was not received until an hour after the vote.

But although one battle might be ended, there is still a struggle to be carried on. The TASS members made it clear in another vote that they are not prepared to countenance any further attacks on their past agreements or union strength.

Postal union conference may end headlong retreat

THE Union of Post Office Workers conference which opens in Blackpool next week will confront the Tory offensive over productivity deals and the Industrial Relations Act. In both cases the union leaders are in headlong retreat.

The UPW leaders have been chasing 'productivity' for years, but since last year's strike it has replaced any attempt to achieve good conditions through trade union measures. Instead, the leaders hope that if the Post Office is as profitable as possible, then the workers will be rewarded with pay increases.

But last December conference rejected a major part of this strategy when a work and staff measurement scheme for sorting offices was voted down.

Cut costs

The leadership is now suggesting local productivity deals, by which management and unions try to cut labour costs and share the savings 50-50. They want to bolster this deal by agreeing that postmen will deliver unaddressed advertising material—a suggestion which the UPW itself killed four years ago.

The union has taken a similar line on the Industrial Relations Act. Although voting for official TUC policy, it is going to the Industrial Relations Court over the recognition of the scab union of telephonists, the Telecommunications Staff Association. The only reason the breakaway union has achieved any membership is because of the UPW's poor record among telephonists—which will not be put right by appealing to a Tory judge.

Backlash rocks press union

A SPECIAL conference of the journalists' union has been called for 2 September in a bid to reverse its policy of de-registration under the Industrial Relations Act.

The decision to hold a special delegate meeting comes just one month after the NUJ annual meeting, which voted 2-1 in favour of de-registration. The decision sparked off a violent reaction among members who rarely attend meetings and did not take part in the pre-conference discussions on the Act.

Urged on by several newspapers—including an editorial in the Daily Telegraph—they flooded into branches, demanding another conference. Under union rules a special meeting must be called if 35 branches call for one and the executive received requests from 50.

Behind the uproar lies the disastrous decision of the union's executive last autumn to hold a referendum among members on registration, even though the previous conference had instructed it to fight for a policy of non-registration. The referendum, which ruled out discussion and debate on the subject, resulted in a big majority for registration.

The referendum was only to test opinion and the April conference, composed in the main of the most active and most aware members, voted heavily in favour of what was then TUC policy.

But many less active members were confused by the executive's tactics and thought the referendum was binding on the union. Many of them are now demanding that referenda should take priority over conference decisions.

The urgent task facing militants in the NUJ is to argue the case for collective decision making and the dangers of the Act and to fight for delegations to the special conference that will maintain the present opposition to registration.

● The NUJ's biggest branch, Magazine and Book, has held out against the tide. A packed meeting of more than 300 members on Monday voted overwhelmingly in favour of opposition to registration. The decision came after three hours of debate in which scores of newcomers were won over when the full implications of registration were spelt out by branch activists.

Labour councils ready to betray tenants to Tories

LABOUR COUNCILS now control almost all the major towns in the country, but any pretence of opposition to the Tory Rents Bill is likely to disappear soon.

Already only four of the 21 London boroughs are still committed to refusing to implement the rent rises—and recent statements by national Labour Party leaders are encouraging the surrender to Tory pressures.

The latest piece of advice comes from Anthony Crosland, leading Labour spokesman on housing. 'Don't talk about defying the law', he told the Association of London Housing Estates last weekend, 'that is not only wrong in principle, it is not the best thing for your tenants.'

Crosland went on to suggest that it is possible to use a concession made by the government to keep rent rises at a low figure.

This concession allows councils to raise their rents by less than £1 in October, if more than two per cent of their tenants would be paying more than the so-called 'fair rent' level if the full increase was imposed.

Until recently it was generally assumed that few councils would be able to avoid

THE RENTS BATTLE

paying the full increase in this way, since the 'fair rent' level has been estimated by civil servants to be generally about twice the level of existing rents. But then Birmingham city council produced an estimate for 'fair rents' in the city which involved raising rents by only 35p in October.

This claim has been seized on by the



CROSLAND: wrong in principle

Tories to justify their argument that the increases will not be as bad as often claimed. It is also being used as an excuse by Labour Councils to justify implementing the Tory measures.

But in fact there is no evidence at all that the concession will do anything in the long run to help tenants.

Under the Bill councils are to charge

rents 'with regard to the return that it would be reasonable to expect as an investment'—in other words, the councils must be able to make a profit on each house. They have to ensure that some such assessment is made within six months of the Bill becoming law.

These assessments are then referred to supposedly independent committees, which have the final say about the level of rents. The committees will be overwhelmingly composed of people with a direct interest in keeping the general level of rents and house prices as high as possible—solicitors and property valuers, for example.

Forced up

If councils do manage to get away with charging rent increases of less than £1 in October, that will not stop rents for most tenants being forced up soon afterwards.

If Birmingham Council, for instance, only put 35p on the rents in October, at the end of the year they will have to suggest 'fair rents' to the assessment committees. If the rents suggested by the councils are low, the committees will jack them up.

In the end the tenants will face the original increases anyway.

The Tories are quite happy to see fairly low increases for many councils in October, knowing that when the committees get to work much larger increases will follow. In the meantime they hope that much of the opposition to the October increases will be fooled into believing that a major concession has been made.

Angry crowd blocks council

LLANTRISSANT, South Wales: More than 200 angry tenants blocked the entrance to the council chamber last week protesting at the Labour council's decision to implement the Tory Rents Bill. The 200 represented thousands of tenants in the area who have been refusing to pay a rent increase imposed in April.

The police were called to clear a path for the councillors while an angry crowd demanded their resignation. Don Hayward, a member of the South Wales miners' executive, said it was shameful that the council should support the Tory government by implementing the Bill.

SCOTLAND: Already 20 councils have said that they will refuse to raise the rents, including Glasgow with 150,000 houses. But other Labour councils have crumbled and decided to raise the rents.

In East Kilbride New Town, while 16,000 development corporation tenants are organising to withhold their rent rises, 400 council tenants have had their rents increased by the local Labour council.

The tenants' movement in Scotland is growing rapidly with new organisations being set up every week. Tenants in several towns, including East Kilbride and Cumbernauld, are already on partial rent strikes.

CAMDEN, London: A packed meeting of tenants at the town hall last week set up a Federation of Camden Tenants Associations. The Labour council has refused to implement the Rents Bill.

But the unity of private and council tenants and above all, as Camden Trades Council chairman and building worker Bill Lloyd stressed, the united action of tenants and the trade union movement is essential if the Bill is to be defeated. Only working-class strength can destroy Tory plans and build a movement which would end forever the control of housing by bankers, insurance companies and property speculators, and instead build houses for people, not profit.

NEWHAM, East London: Thirteen Labour council members who refused to vote to implement the Rents Bill, have been suspended by the Labour group. The Trades Council Action Committee is mounting a campaign to support them and attack the Labour majority who voted for rent rises.

ISLINGTON, North London: 300 angry tenants filled the public gallery at the council meeting last week. The tenants, disgusted at the Labour group's decision to co-operate with the Tory plans to double rents, heckled the councillors who claimed to represent them. Tomatoes were thrown at the councillors and finally the police cleared the public gallery.

DAGENHAM: Tenants' leaders from the Beacontree Estate, one of the biggest council estates in Europe, are meeting shop stewards from local factories on 11 June to ask for massive industrial backing for the fight against the rent rises.

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Socialist Worker

OVERTIME BAN HIDES RETREAT ON 35 HOURS

MANCHESTER:—350 engineering shop stewards voted on Monday to drop the 35-hour week from the list of demands being fought for throughout the district.

The meeting, organised by the district committee of the Confederation of Engineering Unions, heard a report on the decision of the AUEW national committee to give priority in the claim to the question of pay and holidays rather than hours. In line with this, local officials recommended that factories where no offer over hours had been made should be allowed to settle over pay and holidays alone.

But the officials had to recognise that feeling over the hours issue is strong among militants in the area. Some of the workers occupying their factories could have settled for money alone weeks ago, but have been determined to hold out for a cut in the working week—a gain that would not be eaten into by inflation and which would have an immediate effect in cutting unemployment.

DEMAND

So a successful resolution insisted that no overtime should be worked in plants where no concessions on hours have been made.

But about a third of the stewards felt that this attempt to hide the retreat over the hours issue was not good enough. An overtime ban is no substitute for a shorter working week. They voted for an amendment to delete the paragraph setting aside the 35-hour week demand.

The amendment was defeated because there were many stewards at the meeting from plants like AEI Trafford Park which have already settled without making any gains over hours. They were able to out-vote the factories which are still holding out.

ISOLATION

Many militants were shocked at what they saw as an unprincipled alliance between the local officials of the union, many of whom are leading members of the Communist Party, and the 68-year-old right-wing convenor of AEI, Brennan, whom the state has rewarded with an OBE.

The vote also reflected some stewards' undoubted fear of isolation after eight weeks of struggle. But the way to overcome that is not through a retreat on the hours issue, but by establishing real unity between the different factories.

There is an urgent need for a joint committee of the occupied factories to bring together the workers bearing the brunt of the struggle and to send delegations throughout the country to campaign for support.



Pupils and teachers fight the system

STRIKES and demonstrations by London schoolchildren this week and last have spotlighted the growing discontent by pupils at the undemocratic nature of the education system. The strikers, organised by the Schools Action Union, are demanding:

- An end to caning.
- No compulsory uniform.
- More pupil participation in the drawing up of school rules.
- No victimisation.
- An end to the undemocratic, authoritarian role of head teachers.

Support for the demonstrations has come mainly from children in west and north-west London. Many joined at first out of sheer boredom but after several days of activity they had a deeper awareness of the causes of their indignation.

They are now demanding better conditions for teachers as well. They realise,

more clearly than the education authorities and the teachers' union, that overworked teachers under bad conditions cannot teach well.

Reaction from school authorities has been mixed. One headmistress of a Notting Hill girls' school has agreed to the setting up of a school council.

But at a nearby boys' school, the head called the police when 15 pupils struck to join last week's rally. They were brought back in a police van, questioned and canded.

The head called the police again the following day to remove girls from the playground who were encouraging boys to join the strike. The police questioned boys for names of strikers.

TWO HUNDRED people attended an enthusiastic Rank and File Teachers' conference in Birmingham last weekend.

The first session, Education in Capitalist Society, was introduced by Chanie Rosenberg, who showed how the needs of the capitalist system are implemented in the schools system. So ruling-class children are given a high level of literacy and those of the working class a low level training to command for the former, to submission for the latter.

She described how the potentially revolutionary forces in the schools, pupils and teachers, were struggling for democratic control.

A resolution was passed in a private session giving 'full support to those school students struggling, by direct action, to democratise schools' and for abolition of corporal punishment, detention and compulsory uniforms, and against any victimisation of pupils or teachers.

Chris Searle introduced the second part of the conference on The Role of the Socialist Teacher. He showed how the system forced teachers into an unnatural conflict in the classroom to the detriment of real education and the development of children's personalities.

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Black youths on trial

THE TRIAL of the Metro Four, four black youths from Notting Hill, began at the Old Bailey last week. It is the latest in a series of trials intended to intimidate London's black community.

They face charges of affray, assault and possessing offensive weapons. These arise from an incident, last May, outside the Metro Youth Club in Notting Hill. Two youths were arrested outside the club by police who claimed that they were in possession of an offensive weapon. The

youths ran into the club, where other members, tired of continual police harassment, decided to barricade the doors, to prevent the arrests.

Siege

Police reinforcements from all over London soon arrived and surrounded the Metro. Meanwhile the youths inside had telephoned lawyers, social and community workers and others to witness

the attack they felt was imminent.

At 1am, after a four-hour siege, the police promised that they would not arrest anyone if the youths came out. But as soon as the youths left the club, two were arrested.

When the crowd protested, the police waded in with truncheons drawn, to 'disperse' them. A Socialist Worker photographer who attempted to photograph the attack had his camera smashed by the police.

PICKET LINES

BEXLEY: The lockout at the Erith works of GEC Osram is now entering its fifth week. The 200 employees, mainly women, are demanding equal pay and shorter hours in line with the national engineering claim. In support, the local district of the AUEW has called for a national strike of all members employed by GEC/AEI.

Wenesta's, also in Erith, have settled for shorter hours and an increase of £3.20 on the basic. At Vickers, Crayford and Dartford, discussions have begun on a first management offer of £2.25, while at Sorex Elevators, Erith, there are one-day lightning strikes in protest at a meagre offer of £1.50 with a one-year wage standstill clause.

WOLVERHAMPTON:—500 maintenance workers at the Goodyear factory struck last week to demand parity with production workers and to push for the main points of the national engineering claim. The whole factory has been closed, with 4000 other workers laid off.

OSSETT: Workers at Woodhead Springs have been sitting in for more than a week after an attempt by management to force them from the factory by closing down the furnaces. They had previously been imposing sanctions over the demand for a £25-a-week minimum and for equal pay.

Last Friday the stewards at the factory convened the first-ever meeting with stewards from the other factories of the combine at Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds.

WOLVERHAMPTON:—Workers at M C Hives have won an important victory in their fight for union recognition. Now in the 10th month of an official AUEW strike, they have ensured that one of the firm's main customers will now black Hives' work.

NORWICH: Workers at Laurence Scott and Electromotors have returned to work after being locked out since before Easter. The management have now been forced to make an offer which boosts wages, gives two extra days holiday, and involves moves towards equal pay. A guaranteed 90 per cent efficiency rating will undermine a previous productivity deal.

CLYDEBANK:—Five thousand hourly-paid workers at Singers came out on strike in support of the engineers' national claim at the beginning of this week after rejecting a management offer of £2.50 to £3.25. In return the company was demanding the freezing of bonus payments. Singers is the first major factory to take action in the Glasgow district, where 50 claims are pending and where there are 300 engineering factories.

HULL: Humber's first sit-in strike in defence of jobs followed an announcement by BOCM Silcock, part of the giant Unilever group, that its Hull and Silvertown mills were to be closed with a loss of 350 jobs.

Four pickets arrested

POLICE were called in by the management of the Caterpillar tractor factory at Glasgow to try to break the picket line during the fourth week of the 'pay and hours' strike.

The pickets have been allowing only trade union members into the works. Last Tuesday 200 pickets found police on the scene, breaking the picket line to allow in non-unionists. Four pickets were arrested, including AUEW convenor Bob Carroll, who was held in jail for a day and later charged with assaulting three policemen.

The workers won a victory the following day by calling all 1400 strikers on to the picket line. The firm sent all staff workers home on full pay.

On Friday only two men voted to end the strike.

BARRICADES RISE AGAIN AFTER ATTACK ON PUB

BELFAST: Eight people were killed last weekend in the bloodiest fighting to hit Northern Ireland in many weeks. The recent lull ended as barricades were built in many parts of the city.

The events were triggered off by an explosion outside a Catholic pub in Ballymurphy. As people fled from the pub, where they had been watching the England v Germany football match on television, they came under fire from the nearby Protestant Springmartin district. Three Catholics were killed.

The British Army took no action to stop this onslaught at first. It was only when the local sections of both wings of the IRA started returning fire that the army moved in 'to separate the two sides'.

Its main aim seems to have been to disarm the defenders rather than the attackers. This is certainly the belief of the people of Ballymurphy.

It is a belief strengthened by the distorted account the army give of the bombing, claiming there was no evidence the bomb was planted deliberately, even though many witnesses saw three men running away just before the explosion and though the shooting of those fleeing the

pub indicated a carefully prepared attack.

The evidence is that the army's aim was not so much to stop the fighting as to use it as an excuse to tighten its own grip.

Most people in the Catholic working-class districts, such as Ballymurphy, do not clearly see this.

But they do know that if they allow the British Army to disarm the local sections of the IRA, then they will be subject to unprovoked attacks from Protestant extremists. That is why they have once again been building up barricades and supporting attacks on British Army posts.

The long-term problems of Northern Ireland will only be solved when Protestant workers begin to understand what sections of the Catholics already accept—that only a united working-class movement can deal with the growing economic and social problems of all workers, regardless of religion.

But in the meantime, socialists in Britain have to support the right of the Catholics to defend themselves and to fight to throw out the army of our own Tory government.

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