

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

£: BIG BOOST TO PRICES

Big pay fight hits sites

BUILDING WORKERS throughout the country joined the great pay battle on Monday. They are demanding a basic rate of £30 for a 35-hour week and an extra week's holiday in the summer.

While 60 selected sites were shut, tens of thousands of other building workers demonstrated their support with mass rallies and marches in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Merseyside, London and elsewhere. Sites not yet called out stopped for day and half day token strikes.

The message was hammered home that the present low basic wage of £20 a week—and most building workers have to survive on that throughout the winter when no overtime is available—is not good enough.

Nor are the present appalling conditions in the industry. While the housing shortage is pushing building profits to an all time high, building workers have to put up with an accident rate even higher than in the mines.

A worker is killed on a building site in Britain every working day of the year.

Soaring prices

The use of the 'lump'—labour only sub-contracting—and the blacklist to prevent union organisation makes resistance at the site level difficult. UCATT, the biggest of the building unions, claims only 40 per cent of the total work force. There are as many building workers on the 'lump' as hold union cards.

Figures released by the Department of Employment prove that the usual Tory lie that high wages cause high prices holds no water in this industry. Last year while house prices were soaring by 20 per cent or more labour costs for the industry fell.

The 60 sites on strike this week will be joined by another 60 next week and the week after.

The Tories and big business, having lost out to the miners, the railwaymen and the dockers, would love to restore their fortunes by inflicting a defeat on the builders. It is up to the rest of the trade union movement to stop that happening.

'Return to the sender'

THE TORY GOVERNMENT has effectively wiped out whatever real gains workers have won from recent wage increases by allowing the pound to 'float' on the international money markets.

Floating the pound is just one way of devaluing the price of sterling against other currencies. The general view in the City and among foreign

bankers is that before long the pound will have been devalued by an average of 10 per cent.

Devaluation meant a big boost to prices and the cost of living under Labour in 1967. It will mean the same under the Tories in 1972.

At present the cost of living is rising by nearly 7 per cent a year. But with the 'Fair Rents' Bill, big price increases threatened by the nationalised industries, high railway and bus fares, and the end of the Confederation of British Industry 'price restraint', the rate of increase in the cost of living seems bound to rise to between 8 and 10 per cent later this year.

Devaluation will probably add another 2 to 3 per cent to that figure.

This latest devaluation may put up prices, particularly of imported foods and consumer goods, even more than in 1967 because overseas sterling area countries—mainly in the so-called Commonwealth—will probably not devalue in step with the pound this time.

Taking all these factors together, and allowing for the beginnings of cost increases in anticipation of entry into the Common Market next January and the imposition of Value Added Tax shortly after, it appears likely that the cost of living will be rising at an annual rate of about 10 to 13 per cent in six months time.

Such a deluge of price increases around the corner makes nonsense of many of the wage settlements covering the coming 12 or 18 months now being signed by trade union leaders. Under these agreements many millions of workers are now faced with the prospect of a sharp cut in their real wages and in their entire standard of living.

To keep ahead of the likely increase in the cost of living over the next year and to make up for the 7 per cent rise last year, trade unionists need (after tax and stoppages) pay rises of about 18 per cent—or close to 25 per cent in gross pay.

Treachery

It is against this background that the recent talks between TUC chiefs and the CBI and the Tories must be judged.

The Tory strategy is quite clear: to use the good offices of Vic Feather and the TUC leaders to get agreement on a new incomes policy. This is another way of saying get the unions to agree to a 'voluntary' wage freeze.

To agree to talk under these circumstances is sheer treachery, particularly at a time when a concerted push by the entire labour movement could clear the Tories out of office entirely.

Over the next few weeks we can expect a growing alliance between the TUC chiefs and the Tories. We may expect to be told that the 'national interest' demands it.

We may also be told that, in return for collaboration, the Tories will put the Industrial Relations Act into cold storage. Above all we may expect to be told that co-operation is the only way to prevent an outright statutory wage freeze.

The organised labour movement must reject these suicidal arguments.

The 'national interest' can't control the increase in the cost of living. It can't provide jobs for the unemployed. It can't prevent the elderly and the lowest paid from leading lives of squalid poverty.

The new Tory offensive against working people can only be defeated as part of a mass struggle to kick the Tories out and to build a real socialist alternative.



SACK THREAT TO WEMBLEY ENGINEERS

'WE'RE sending 'em back'—that was the attitude of workers at Stanmore Engineering, Wembley, this week when they received dismissal notices by recorded delivery post. They have been occupying the factory in support of a pay claim and were instructed to leave the

works on Friday by a court order. Now they have been told by post of their dismissal because management has decided to close the plant and move the machinery.

Picture: MIKE COHEN (Full report page 11)

£: full report page 7

WORLD NEWS

BRIEFING

Russian police arrest anti-Stalinist critic

by Ian Birchall

RUSSIAN police arrested Pyotr Yakir, a well-known critic of the regime, last week. Yakir is the son of General Yakir, who was shot in 1937. He was himself deported at the age of 14 as a member of the family of an 'enemy of the people' and spent 17 years in a prison camp.

He has been associated with the opposition publication *Chronicle of Current Events* and with various human rights groups. He has continued his outspoken opposition despite numerous searches of his home and threats from the police. In January police told him that only respect for his father prevented him being arrested.

Yakir's various articles and statements have been directed above all at the threat of the revival of Stalinist practices and even the rehabilitation of Stalin himself.

In March 1969 he sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party demanding that

criminal proceedings be opened against Stalin. He argued that if people could be rehabilitated after they were dead they could also be prosecuted.

Many of Yakir's criticisms seem to be basically liberal. In January he signed a letter to the United Nations asking for support against the conviction of Vladimir Bukovsky. Often too he quotes Khrushchev's criticisms of Stalin, though it is not clear how far this is a purely tactical device.

But some of his statements probe deeper into the history of Russian society. In a statement in 1969 he commented that the Russian authorities are still not honest about their own history:

'For some reason there is not enough objectivity to

permit telling the truth about the major political leaders of the first decade of Soviet power. It would, after all, be possible, without violating the proper bounds of party discussion, to say honestly of various persons that they did not organise terroristic actions, did not engage in espionage, and did not sprinkle broken glass into foodstuffs. . . .

'But the great Civil War services of the People's Commissar for National Minorities, J V Stalin, remain with us to this day, alongside the unrelieved wrecking activities of the then People's Commissar for the Armed Forces and Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, L D Trotsky.'

Yakir's arrest came in the same week as the circulation in Moscow of a leaflet denouncing poverty in Russia. It says: 'The working people of the Western countries have achieved their high living standards and ample political freedoms through struggle, the tried and tested way being strike and demonstration.'

A HUNDRED and fifty people attended a meeting of solidarity with Spanish students held in London and sponsored by the National Union of Students last Friday. One speaker, a Spanish student, told how his fellow students were fighting back against the so-called educational reforms. Madrid medical students had been on strike for eight months.

A speaker from the Workers' Commission described the big struggles in the working class. Though strikes are illegal, Spain has the second highest strike rate in the world.

The need for concrete international co-operation was stressed. Spanish car-workers are already in touch with Fiat workers in Italy, and at the meeting a national official of the white collar union, ASTMS, pledged to help workers in multi-national companies to make contact.

AFRICAN students expelled from South Africa's University of the North have staged a second mass walkout after finding on readmission that 22 of their leaders, including South African Student Organisation militant Tiro had not been allowed back in.

The African University at Fort Hare has been closed a week before the end of term so that, in the words of the white rector, 'the students can cool down'.

Police dispersed a demonstration of striking African secondary school kids at Pietersburg with tear gas. 15 have been remanded under the Riotous Assembly Act, and 580 sent home. The 10 school kids arrested seven weeks ago after striking at Iltlotleng Secondary School have just been released with the threat of immediate rearrest if they misbehave again.

ITALY: HOW FAR TO THE REVOLUTION?

BY ANY of several tests it is clear that Italian society has entered a pre-revolutionary crisis, which is likely to get still more intense in the months ahead. But the potential forces for social revolution are in almost complete disarray.

Few countries in Western Europe offer such a picture of growing economic, social and political chaos as Italy. As in Britain and other advanced capitalist societies, the Italian working class is faced with a deadly combination of rising unemployment and rapid inflation.

by John Palmer

Unemployment is well over a million and is still rising after three years in which industrial production has been virtually stagnant.

Stagnating home and foreign markets have compelled Italian industry to 'rationalise'. Productivity deals and closures have contributed to the tide of redundancies. Several of Italy's industrial giants, such as the chemical group Montedison and tyre manufacturers Pirelli, which is linked with Dunlop, are in bad trouble.

CLAIMS

Poverty and unemployment are worst in the 'Mezzogiorno'—the backward south. The cost of living is rising at more than seven per cent a year and shows all the signs of getting worse.

It is against this background that the Italian working class is preparing its annual wages battles this summer and autumn. Substantial wage claims have been put in by the three trade union confederations.

But if it were only for the union leaderships the Italian employers would have little to fear. The CGIL (Communist Party led) and the UIL (Social Democrats) have already made it clear that they do not want to 'unduly embarrass those sectors of

Italian industry with genuine problems'.

The 'hot autumn' of 1969 is the name given to the wave of militant strikes and occupations which paralysed Italian industry that year. Significantly, the movement was unofficial and in many factories found itself in headlong conflict with the trade union leaderships—notably the 'communists'.

Italian businessmen and financiers are worried that this year the unofficial movement will be beyond the control of the union and left party officials and will bring the country to a complete halt. However, it must be said that the confusion and lack of organisation in the unofficial factory-based movement is a serious and possibly fatal weakness.

The implications of a wave of factory occupations and military strikes later this year become even more explosive when the total crisis in Italian ruling-class politics is taken into account. Italy has been without effective government for several years and the recent general election seems to have put the prospect of stable government in Rome even further off than ever.

Prime Minister Andreotti has now succeeded in forming a government. But this is a shaky structure which will hardly survive a hot autumn and in any case will have to depend for parliamentary survival



The riots at Reggio Calabria: other spontaneous uprisings will not be far away.

on at least an 'understanding' with the recently strengthened fascist party, MSI.

The ruling class is basically divided about the way forward. A majority, particularly in medium and smaller businesses, are adamant that only a 'strong right-wing course can save Italy from the unions and bolshevism' (to quote one Liberal Party leader).

But many larger Italian industrialists and financiers and an important section of the Christian Democrats believe that the cutting edge of the threat from the working class can best be blunted by co-opting the Communist Party into government.

One frequently hears in Italy how 'respectable' the Communist Party has become. During the election it preached

more of 'law and order' than almost anyone, except the fascists.

The ruling class are impressed by its moderation and administrative efficiency in provinces such as Emilia Romagna where the Party rules locally and even receives funds from local businessmen. The 'opening to the left' tacticians believe that to bring the Socialists and Communists into the government is the best insurance against possible social revolution.

ARMY

Another factor in favour of the Italian establishment is the chaos and ultra-left adventurism that characterises much of the politics to the left of the Communists. Groups supporting individual terrorism have helped the Communist Party game by driving workers away from the revolutionary left.

If constitutional methods fail to produce a credible government, able to deal with the workers this summer and autumn, there are those in the army and elsewhere (not to mention their friends in the fascist ranks) who will look for other 'solutions'. The links between sections of the armed forces top brass and the Greek Colonels and the MSI is now well-documented.

This all adds up to a crisis of leadership in the ranks of the workers' movement. The outcome of the impending battles in Italy this year must also influence the course of the struggle in Britain and other West European states. Time is not on the side of the Italian left.

Arab guerrilla groups still in disarray

by Ted Crawford

THE LEFT in the Middle East suffered a terrible defeat in September and October 1970 with the crushing of the guerrillas by King Hussein of Jordan. This defeat was so thorough that it seems that all the old organisations are more or less finished, and the coming of a new revolutionary wave will take a long time.

But such a new movement will be very different from the old because it will have learnt some important lessons.

The most important of the guerrilla organisations was El Fatah, which has now suffered a real decline. It was always the most powerful group in Jordan.

The terrorist group called the Black September Movement, although nominally independent, is working under its political control. This group was responsible for the assassination of the Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi Tal.

But such tactics are a sign of weakness not strength. Even if they managed to kill Hussein it would now make little difference—though in 1970 such an action backed by the people would have had very different results.

Israelis have destroyed most of its underground network by torture and terror and the group itself has split.

But before splitting it set up an all-Arab organisation called the Socialist Arab Workers Party. This was significant— for it recognised that a movement of Palestinians alone was incapable of further progress.

But it is hard to tell if the new party has any real strength. When the Popular Front split, Habbash kept the organisation's paper, and his group has claimed responsibility for the killings at Lydda Airport.

But the other side of the split, which regarded hijackings as a diversion, appears to have a majority in the new party. Both groups claim to be marxists.

Today all these groups are measured in hundreds rather than thousands. Many thousands of militants are demoralised and have dropped out of political activity.

The Lydda Airport killings are a sign of such desperation.

Meanwhile Israel will use guerrilla activities as an excuse to try to occupy

part of South Lebanon, where it would like to control the water of the Litani river.

The only chance for the Palestinians is the mobilisation of the masses in all the Arab lands to overthrow their own governments. It is now more and more clear that this can only be done under the leadership of a working-class party. For all their verbal marxism none of the Arab groups has yet tried to build such a party.

IS Books

YOUR last chance to come to IS bookshop is a BIG BOOK SALE on Saturday 8 July, 11am-1pm, 2-4pm, for we are now closed to retail sales until the opening of our new bookshop.

But we will continue to expand the mail order side of the business, and a new expanded booklist is available on request. IS branches will be able to arrange for the collection of bulk orders.

Write to: IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

RUSSIA is helping South Africa build a new £20 million blast furnace at Vanderbijlpark. Modern Russian machines are being used for specialised welding work at the Works of ISCOR—the South African state-owned iron and steel monopoly.

When completed next May the iron blast furnace will increase ISCOR's iron production by more than a million tons a year.

DESPITE Nixon's visit to Mao, Chiang Kai-shek still has friends in the United States. The Taiwan (Formosa) Government Information Office has released the text of a poem sent to Chiang by an admirer in Memphis, Tennessee. It includes the immortal lines:

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek inspires poetry and songs
A toast to you Generalissimo to correct some wrongs
I hope you may overcome your foes
Who have surrounded and impounded a multitude of ugly woes.

MORE setbacks for Uruguay's urban guerrillas. Twenty-four Tupamaros have been arrested, including seven doctors, among them some of the best-known medical men in the country.

Socialist Worker

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

The swindle of 'incomes policy'

HOW would you like a £50 a week increase? Not a wage of £50, an INCREASE of £50. That is what Mr Richard Marsh of British Rail, Mr Derek Ezra of the Coal Board and the rest of the bosses of nationalised industries plus top civil servants and judges like Sir John Donaldson of the NIRC, got last week.

Not bad you might have thought. But the top bureaucrats' union, the Institute of Professional Civil Servants, is not at all pleased. It thinks the increase is pretty miserable if not downright mean.

Incredible as it may seem, they have a point—provided you think in terms of government pay increase norms. The increase (£1,500 per year) is 18 per cent, but since there was no increase in 1970 or 1971 this averages at 6 per cent a year, which is a very poor increase with inflation at its present rate.

All of which points to the inequity—the swindle—of 'incomes policies' under capitalism. Suppose the 'norm' for pay rises is fixed at 10 per cent—an improbably high figure. A worker drawing £20 a week has a maximum fixed for his increase of £2 a week. A man getting £413 odd per week—that's the rate now drawn by that ex-Labour Party politician Mr Marsh—has his maximum increase fixed at £41 a week.

It is an obvious enough point when you think about it, but every militant needs to hammer it home on every possible occasion. Any incomes policy under capitalism necessarily and inevitably **increases** inequality.

Any incomes policy under capitalism hits the lower paid workers most of all. That is what Wilson's incomes policy did, that is what the incomes policy Heath is now trying to foist on the TUC will do. Where incomes are very unequal, as they are inevitably under capitalism, an incomes policy does not **freeze** inequality, it **increases** inequality.

Yes, all right, say many workers, but what about taxes? Most of these big increases to people like Marsh and Donaldson go straight back to the tax man. Not true. This myth, which has been very successfully peddled by Labour and Tory alike, can be exploded by the government's own figures.

More favourable

In February 1970, the government publication Economic Trends produced a table showing the proportion of income paid in tax on earned income from £11 a week to £60 a week and over. It showed that a man with a wife and two children earning £24 a week (including family allowances) paid 34 per cent of income—one third—in taxes, direct and indirect taken together.

Men with the same domestic commitments earning £60 a week and over—all of them together that is, including those earning hundreds of pounds a week—paid 33 per cent of income in taxes—one third. In fact the group paying the highest proportion of income in taxes—41 per cent—were the very poor with £11 a week or less. Since then Barber's Budgets have made their situation still more favourable to the highest paid.

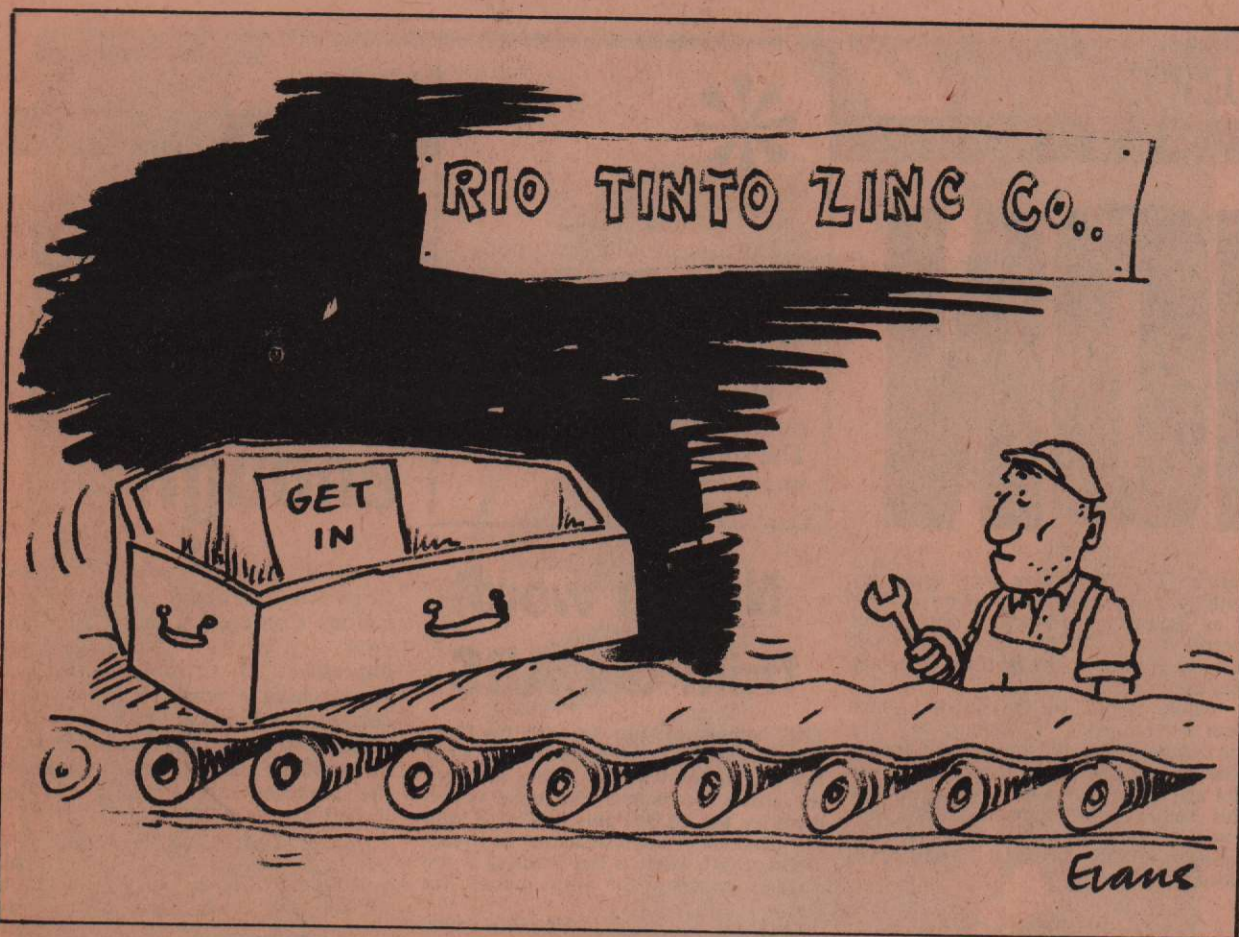
It is worth reminding ourselves again that the richest 10 per cent of the population of Britain own 83 per cent of all wealth and the richest 1 per cent own 42 per cent of all wealth.

No incomes policy will restrict the concentration of wealth into the hands of a tiny minority of profiteers. Quite the opposite. By checking wage increases it will increase their wealth. Even if, as was done during the war and for a time under the Attlee Labour government, there is a legal 'freeze' on dividend increases, it will not hurt the rich.

Quite the reverse—it will lead to an enormous growth of capital gains, a tremendous rise in the value of shares in expectation of a big pay-out later on.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Tory government is now pushing hard to draw the TUC into a new incomes policy fraud including, if possible, compulsory arbitration on wage claims. The floating pound—backdoor devaluation—makes it all the more urgent for them.

Prices, especially food prices, are being given another upward push. Value-added tax—another highly inflating measure—is coming in. So are 'Fair Rents'. In the interests of defending our living standards let alone increasing them, this incomes policy swindle must be defeated.



COTTONS WARS

Border war

STUDENTS and staff at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry are considering reporting the college authorities to the Race Relations Board following a decision to refuse admission to a student called D Purdie.

Mr Purdie, who holds qualifications normally regarded as equivalent to English A levels, applied for a BA course in the Town Planning Department of the Polytechnic in February. He was interviewed in April by two members of the staff who regarded him as 'having high potential' and recommended giving him a place.

The application was rejected by the Registrar and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science because Mr Purdie was ... a Scotsman. A letter of explanation from the Registrar to the staff members who interviewed Mr Purdie says:

'While he may indeed have a high potential and may well prefer to be educated in England, I am afraid that I do not see that any sort of case has been made for giving him preference over English candidates ... However, my main reason for refusing his application lies in the fact that the admission of Mr Purdie could mean the exclusion of an English student.'

SAY that again? Headline in Monday's Times: 'Scots businessman shot dead by German police suspected of guerrilla links'. Yes, but what had the businessman done?

Cpl punishment

LANCE-CORPORAL Albert William Sole, serving in Northern Ireland with the 1st Battalion the King's Regiment, was on leave in Blackburn when he bumped into Mr Mohammed Ariff in the street. Mr Ariff apologised, even though it was not his fault.

Whereupon Corporal Sole punched him on the face and told him: 'We don't want you here.' The police told Blackburn magistrates last week that when they questioned Sole he said:



Jane-Anne Pepler: before ...



... and after: see Blackballed

'Yes, I belted him.'

Sole had previous convictions for assault causing actual bodily harm and possessing an offensive weapon in a public place. The magistrate, fining Sole £20, said the assault was disgraceful and added that he did not understand how a soldier stationed in Belfast could attack anyone like Mr Ariff.

We would have thought the Corporal had had plenty of practice. But Mr Ariff can seek consolation in the fact that, painful though his face is, at least he wasn't beaten with his head in a plastic bag.

NICE work if you can get it department: Legal fees of all kinds since the Industrial Relations Court came into effect amount to something in the region of £250,000.

And a Bill now going through parliament will increase pensions for a prime minister from £4000 a year to £7500 (an 87.5 per cent increase), a Lord Chancellor from £6250 to £8500 (36 per cent) and a Speaker from £5000 to £6500 (30 per cent).

Memo to ambitious readers: you have only to hold these offices for one day to qualify for the full pension.

Gamekeeper

NOW it can be told: on the Friday of the great events at Chobham Farm, when it looked as though the three dockers' stewards would be jailed, the minority union concerned, the National Amalgamated Stevedores

and Dockers, held an emergency meeting and declared the strike by its members official.

As soon as the news became known, NASD officials received a phone call from none other than V Feather, who bellowed at them that they had gone out of their minds and were deliberately helping to provoke a trade union confrontation with the government.

Interesting, not only for the light it sheds on our Vic's politics but because the NASD is not a member of the TUC, having been expelled back in the 1950s for alleged 'poaching' of TGWU members.

Which proves that Vic, whatever his other deficiencies, at least has the ability to communicate with the dead.

Black balled

IT is not unusual for the skin of people with a kidney disease to turn a darker shade. But it could only produce personal abuse and unhappiness for a young girl in South Africa.

Jane-Anne Pepler, a 17-year-old schoolgirl from Beoni, was a clearly defined 'White' before an operation on her adrenal glands to ease a weight problem caused by her having four kidneys instead of two.

Her skin has turned almost black since the operation. Result: she is spurned by other Whites and is humiliated by fellow school students. Jane-Anne says: 'I have learnt the hard way that the colour of a person's skin doesn't really count or make them any different inside.'

Her mother is less philosophical. Her daughter's life is ruined, she says, and adds: 'It is particularly embarrassing for us because we are a purely Afrikaans family and strong Nationalists. We believe in White supremacy.'

Sorry, Jane-Anne, you'll just have to get a different bus to school ...

On spec

A COUNCIL tenant in Hemel Hempstead is clearly impressed by the Tories' green-light policies for land and housing speculators. He agreed to buy his three-bedroom terraced house from the Tory council in March for £8150.

Two weeks ago he advertised it for sale in the local paper—at £11,400. He stood to make a £3000 profit with out laying out a penny, for the deal with the council had not been finalised and he hadn't paid the original £8150.

This piece of private enterprise was too much for the new Labour council, which has cancelled the deal.



Telephone
01 739 9043
editorial

LIVELIEST LETTERS ON THE LEFT

ABORTION

I AGREE with the reasons for abortion given in Wendy Henry's article (17 June). However it is also essential to point out that there is immediate danger from the 'environmentalists' and 'conservationists' (mentioned in the same issue, The Effluent Society, by Ken Montague) who with us recognise the need for freely available abortion.

But these people are in favour of abortion for exactly the wrong reasons. These 'environmentalists' think there are too many people on the earth and fear that natural resources will soon run out. They think abortion is one very handy way to solve this problem.

What these people do not recognise is that, as Ken Montague says, 'Industrial capitalism is directly responsible for pollution, for the contamination of the sea with industrial and nuclear waste.' They ignore the fact that it is the people of the industrialised countries who, under capitalism, are forced to use 20 to 30 times more of the world's resources than Indians or South Americans.

These 'environmentalists' imply that it is the poor who are producing too many children and that over-population—not capitalist exploitation—is the environmental issue. They imply that poverty and starvation and inadequate housing will be solved by population control.

The very rich people who support and fund these campaigns find abortion, and compulsory sterilisation, very convenient to their ends. It is not the white and rich capitalists who are threatened with commercial and/or governmental fertility control, but it is the working class, poor people and especially, black people.

The big talking point...

We must make very sure not to let these 'environmentalists' dictate fertility programmes for their own purposes. At this moment I strongly suspect that many immigrant and working-class women in England are being granted abortions only with compulsory sterilisation at the same time (which is also medically unsound). Worse, I suspect many poor and black women here and elsewhere are being sterilised without their consent or knowledge.

We must make sure that free and safe contraception and abortion become available to all women so that they may control their own bodies—not so that businessmen and politicians can dictate these decisions for their own profit.—NANCY HELLEBRAND, London NW3.

Piffling

AS ONE who is growing rapidly convinced of the rightness of the socialist cause your article on abortion chilled and depressed me.

Human life is sacred and it is murder to take the living foetus from the womb whether in a back street illegal operation or in a legally operated clinic.

If it was a case of choice between the life of the mother and unborn child then

perhaps one could have some sympathy with the practice but Wendy Henry justifies it on the piffling grounds of 'sex without worry', the notion that sex for the single woman is a sin or the fact that a woman may prefer a career to a baby.

I hold no brief for the churches, which your correspondent condemns, but they are concerned for the rights of the unborn child. I hope that too many socialists will not allow themselves to be identified with this demand for abortion—it can only damage their cause apart from its basic wrongness.—DONAL MAC AMHLAIGH Northampton.

Forced

YOUR excellent article on abortion missed one important point. Under socialism, although abortion would be free and available on demand, it would hardly ever be necessary.

In a society which really cared about people, reliable free contraception would be readily available to all. That would mean very few unwanted pregnancies anyway. And a woman who does become unintentionally pregnant would often like to have the baby if only she could afford it.

A better society would make sure she could afford it. The desperate housing shortage, high food prices, the daily worry about money—all have got worse and worse under capitalism. And these are the things that make many women decide to seek an abortion.

Abortion is a grim business. No woman really wants one. She is forced into it, not only by financial pressures but by social attitudes.

We must fight for better living conditions. But we must also show up the idea of the 'disgrace' of the unmarried mother or the woman who has 'too many' children for the hypocrisy that it is.

The shameful treatment handed out to women and children is another proof of how inhuman and cruel capitalist society is, and yet another reason to replace it by a society in which human happiness does matter.—VALERIE CLARK, London N8.

Prevention

WHILE I agree with free abortions I feel there should be more emphasis on preventing unwanted pregnancies than stopping them. The campaign should be for more free family planning clinics and advice bureaux.

Let's face it—a man can go into any hairdresser or chemist and get what contraceptive he wants, but a woman has to go to her doctor and explain why she wants to go on the pill or use any other method.

This should not be so and I feel that Women's Lib should put far more stress on these issues. After all, prevention is better than the cure.—TREVOR M SHAW, Nottingham.

Backslaps are not enough



Letters should be typed or written on one side of the paper only and must arrive not later than first post Monday.

Please try to keep to a maximum of 250 words. The shorter the letters, the more we can publish.

Now a word from the ABS

THE 'arguments' put forward by Carla Greene (BBC: The Greeks Have a Word For It, 20 May) would, if they had read the article, be viewed with some amusement by the 11,000 plus BBC staff who are members of the Association of Broadcasting Staff. What is less amusing is the obvious contempt of your journal for truth.

For the benefit of your readers who might otherwise be left with a very untrue picture of the trade union situation in the BBC, I point out the following:

1. The ABS is not a 'house union'. It is, and has been since 1946, a fully independent trade union. Since 1963 it has been affiliated to the TUC. Its membership is drawn from the BBC and other broadcasting organisations.

2. The ABS has no 'privileged position' in the BBC. As an 'industrial' union, it has negotiated bargaining rights for all categories of BBC staff.

3. Recruitment, contrary to Miss Greene's assertion, is a constant priority. ABS membership in many of the key job categories in the BBC is more than 70 per cent—in some almost 100 per cent. The main areas of non-membership are among secretarial and clerical grades. These are difficult areas for recruitment throughout industry.

4. Two of Miss Greene's statements rebound on each other. She contends that a 'real union' would not tolerate the use of short-term contracts. Yet it is the card holders of that named 'real union' who benefit most from the use of short-term contracts. The majority of them are dual card holders who want the continued privilege of mobility. The ABS, on the other hand, has been arguing with the BBC for years for a drastic reduction in the use of short-term contracts with the aim of protecting the interests and job security of its members.

5. The ABS was requested to back the ACTT's stand on the Lotus Eaters. It informed the BBC that any member who, for reasons of conscience, felt he could not accept an assignment of this nature would receive the full protection of the union. Its position was similar to that of several others of the entertainment industry unions on this issue.

6. ACTT's claim for recognition by the BBC is something that we have never been notified about officially. Our attitude is the same as that of the other TUC affiliated unions recognised by the BBC. We expect, in a field that we already organise effectively, to settle claims from other unions hoping to break in through the Bridlington principles accepted by all TUC affiliates.—D A HEARN, General Secretary, Association of Broadcasting Staff, London W1.

I WAS present at the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions Conference on 10 June and your report (17 June) gave an impression of extreme delicacy in approaching a sensitive topic. While correctly accentuating the positive statements made by a few delegates in pointing out the basic failures of the conference, the politics behind them was not mentioned.

While appreciating the dangers of seeming to be sectarian, I think it would have been in order to point out that what was missing both from the Liaison Committee's 'declaration' and the vast majority of the contributions was revolutionary politics.

The call from one or two delegates to learn the lessons of the Minority Movement was answered by one speaker who said that the mistake of that movement was precisely that it tried to organise as a minority within the wider movement. This points to the underlying conflict which dominated the day.

The Communist Party believes that the mass rank and file movement already exists, that it is just a matter of rallying the movement, with back-slapping 'conferences', behind the left social democrats.

The revolutionaries present were clear that reformist policies like these are bankrupt—although the few who spoke didn't say it in so many words.

We expect from Socialist Worker some analysis of events like this conference in political terms.—DAVE STRUTT (ASTMS), Edinburgh.

Did China get lost in the smog?

I WAS interested to see that Ken Montague's review article The Effluent Society (17 June) discussed the United Nations Stockholm Conference and managed to skirt very craftily around the intervention made by China.

As far as I recall the press reports, China very strongly made the point that 'capitalism is to blame' for pollution, and if the Algerians made the same point, that is hardly a reason to give them sole credit.

I believe it was also China that helped to try to bring the question of the bombing and defoliation in Vietnam on to the agenda in conjunction with several other countries.

I would be the last person to defend the ruling bureaucracy in China, but they will stay around even if you do ignore them.—BILL FAKES, London SW17.

Tenants need strong links

TOM BRADDOCK'S letter (17 June) criticises the International Socialists for not giving tenants an effective lead in fighting rents. This is less than accurate.

We of course condemn the Labour leaders for their collapse on the Housing Finance Bill and demand that Labour councils refuse to implement it, refuse to co-operate with the Housing Commissioners, and 'give full backing to tenants' movements in fighting rent rises' (the phrase Tom objects to).

However we also—and largely alone on the left—stress the building of the tenants' movement, the links with the trade union movement, building a national tenants' organisation, and preparing for a national rents strike to defeat the Tory plans.

These ARE fighting strategies to defend tenants from the Tory attacks and IS branches are making a major effort to build the tenants' movement in their areas.

Of course, at the same time we stress that there can be no 'fair rents' under capitalism. However unless we are in a situation of mass struggle, to advise individual tenants to suddenly cease paying ANY rent as Tom suggests would achieve little other than eviction!

Socialists must help build the tenants' movement and at the same time put forward their political alternatives. Only then can we talk about rent strikes and in the long run the abolition of rents.—HUGH KERR, IS Tenants Committee.

A RIGHT TO A LIFE

SHORTAGE of space prevents me going fully into the argument of when is a child not a child. However, very briefly, I believe that life begins at birth.

From the moment a baby is born it is capable of feelings. It can feel hungry, tired, happy, contented etc. Although it is very helpless it is no doubt a complete person, with the ability to think, move and breathe although it is very dependent on other people to satisfy its basic needs.

For a marxist a human being is something with consciousness, however elementary. At the time when abortion is still safe to be carried out the foetus has no such consciousness.

For Gloria Murphy to suggest (24 June) that my next step is to advocate euthanasia ('mercy killing') for old and lonely people is a grotesque piece of thinking. One of the reasons I am a revolutionary is that I believe that only with socialism can the problems of old age, loneliness, poverty and unwanted babies be completely solved.

But this doesn't stop me fighting for higher pensions, better housing, increased

wages nor will it stop me fighting for free abortions.

My main argument is that babies have a right to more than mere existence, they have a right to a life.

Women also have rights—the right to decide if she wants and can cope with a baby.

Both Ellen Reynolds and Gloria Murphy support free contraception. So do I. But even with this there are still going to be mistakes. And are we going to say to the women, men and children involved: 'You've made your bed, lie in it!'

The last point is that I myself am an unmarried mum. And am potty about my baby. But I've also had an abortion. I desperately wanted both babies, but realised that only with my second pregnancy was I in any way capable of providing a happy life for both myself and my baby.

I was one of the lucky ones who managed to scrape together enough money to ensure that two people didn't suffer needlessly. This is the right of all women, rich or poor, married or unmarried.—WENDY HENRY, Manchester 20.

Fleet St all at sea on floating £

THE £ was sent afloat and Fleet Street was left last week to flounder in a sea of its own confusion. The national newspapers who normally speak with one distorted voice were more than a little uncertain this time and discord was the result.

The consensus appeared to be that Barber had done well for Britain but that the unions had done badly by Britain.

This way the press had a field day at the expense of the unions while congratulating the Chancellor. Stories on 'massive wage settlements' and 'the inflationary spiral' abounded. Nowhere was there mention of record profits and peak dividends.

The Sun led the way in the inevitable clamour for an incomes policy with a front page opinion piece which demanded WAGES PACT NOW! and the Mail warned gravely SQUEEZE IF £ GAMBLE FAILS.

The Financial Times weighed in



RON KNOWLES' EYE ON THE PRESS

with a leader which laid blame for the pound's plight on the 'threat of a docks' strike'.

IT IS RIGHT TO FLOAT THE POUND intoned the headline on the main leader of the Times—and no one seemed to disagree. But neither did any of the papers appear to appreciate the inconsistency of blaming the unions and their pay claims for forcing the Chancellor to do the right thing.

If he has done the right thing

under pressure from the unions, surely the unions should exert more pressure to ensure that the government is right more often?

True to form, the Express was telling us across its front page £ FLOATING PROUD. The story beneath this chauvinistic slogan explained how the brave British Barber had dotted the dirty dagoes of Europe in the eye and put paid to their speculating.

Far less space and prominence was given all round to the news that bosses of nationalised industries, judges, top civil servants, and other members of the impoverished establishment were to get rises of about £50 a week.

It was left to the Guardian to introduce a note of leader column sanity:

'The government must surely now begin to realise that it cannot convincingly ask for restraint if its own conduct is unrestrainedly partisan: a large rise in rents planned

for October and the enormous cuts in high tax rates—especially on unearned income—planned for next April will not win a restrained response from the unions. Wage earners will not be the keener to respond to any call for restraint when they see their chairmen getting pay increases half as big again as their own annual income...

SPORT has reached a new dimension in the columns of the Sun. On Wimbledon opening day the Sun plumbed new depths in its nudity obsession by publishing a series of sketched impressions of Wimbledon women's champion Evonne Goolagong as she would appear playing tennis the nude.

Now the Sun is inviting readers to ask for more nude studies of top sporting personalities. Entering into the spirit of the thing, this column invites readers to submit studies of Sun proprietor Rupert Murdoch as he would appear in the nude on hearing of a big circulation drop.



A cease-fire by the IRA, the possible release of more internees and a new voting system in elections—could this mean a hope for peace in Northern Ireland? Socialist Worker's Irish correspondent sounds a warning note, pointing to the underlying repression of the Six Counties state and the fact that Whitelaw, while showing the velvet glove, is in power to prop up British capitalism's domination of the province. There is no solution to the 'Irish problem' on a Six Counties basis, neither are there any short-cuts to a political solution for the working class, Catholic and Protestant, of the entire 32 Counties.

PEACE? IN A STATE BUILT ON VIOLENCE?

THE SIX-COUNTY state of Northern Ireland was born in repressive violence and has maintained itself by violence.

The way it came into being has ensured continuing discrimination and repression. An alliance of British Tories with Northern Irish landlords and capitalists, commanding the mass support of Northern Protestants, intent on defending privileges given them as a reward for loyalty and obedience, produced this state and its ideology.

Their weapons were the Orange Order and the Unionist Party, dominated by a single and intolerant political ideology, and by a single and bigoted religious persuasion.

In the years when the 'partition settlement' between Britain and Ireland was being shaped, the Northern rulers created a new tool to ensure that 'their' Six Counties were firmly under their control. The 'Special Constabulary', totally Protestant and Unionist, had—on an official estimate—49,000 members in 1922.

TERROR

This meant that about one in ten of all adult Protestant men had a gun and a uniform at home, and was paid a small sum to train regularly, to be prepared for action in all emergencies, to defend the institutions of the state and the private property of Unionist landlords and capitalists.

Since then the Special Constabulary has been reduced and eventually abolished—but not before it had chalked up a long record of murder and terror.

There was also the Royal Ulster Constabulary—again wholly dominated by Protestants and Unionists—and behind them both was the British Army, permanently stationed in the Six Counties and ready to deal with the situation when the RUC and the Specials were insufficient to put down opposition to the state.

The reason such force was necessary to defend the state was that one third of the population—Catholics and Nationalists—were opposed to its existence, or, at the least, opposed to its particular shape.

FIDDLED

To contain this one third, the Tory-Unionists passed a series of Acts (in a parliament where they faced no real opposition) designed to prevent the growth of any mass anti-Unionist movement.

This was the purpose of the notorious Special Powers Acts, of Public Order Acts, Criminal Justice Acts, and of successive 'gerry-manders'—fiddled elections—intended to maintain Protestant-Unionist control even in areas with a majority Nationalist population.

In every decade of the history of the Northern Ireland state (also of the 26-County state, it should be noted) there has been internment without trial. There have

Brian Trench reports from Ireland

been regular pogroms against the Catholic population in the working-class ghettos of the big towns. Catholics have been murdered—and officialdom has known and covered up.

The Unionist rulers have further ensured their control by discrimination in allocating jobs and houses. They have tied the Loyalist-Protestant workers to the state by giving them preferential treatment.

Through the Orange Order, the Masonic Order, the Apprentice Boys, the Royal Black Preceptory, and a host of other formal and informal institutions, the ruling class of the North has handed out its small favours to the Protestants, and has kept the Catholics in subjection.

CONFUSED

This discrimination has meant that Catholics are under-represented among the skilled trades, and over-represented among the unemployed. So when Willie Whitelaw announces generously that the new jobs in the Belfast shipyards will be allocated on merit alone, he can be confident that this will not upset radically the present balance of 20:1 in favour of the Protestants.

Discrimination penetrated—and still penetrates—every aspect of life in Northern Ireland. That is why the simple suspension or abolition of the Stormont parliament does not change the system.

Some anti-Unionists have concentrated attention on Stormont itself for so long that they see its suspension as the final destruction of the apparatus of discrimination and repression. Certainly, the introduction of direct rule demands new tactics. Certainly, the Protestants are confused and frustrated because Stormont—a focus of their feeling of superiority—has been removed. But the old pattern continues.

Whitelaw's style is radically different from that of the Unionist politicians. He is unlikely to parade with the Orangemen on 12 July to celebrate victories over the Catholics. He is unlikely to make speeches which insist that the purpose of the Northern administration is to protect the interests of Protestants.

But that alone does not bring changes. There are more than 100,000 guns in the hands of Protestants and others are being shipped in for the Loyalist extremists, with the British Army's full knowledge. Whitelaw seems prepared to end internment, but seems less willing to abolish the Special Powers Acts which allow internment without trial. The introduction of proportional representation at local elections is a reform from which Unionists have little to fear.

Whitelaw's new administration and new style represent the changing interests of the British and Irish ruling classes in relation to Northern Ireland. The profitable British investments in the South mean that the British capitalists have to find a way of accommodating the aspirations of the Catholic middle-class, North and South.

But the development is long-term. The start made with direct rule has not changed things overnight. The small trader, the farmer, the local government official still sees the problem as one of keeping down the 'rebels', the 'Papists', and the disloyal. The apparatus through which this is done still exists.

For years, middle-class Nationalists and moderates have moaned about the 'unequal chances' for Catholics. Recently they have campaigned for a society in Northern Ireland where everybody has equal

opportunity. Others have tried to knit together a unity of Catholics of all classes to press for reforms.

Even the Official Republican Movement has followed this kind of line in campaigning for full civil rights within the framework of the Six Counties.

Such liberal demands were always utopian. They are even more so in the context of Northern Ireland.

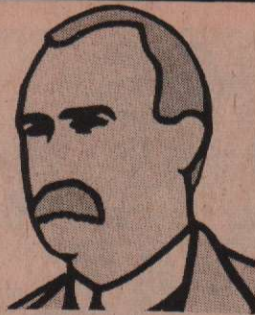
ALTERNATIVE

Discrimination, repression and religious sectarianism cannot be reformed out of existence. These patterns have become so much a part of everyday life that only fundamental social and political change—and change of ideas and attitudes—can root out the cancer.

The Catholic minority in the North cannot do it alone. The Loyalist population in the North is unlikely to abandon its loyalty to its 'own' state, as long as the only alternative is rule by the reactionary Catholic middle class.

It is only as part of a programme for socialist revolution throughout Ireland—a programme for working-class action—that the fight against discrimination and repression in the Six Counties acquires real force, and real chance of success.

'Political and social freedom are not two separate and unrelated ideas, but are two sides of the one great principle, each being incomplete without the other.'



JAMES CONNOLLY

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Noise: it's about time someone shouted

LAST MONTH a project engineer with Short Bros and Harland was awarded £27,000 damages for permanent hearing loss as a result of testing a 'Carl Gustav' shoulder-fixed anti-tank gun without proper ear protection.

Its 185 decibels left him with continuous ringing in the ears, sound distortion and a complete inability to hear people when they talk quietly.

This exposure to noise was at a massive level. But every day in most factories in Britain workers are being exposed to severe noise levels which will, over time, permanently damage their hearing.

An official warning that industrial noise was a serious hazard to the health of workers was first given in the 1908 annual report of the chief factory inspector. Since then the hazard has multiplied thousands of times both in scope and intensity. Absolutely nothing has been done.

So as late as January 1969 it was possible for the employers of a construction worker who had completely lost the hearing in his right ear thanks to two weeks of operating a Tornado cartridge fixing tool, to defeat an action for damages on the grounds that they were unaware of any hazards.

True, the Factory Inspectorate has recently brought out a code of practice on industrial noise levels. But as usual it counts on employers to comply of their own free will—very much an outside chance.

Industrial noise is a massive problem. A recent Swedish study concludes that three quarters of all workers in the heavy, medium and light engineering industries have their hearing damaged by the age of 50 and nine out of ten well before retirement.

Another study, from Salford University, found that in the typical noisy factory, it was possible to detect hearing loss among all workers by the end of the first year's employment. By the age of 40, a quarter of workers would be having difficulty with faint speech. And by 60 the average worker would be having trouble with normal speech.

Acceptable noise level for eight hours continuous exposure is 90 dBA (decibels adjusted to approximate the sensitivity of the human ear.) Patrick Kinnersly, a technical journalist who has pioneered investigation into noise, states that there can be little doubt that most factories have a noise level well in excess of 90dBA.

Anti-human

At a Metal Box factory in Reading there was a continuous level of noise of 110 dBA. (It is worth remembering that each successive three dBA increase represents a doubling of sound energy.)

In time the Metal Box noise level would mean certain and serious impairment of hearing for all employees. Yet absolutely no protection was worn.

A shop steward found out about the effects and approached the management, who immediately produced boxes of ear plugs, indicating that they were perfectly aware of the hazards but did not want to interfere with productivity.

Ear plugs, in general, are not an adequate solution. Protective ear muffs are more adequate. But the most effective solution is to design machinery for silence and safety. This is where private enterprise industry is totally anti-social and anti-human.

Depreciation of tool value is something that deeply concerns the businessman. Workers can simply be written off for free, particularly as most of them have no idea of the hazards involved.

The safe working period for most chain saws, for example, is seven minutes a week without ear protection. But instead of boosting silencers and putting in toothed rubber belts to replace gears, which would protect the worker's hearing, the only thing that receives adequate attention is the air cleaner which protects the engine.

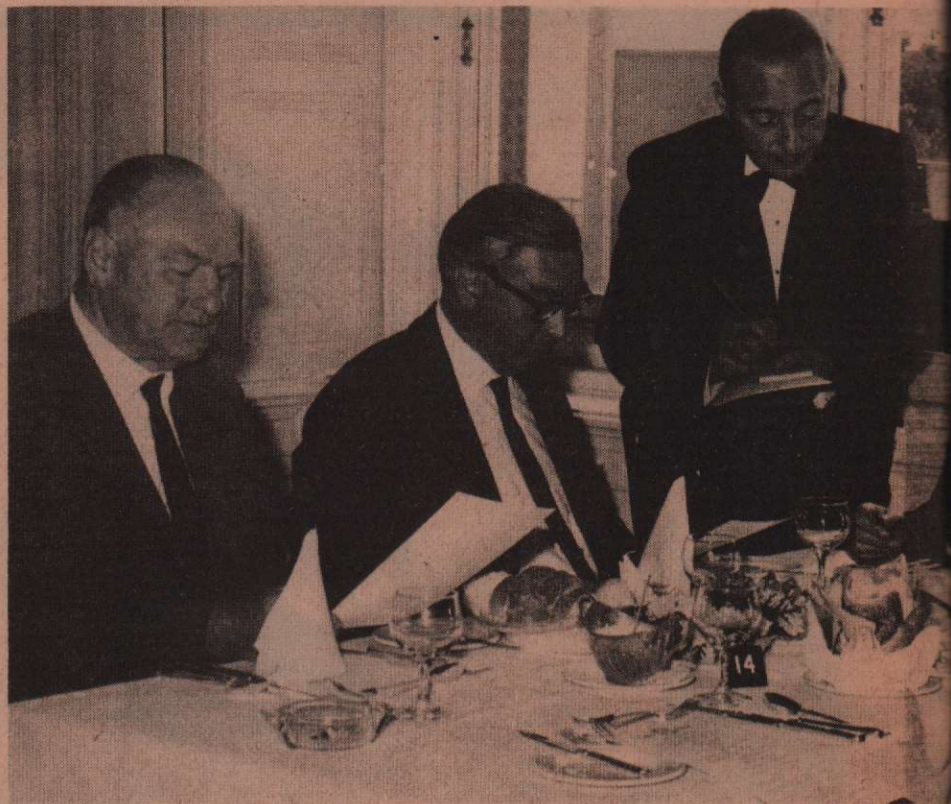
The Salford study underlines that next to nothing is being done on the problem.

This does not mean that nothing can be or could have been done. The necessary technology is undoubtedly there. As Patrick Kinnersly puts it: 'The assumption seems to be that if a senior executive loses the ability to hear a violin concerto, then that's tragic. But if it's a large group of workers, then it's either too bad or too expensive to do anything about it.'

It was in 1844 that Karl Marx wrote that when the worker sells his labour, he is a commodity whose whole life is ravaged. All that the latest occupational health research is doing in 1972 is to uncover new and desperately serious dimensions to that slavery. The point is to abolish it.

LAURIE FLYNN

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE TORIES FALL



Industrial militancy, rampant price increases, mounting hostility to the 'Fair Rents' scheme and now the threat of a major economic crisis—all this raises the real possibility that the Tory government could be forced from office this year. And that means the return of a Labour government. In this important article, the editor of International Socialism, our quarterly magazine, demolishes the idea that such a government could be won to 'socialist' policies and stresses the need for workers to build and maintain their own independent organisations.

KICK OUT the Tories? All right, but what is your alternative? Isn't it true that Labour will put over much the same policies as the Tories?

A very common answer given by many on the left, including Tribune and the Communist Party, is 'fight for the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies'.

Now one thing is quite certain. In the present circumstances kicking out the Tories does indeed mean the return of another Labour government.

There is no other possibility in the immediate future. A socialist alternative capable of fighting for power in the here and now has yet to be built.

In this situation, it is easy to see the appeal of a Labour government 'with socialist policies'.

There are a number of things wrong with the idea. First of all, 'socialist policies' can mean all

things to all men.

Michael Foot is all for it. Harold Wilson will certainly agree with it, if it becomes popular.

And even Roy Jenkins will subscribe to it if a little pressure is put on him.

After all, Ramsay MacDonald, Clement Attlee and Hugh Gaitskell have all, in their time, protested that they were for socialism.

To be of any value at all, a fight to commit the Labour Party to new policies has to be concerned with specific and concrete policies.

Value

Secondly, these policies need to be about things which really and vitally concern millions of working people, about housing and rents, about welfare, about inflation and wages and living standards, about health and education. Socialists need to remember that the vast majority of people approach political questions on a bread and butter basis.

There is more value in a fight in the unions to force the Labour Party to adopt some quite limited proposals which are in line with traditional Labour thinking—for example, a return to a universal and free health service—than to adopt generalities about 'socialism'.

Of course if we believed that Labour could deliver what it promised the case would be different. We do not believe any such thing.

Failure

Every one of the six Labour governments that have held office in Britain have been concerned to keep capitalism going. While most workers perhaps would not express it in these words, they understand the fact well enough.

What the bulk of Labour voters have expected from the party is a number of reforms which would be to the advantage of working people. They have not expected and do not expect Labour to turn society upside down so that the humble and meek inherit the earth. They have expected Labour to



It sounds like a good slogan—but it lets the Labour leaders off the hook...

better than the... No, we do not... pie in the sky of which nobody... Labour lefts and members believe...

In terms of... terms of attack... living standards... government will... the last only to... is worse.

Any governm... running capita... Labour is and a... committed in... forced to attack...

Just as He... abandon his pipe... to 'free ente... without state... industry so La... agrees to in opp... Heath is now do...

Then isn't it... to call for kick... if this is the pros... we say quite... believe and exp...

We are back... started with... revolutionary s... disgusted with L...

Attacks

Hundreds of... Labour support... the same light... see a way out.

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To prove it... they already... millions of tra... housewives who... everything, clin... that Labour is... do something fo...

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Wage freeze on the menu: George Brown dining and dining TUC leaders on the eve of Labour's 'incomes restraint' policy. A new Labour government will try the same unpalatable dish



Panic in high places as sterling comes under the hammer



DIRE WARNINGS about the 'threat to sterling' last week show that the Tories have failed in the task that they set themselves when they came to power two years ago. They have in no way solved the fundamental problems that have beset British big business for the past 10 years and more.

Their only consolation is that the Labour government before them could not solve these difficulties, and if a Labour government follows them, it is likely to be just as unsuccessful.

The need to expand the economy was repeatedly stressed during the 1964 election campaign. British industry, it was pointed out, had an appalling growth rate compared to that of various other countries. If only this were changed, then all sorts of goodies would be available for the mass of the population without any need for basic social change.

Labour in power found things quite different. When they tried to expand overall industrial production by more than a small amount, in 1964 and then again in 1966, they were rapidly faced with massive balance of payments crises.

The reaction of Labour ministers to these was to argue that imports had to be cut by the easiest means available—by holding down the real wages of workers.

To this end they imposed a wage freeze, abandoned promises to improve the welfare services, and pushed up taxes on consumer goods. Finally, they devalued the pound, which pushed up the price of imports—and so food prices, since half our food comes from overseas.

From the beginning of 1969 onwards, growing sections of workers, many without any previous traditions of militancy, began fighting back.

Previously the government had relied on right-wing trade union leaders to hold their members' wages down. This was no longer sufficient, and in desperation Wilson and Castle tried to exert direct pressure on the unions by 'In Place of Strife'.

But the Labour Party depends in the last analysis on the trade unions for money and votes. Its leaders got cold feet when they saw the hostility among trade unionists to this fore-runner to the Industrial Relations Act and beat a quick retreat.

Stagnate

When the Tories came to power in 1970 they faced no such inhibition.

They carried on with the work of the Labour government in cutting welfare services and pushing up rents. They deliberately allowed unemployment to rise, hoping that this would persuade workers to accept lower wages for more intensive work. And they introduced the Industrial Relations Act to weaken the resistance of workers on the shop floor.

The economy continued to stagnate. But it was argued that this was creating the conditions under which massive expansion would take place later.

About a year ago they began to shift the emphasis slowly. They took measures which, according to their well-paid advisors, would begin to put the economy into gear.

They felt they could do so safely as the defeat of the postal workers was inducing workers to accept lower wage increases, which did not keep up with the cost of living.

But all these calculations have now been upset. In part this has been because of the very anarchy of the capitalist system which the Tories so wholeheartedly uphold. Under this system the economic success of any government, Tory or Labour, depends upon its ability to persuade the few thousand big businessmen who control economic decision-making to do as the government wants.

The economy will expand only if these people are convinced that they will make adequate profits from it. If they are not convinced, then no

amount of pleading by the government will induce them to create more jobs and produce more goods.

They are not convinced. The decline in the machine tool industry shows this—for it shows new factories are not being opened and new plant is not being bought. There was a 40 per cent drop in orders for machine tools last year, resulting in the closure of many factories and the loss of 18,000 jobs.

In a desperate attempt to encourage businessmen to invest, the government is now offering to give away hundreds of millions of pounds in investment grants and tax relief.

Even so, calculations by bodies like the National Institute of Economic Research do not expect a growth in industry of more than 3½ per cent—only two thirds of the growth rate of most of British big business's major foreign competitors and a third of a country like Japan.

Yet this miserable growth rate now threatens to run right into the wall of a balance of payments crisis.

The comparative lack of investment by British business in the past means that when there is expansion foreign goods are often cheaper and better value than home products. Imports shoot up more quickly than exports.

When this happens, those who own wealth in Britain immediately try to protect themselves against possible devaluation of the pound, or even to make a fair profit from it, by moving their money overseas.

This makes the balance of payments situation even worse and increases the pressure for the government to try to solve it by cutting back imports. But there are only two ways in which they can do this—either by slashing workers' living standards or by ending economic expansion.

Sections of the capitalist press are arguing for what seems to be a third alternative—devaluation of the pound. But in fact this would mean that food prices would shoot up even more than now—especially since government policy is to set British food prices at the same level as those in the Common Market. So they are fixed in terms of foreign currencies and any reduction in the value of the pound will automatically force them up.

It is this background which explains the growing Tory panic.

They know only one way out of the crisis that confronts them: to hit out wildly at the organised working class.

But the miners, the railwaymen, and now the dockers have shown that



London dockers have dealt Tory plans a body blow

by Chris Harman

important sections of the working class can turn the tables on the government in the wages battle and reduce the Industrial Relations Act to pure farce.

Subtle

So bad is the situation for the government that some of its own supporters are openly muttering about a return to the Harold Wilson approach—they believe that workers can once again be fooled into accepting 'incomes policy' if the Industrial Relations Act and perhaps the 'Fair Rents' Bill are 'put on ice'.

Vic Feather is openly encouraging them in this belief. So, more subtly, are Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, with their talk of 'conciliation' and 'arbitration' procedures.

But such plans are in no way in the interest of ordinary working people.

The stagnation of the British economy is at an enormous cost to working people. It means that hundreds of thousands are needlessly unemployed. It means enormous quantities of goods that could improve living standards are just not produced as factories and machines stand idle.

But there is no real way to overcome it until economic power is taken from the hands of those who refuse to invest and who precipitate such stagnation.

Massive, co-ordinated intervention by the working class is necessary to destroy the economic power of the ruling class where it is exercised—in the factories, the docks, and so on.

Until that occurs we will continue to have to pay the price for the economic failings of capitalist governments, whether Tory or Labour.

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That is why, without pandering to the illusions that the Labour Party can be converted to socialism, we support the Labour Party electorally and will go on supporting it until such times as the socialist left is strong enough to replace it.

Millions

That is why we exert whatever influence we can to commit Labour to pledge itself to end unemployment, to repeal the Housing Finance legislation and reverse the rent increases, to abolish Means Testing and the anti-union law, to the sort of reforms Labour has always claimed to stand for.

Millions who are not yet convinced of the necessity for socialism can be brought to support these things. Many believe that Labour can do the job.

We disagree. Experience will show who is right. The first step is to bring the Tory government down.

LAST WORD by Evans

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BY DUNCAN HALLAS

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ALGERIA

Victory and defeat

BY MAY 1958 the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) had been fighting for three and a half years. In purely military terms they were still nowhere near victory. But the war had brought the French state into deep difficulties.

Since the Second World War parliamentary democracy in France had staggered from crisis to crisis. The existence of several political parties, reflecting the fragmentation of the French middle class, meant that governments scarcely ever lasted more than a few months.

The government formed by Pierre Pflimlin on 13 May 1958 was the 24th since the end of the war.

In the early months of 1958 incident after incident revealed the declining authority of the French government. In February French bombers, pursuing FLN guerrillas, crossed the Tunisian border and bombed the village of Sakkiet, killing 69 people, including 21 children. The government was sharply attacked by both right and left.

In March a thousand Parisian policemen held an anti-parliamentary demonstration outside the National Assembly building.

For a month, from mid-April to mid-May, it was impossible to form a government at all. And on the very day a government was at last formed, there was a rebellion in Algeria.

Army officers and European settlers demonstrated and established a 'Committee of Public Safety'. In effect they were refusing to accept the authority of the Paris government.

CORRUPT

Among the leaders of the revolt were General Massu, whose brutality had smashed the FLN's urban guerrilla network in Algiers the previous year, and General Salan, who had served as a special correspondent with Mussolini's troops in Ethiopia, and had led the negotiations over the Indochinese opium crop at the end of the Second World War.

Civil war seemed imminent. Pro-army elements in Paris could probably have mobilised more than 50,000 armed supporters, and most of the police would have joined them.

The only force on the left able to mobilise, the Communist Party, was in poor shape. It had suffered severe demoralisation from the events of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and its supporters were hardly inspired by calls to defend the obviously corrupt and inefficient parliamentary regime.

The party's strike calls went unheeded by most workers—at the Renault factory only a thousand of 35,000 workers came out on strike.

THE SUPPORTERS of de Gaulle now started canvassing for his return from his self-enforced retirement. De Gaulle was able to win support from a broad range of political forces.

The Gaullists refused to work publicly with fascist elements, and made a special effort to win the Socialist Party. De Gaulle declared he had fond memories of speaking beside Mollet, the Socialists' leader, at the Liberation.

The incident was a fabrication; the two men had never met. But Mollet was



De Gaulle, who came to power through 'Keep Algeria French' support, and four years later handed over independence



General Salan, one of the right-wing leaders of the 1958 revolt who three years later led the OAS terror campaign

Ian Birchall's second article

suitably flattered and supported de Gaulle.

De Gaulle became prime minister on 1 June, with a mandate to prepare a new constitution. He had been brought to power by those whose slogan was 'Algeria is French', but the phrase had never crossed his own lips.

In fact de Gaulle was the direct agent of the big French capitalists, the men who realised that today France could exploit Algeria economically without direct political rule, and that the war was unnecessary for French capitalism.

But the road was still long and winding. French public opinion favoured a negotiated peace, but many within de Gaulle's own party did not. A series of manoeuvres and fake offers was necessary before de Gaulle was in a position to begin negotiating for independence for Algeria.

The FLN fought on. The leadership, recognising their military weakness, were keen to shift the struggle on to a diplomatic level.

But the Algerian workers and peasants were still confronted with the brutal realities of French power—forests and vegetation were destroyed by napalm, militants were interned and tortured. The FLN lost at least 140,000 dead during the war.

By early 1961 the FLN were able to renew the struggle in the towns of Algeria, and in October they decided to

bring the Algerian workers in Paris into the fight.

A mass demonstration of at least 30,000 met the most savage police repression. Twelve thousand were arrested and interned in various sporting stadiums, and at least 50 were thrown in the River Seine and drowned.

THE WORKING CLASS carried the main burden of the Algerian liberation struggle. Algerian workers suffered and died by the thousand. But this did not make the liberation movement a working-class movement, let alone a socialist movement.

There was, in fact, no independent revolutionary socialist organisation in the Algerian struggle. The Algerian Communist Party, after initial hesitation, sent its members into the FLN.

The few revolutionary socialists close enough to play any part in the fight took much the same position. While showing great courage in giving material and practical support to the FLN, they held the fundamentally false view that the FLN could transform itself into a political party which would have a programme with a clear socialist stand.

In fact the FLN was nothing of the sort. Not only did it give its own trade union organisation only a minor place in the struggle, but it used physical violence

and terror against workers' organisations under the influence of its rival the MNA (Algerian National Movement).

Those socialists who saw the MNA as representing a revolutionary socialist alternative were equally mistaken.

Certainly the MNA had a good base among Algerian immigrant workers in France, and the rhetoric it adopted was often more socialist-sounding. The MNA did address appeals to the French working class, but in face of the passive attitude of the mass organisations, it did not get very far with these.

It was this lack of a movement with a class rather than a nationalist position that made the final act of the Algerian tragedy more bloody than it might otherwise have been.

French capitalism had decided that it could afford to get out of Algeria. But the European settlers, mostly small traders and landowners, could not afford to get out.

VIOLENCE

Clearly the European settlers had lived as parasites on the Algerian population. But they were also victims of imperialism. Many, particularly the workers, had been Communists, but as the war went on they had moved over to the extreme right.

As it became clear that de Gaulle was determined to negotiate a settlement with the FLN, the European settlers and their

allies in the army turned to desperate violence. A settler revolt in early 1960 was followed by a military rebellion in 1961.

AFTER THE failure of the 1961 army revolt the extreme right took its last gamble. The OAS (Secret Army Organisation) was formed and embarked on a campaign of terror bombing and assassination in France and Algeria.

Among its leaders was General Salan, who only three years earlier had welcomed de Gaulle's return to power, saying: 'We shall march together up the Champs-Élysées, covered in flowers.'

In February 1962 a mass anti-fascist demonstration was called in Paris. De Gaulle, in order not to appear dependent on the left, banned it. The demonstration went on—and the police, most of whom probably supported the OAS, took the opportunity to kill eight demonstrators.

In March de Gaulle signed the Evian agreements which gave Algeria its independence. The European settlers launched into a final frenzy of desperate rage. European women in cars deliberately ran down Arab children in the streets.

But the OAS was smashed, and the FLN took over the war-ravaged country.

CULT

The courage and devotion of the Algerian people had won the independence of their country. For a while Algerian 'socialism' became the latest cult among the trendy left from abroad.

But in fact the social revolution that Algeria needed had not yet begun. Algeria faced independence with two million unemployed and more than four million others 'without means of subsistence'.

The new regime claimed it was following socialist policies. In particular *autogestion* (self-management) in agricultural undertakings and a small section of industry received much publicity, and was said to be a form of workers' control.

In fact the workers' councils that existed had limited power. The directors of enterprises retained substantial rights, and seasonal workers, a large section of the Algerian labour force, were not allowed to participate. The FLN smashed opposition in the Algerian trade unions and manned them with loyal government supporters.

Such was the demoralisation of the Algerian people that when, in 1965, Ben Bella, FLN leader, was overthrown by a military coup, hardly anyone seemed to notice, let alone fight for him. The Algerian working class still has a revolution to make.

Rosa Luxemburg

BY PAUL FROLICH

Rosa Luxemburg was one of the greatest figures produced by the international working class movement. Both a profound and original thinker and a brilliant speaker at party groups and mass meetings, she embodied all that is best in the revolutionary tradition.

For more than 30 years, until her murder in Berlin in 1919, she was continuously in the forefront of the working class struggle—in Poland, Russia and Germany.

Unavailable in English for many years now, this definitive edition is a new translation from the third, revised, German edition which appeared in 1967 under the guidance of the author's widow.

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DAVID WIDGERY REVIEWS

THE MYTH OF MOTHERHOOD by Lee Comer. Spokesman pamphlet No 21, 8p.

THE FAMILY is the most basic and the most ancient of groups. We are all born into one and may never leave it.

In a public world dominated by competition and ambition, the family and the home provide a private retreat, a world of the kids, of love and the release of sex.

For the child, it is the place where he or she first learn the rules of society and find out that little boys must play with guns and little girls with dolls, that boys can't be cissy and girls can't be tomboys.

For the father, still automatically seen as the head of the family, the home is the only place where he is still in charge and his wife and children must be a credit to him, or what would the neighbours think?

Strains

For the housewife who never leaves it, it can be a slow hell of repeated but unnoticed labour. There's a Weetabix commercial that puts the mother's role in society all too clearly. Against cosy pictures of glowing fireside faces a mother is there to give:

'Grace to her girl children,
Boisterousness in her boys
and strength in her man'

But every month 30 or 40 happy well cared for Weetabix kids are brought into casualty departments as battered babies. Kids, usually under three years old, who have, in the words of the Ministry of Health 'received non-accidental violence at the hands of an adult'.

The mythical happy families in the adverts just can't match up to the strains of the real world of overcrowded housing, shift work, and low wages. Most families still get by, grumbling. But in some the pent-up frustrations explode into physical violence.

Hinged

It has taken the Women's Liberation Movement to press the question of the family back into the centre of socialist concern. Originally Marx and Engels, who automatically assumed that the family would disappear after a socialist revolution, tried to anchor marriage and the family in the need to protect and pass on private property.

Marriage was based on economics: the wife was part of man's possessions and was treated accordingly, they said. And since the subordination of women hinged on the male-dominated family, it must have arisen before capitalism itself.

Both Marx and Engels hated the hypocrisy of Victorian men who divided women into wives and prostitutes, the first maintained for social reasons and the second for erotic needs. Love, which Marx

described as 'the experience which really teaches man to believe in the objective world outside himself', was and still is continually distorted by cash... or lack of it.

Modern marxists in Women's Liberation have continued to see the family as necessary for capitalism and mainly responsible for the oppression of women.

Within the home it obliges them to work round the clock, without pay or strikes. The sexual division of labour is so ingrained that most people assume that a woman's life will be spent looking after the children and feeding and caring for the male bread-winner.

Housewives just have to accept that their life will be devoted to somebody else's happiness. They must live their lives through their children, at second hand.

A wife's economic dependence on her husband means that she has to accept his petty tyrannies and assumed superiority even if she realises that he is just taking out on her the strain of his work. But if she manages to get a job, she is

constantly discriminated against because of her position in the family, forced to accept 'pin-money' wages, the lowest jobs and the lousiest conditions.

And if she has no husband, the sickly clichés of society's concern for the sanctity of motherhood are transformed into contempt for 'unmarried mothers', and she has to suffer high rents, nosy parkers from the Social Security and the continual threat of prison and children being 'taken into care'.

Deny

An especially destructive myth, unconsciously accepted by too many socialists, is that child-rearing has to be woman's work. This argument has its origins in the ideas of Freud, who was first to draw attention to the intensity of mother-child relationships and who emphasised the importance of the first years of a child's life in moulding its personality.

From this discovery it was deduced that the mother needed, biologically, to stay with her child

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They're your kids and it's your money they're spending. Today is the day you can make sure it's money well spent. Mothercare have a full range of hard wearing practical items all beautifully designed, all at sensible prices. All likely to make your life a whole lot easier. So come on, dad. Come shopping at Mothercare. You might even enjoy it!

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Filling Beakers.
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with white collar Nylon Gingham
Size 42" Price £1.05.



The perfect family, advertisers' eye view

for at least the first five years of its life. After the Second World War many child psychiatrists blamed the rise in juvenile crime on mothers' failings.

From John Bowlby to Evelyn Home it became usual to warn that a negligent mother would be punished by her deprived child becoming a teddy boy.

Lee Comer painstakingly examines the standard, male-authored, accounts of child care and shows that they almost completely deny the father's role in child rearing, except when he pops up as a substitute mum when the real mum goes out to bingo.

She asks the obvious question... why has no one got so hot and bothered about paternal deprivation, the damage done to kids who only glimpse their father as he comes home from necessary overtime and they are going to bed.

She shows how biased and shadowy Bowlby's evidence is, how he assumes as 'natural' a child's strong attachment to its mother, a child's yearning for love and

affection and a child's constant need for understanding and guidance. But this is no more 'natural' than a black person behaving like an Uncle Tom. It is really social.

As long as our sort of society brings kids up in small, isolated, competitive, nuclear families, children are bound to be treated as possessions who must do well in exams, football and good looks compared with next door's kids. The controversial film Family Life was actually a lot better at showing the intolerable pressure that parents load on to their children than it was at explaining mental illness.

Lee Comer reckons that the working-class mother's tradition of 'healthy neglect' of kids is far better than the middle-class mother's suffocating adoration.

She concludes: 'When we have learnt to disengage ourselves from the pressure to conform to our image of them, we will be loving them without violence. In the process we will be going some way towards liberating ourselves'.

IN A LEGAL BLIND ALLEY

THE most fascinating aspect of ATV's Radical Lawyer was the way in which the company cushioned the programme with disclaimers. It was sub-titled One Man's View of the Law and, just to rub the point in, was preceded by a careful statement that the views of Benedict Birnberg were his own and not necessarily shared by ATV.

Will this start an interesting new trend? There now follows a ministerial broadcast by the Rt Hon Edward Heath on devaluation. We would like to point out that when the prime minister says the value of the pound in your pocket has not changed he is expressing a purely personal point of view.

It won't happen, of course. Such wariness is shown only when somebody expresses attitudes outside the comfortable, prejudiced walls of the 'consensus'.

After that nail-biting introduction, the programme was a disappointment. Birnberg propounded the socialist case that British law is class law, a system developed to defend the interests of a rich and powerful minority.

But many of his criticisms emerged as straight, bald assertions without factual support. And the cut from his class analysis of judges to a shot of a procession of gowned and wigged m'luds, including Lord Hailsham, gave the impression that they are a funny anachronism rather than a danger.

A re-run of the police harassment of the Quay family in South London should have left no one in doubt as to the way the police bend the laws to suit themselves and are especially and physically hostile to black people.

Yet I found the visual example of police brutality even wider of the mark than the one of the judges. We saw the stock, familiar shot of the constabulary laying about Vietnam War demonstrators. Police activity on the picket lines during the miners' strike, with eye witness reports, would have been more telling.

Far better than the filmed example was Police Federation spokesman Reg Gale cheerfully admitting that laws were made by rich property owners to defend themselves and the police have to administer those laws whether they like them or not. That's known as the Eichmann syndrome.

The weakest link in the programme was a political one. Having analysed the legal system, explained its vital role as a prop of the capitalist system and its inherent bias against the working class and minorities, it petered out with Birnberg and a group of other anti-establishment lawyers discussing how the system could be democratised and toyed with such ideas as elected working-class magistrates.

This is an off-shoot of the 'parliamentary road to socialism' approach which believes that ruling-class institutions can be taken over and reformed on behalf of the working class.

There is no shortage of evidence to show how the system has tamed the most revolutionary MPs and turned them into reactionaries. The legal system would be different only to the degree that it could draw the sting of 'left-wing magistrates' even faster.

David East

In a child's world, everything's
Dream Toppable.

Just think.
You've all those desserts sitting in your larder.
And just imagine.
How much more delicious they'd all be
with a little Dream Topping on top.

Dream Topping makes a world of difference.

The advertiser's view of childhood—it's all a dream

New sit-in on the Clyde

GLASGOW:-After 21 weeks on strike, the 80 workers at the Charles McNeil engineering works, Kinning Park, took it over last week.

The men, members of the Boilermakers Society and the Engineering Union, came out on strike in February when the directors of the parent company, Marshall and Anderson, of Motherwell, refused to improve a wage offer of £2 that had been in negotiation for more than a year.

Four weeks ago the strikers were told by post that they were all dis-

missed. It has become clear that the firm intends to shut down the Kinning Park works altogether. It is one of the oldest engineering forges in Glasgow.

The floor, where you can walk on it between the piles of discarded steel and wire, is the original Victorian earth floor, with gulleys running across it draining rainwater away from where it comes through the roof.

What look like ex-army temporary latrines, fixed on a metal platform 2ft above the ground to prevent the rats getting in, were the toilet facilities. At the top of each cubicle door the employer had

had an eye-slot cut to allow the foreman to see who was sitting inside.

The occupation started when the strikers learned that the foremen were preparing the most valuable machines in the works for moving elsewhere. Now that they control the works they are only letting in staff workers, who have agreed to co-operate with the occupation. The foremen refused, so were barred admission.

Workers said: 'We're not only fighting these bastards for a rise, we're fighting for our jobs.' Some factories are blacking the firm's goods (which include trade marks Compak, Seapak, Fleming and Superior).

Provos call off armed struggle

by Mike Miller

IRELAND:-The Provisional IRA has called off its armed struggle against the British Army in the hope that they will be able to negotiate a united Ireland.

But even were they successful in negotiating a united Ireland, it would not be much different from the two halves that exist at present. For the Provisionals have no programme for actually defeating British imperialism—only one for fighting its army.

The demand for a united Ireland seemed relevant to a large section of Catholic workers when Stormont was using full-scale repression.

But now Stormont has gone, nationalist aspirations have cooled, and the possibility of having to fight a civil war to achieve the long-term goal of a united Ireland is now less desirable than the prospect of an immediate peace.

The failure of the Republican movement to develop any policy in the south and to engage in struggles there against imperialism and capitalism has left it isolated from the working class there. Southern workers feel that they don't really have any role in the Northern struggle.

It has also meant Lynch could pick off Republicans without facing mass opposition.

It is largely this failure that is responsible for the failure to win support from even a small section of Protestant workers. For why should they give up the devil they know to be ruled by the one they don't know?

If the Provisionals have refused even to raise the class question, what of the Officials? They certainly indulge in all the rhetoric, but have yet to be seen in action in any significant working-class struggle in the 26 Counties.

Vacuum

They have no programme for achieving the workers' republic to which they are supposedly pledged and they remain almost totally silent on the big issues facing the working class in the south: redundancies, unemployment, the National Wages Agreement.

These failures have enabled the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party to fill the political vacuum in the North, with the blessing of the Church for good measure. Many who were staunch Republican supporters yesterday are now talking of giving Whitelaw a chance today.

The Provisionals have shown that they still have a considerable military machine intact, ready to end the cease-fire if they don't get satisfaction from the coming talks. But after a period of peace they will find it difficult to regain whatever is left of their non-combatant supporters.

If the lessons of the past few years are not quickly learned there can be no prospect for an IRA military victory. And then the renewal of the armed struggle could well result in a demoralising border campaign which only the British Army could win.

It is up to socialists both inside and outside the Republican movement to develop a strategy which can relate the day-to-day struggles of all Irish workers with the struggle against imperialism.

Only such a strategy can help overcome the sectarian divide, offer a workable alternative to Protestant workers, mobilise the workers in the south, and sustain the anti-imperialism of the Catholic workers in the north.

The question of which class is to rule the 'new Ireland' must be raised now.

STRIKERS END SIT-IN AFTER COURT ORDER

by Anne Clark

WEMBLEY:-A court order was used in an attempt to break the seven-week struggle for the engineering claim at Stanmore Engineering last Friday.

Workers who had been occupying the factory were ordered to leave by a court injunction. They left, and the next day 29 workers received dismissal notices and another 130 were told they were being made redundant.

The firm is claiming that it is having to close the factory because its main customer has cancelled orders. In fact the main customer, Zenith Carburettors, is run by the same directors as Stanmore Engineering.

Once the workers were out of the factory, the company took the chance to move the dies to its other factories in Deptford, Lewisham and Stanmore.

But it seems unlikely the company will really close the Wembley factory—after all it made £500,000 profit last year. Probably it believes that in a few weeks time it will be able to re-employ some of those made redundant, but on its own terms, destroying the influence of the union.

BLACKING

The position of local union officials during the strike has been far from satisfactory. Although they gave some financial support to the occupation, they have done little to back up the pickets since the occupation was ended.

So although the morale of the strikers is high, there was no effective picketing on Saturday, when the dies were moved.

The local union official advised stewards not to organise the blacking of Zenith carburettors at Vauxhall's until after a hearing of the company's case in court on Wednesday. It was argued that such blacking was illegal under the Industrial Relations Act and might prejudice the union's case—although officially the engineering union refuses to co-operate with the Act.

The strikers urgently need financial backing. Donations to: A Linton, 31 Cheveriny Rd, Kensal Rise, London NW6.

Workers fight closure

HARTLEPOOL:-Workers at the BECORIT engineering factory began a sit-in occupation last week to fight the company's decision to close the works.

The closure announcement was sent to individual workers through the post. The men have received no money since 25 May.

The management did not consult the men's union—the engineers—and has refused to negotiate. The AUEW district is giving the occupation full backing.

Many engineering factories in the area are making collections and taking levies. This is the first action of its kind in the South Durham and Teesside area and is seen by local militants as a vital battle in the struggle against redundancy. Hartlepool has a 12 per cent male unemployment rate.

Since the sit-in started the company has said that it will 'review' the situation. Maurice Apedaile, AUEW shop steward, said: 'We stop in till we get what we want.'

Messages of support and donations to: Tommy Broadhead, AUEW Office, Raby Road, Hartlepool, Co Durham.



Pickets turning back non-unionists at Slater Rogers, one of the Distillers whisky plants in Glasgow.

Labour leaders bid to undermine tenants' fight

THE next few weeks will be crucial in the struggle to get Labour councils to refuse to increase rents under the Tory Rent Bill.

Labour leaders are trying to pretend that the struggle is over. They claim that recent amendments to the Bill show that the Tories have been forced to change their line. Because in some places rent rises will at first be less than £1, Labour leaders are talking of victory. This is dangerous nonsense.

The Labour leaders are pressuring councillors to drop pledges not to implement the Bill. To this end a meeting of Labour councillors has been called in London on 8 July.

This makes it essential for tenants' organisations to press ahead with plans to oppose the operation of the Bill. The conference called by the National Association of Tenants and Residents for Saturday 29 July must be supported. Write now to 283 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, for credentials.

LLANTRISSANT:-A partial victory has been won by the tenants' movement in Wales. More than 4000 tenants in Llantrissant have forced the local Labour council to cancel 38p rent rises made in April and to give refunds to tenants who had paid the increase.

The tenants had organised meetings, petitions, lobbies and demonstrations, but the weapon that really forced the council to give in was the rent strike. Thousands of tenants refused to pay the increase and were backed by the local miners' union lodges.

But the fight is far from over. The council still intends to implement the Tory Rent Bill in October, raising rents by about 75p a week.

SCOTLAND:-A 300-strong delegate meeting called by the Hillingdon Shop Stewards Rent Action Committee and the Scottish Council of Tenants last week decided to call a national day of protest against the Bill on 16 September. The meeting also called on every Labour council in Scotland to refuse to implement the Bill. But the delegates agreed that mass

THE RENTS BATTLE

action by tenants and trade unionists was the only way to defeat the Bill.

STOCKPORT:-The Housing Committee of Stockport Council has decided not to implement the Bill. Their decision is likely to be confirmed at the full council meeting later this month.

EAST KILBRIDE:-The Rent Action Committee is advising tenants to withhold the increase imposed in May, and only to pay up when action is threatened by the Corporation, but to immediately withhold the increase again.

RUGELEY, Staffs:-The council has decided not to implement the Rent Bill when it becomes law, but its opposition is weak, for it says it 'will not be deliberately obstructive and prevent the Housing Commissioners from undertaking their relevant duties'.

LLANDUDNO:-The conference of the Confederation of Engineering Unions passed a militant resolution last week backing tenants in fighting the Rent Bill. The resolution called for opposition through all channels, demanded that local councils should refuse to implement the Bill and called on all engineers to back the tenants in local campaigns.

Moving the resolution, Bob Wright of the AUEW said: 'This Bill is an attack on the living standards of ordinary people and at the same time a charter for landlords and profiteers. It is for this reason that every Labour council should refuse to implement this iniquitous Bill, backed by every tenants' association in refusing to pay rent increases.'

MORE THAN 60,000 copies of the Socialist Worker pamphlet, *The Tory Rent Robbery, and How to Fight it*, have now been printed.

Third whisky plant out

AS THE strike by 2750 Scottish whisky workers entered its third week, and spread to another Distillers Company plant, a mass meeting in Glasgow was told that the Transport Union has made it official.

The strikers, mainly women, cheered this news.

A spokesman for the shop stewards' committee said: 'Now we've got official backing, I'm going to get in touch with the dockers' shop stewards' committee. We want them to black all Distillers' products, especially Johnny Walker, Black & White, and Buchanan.'

Since whisky is taxed virtually out of the home market, exports, which have increased by 10 times since 1946, are the main source of profits.

Support from the dockers will be vital to the strike, which is the first major dispute ever in the whisky industry. In the past the predominance of women workers, the distance between the distilleries, blending, bottling and storage plants, and the capital intensive character of the industry have prevented any real challenges to the employers.

Today, militant women workers are fighting all that.



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Socialist Worker

Victory for the dockers!

LONDON DOCKERS have chalked up a complete victory in the container jobs war. Management at the Chobham Farm depot in Stratford—scene of the mass picket and the Industrial Court somersault on the jail threat to three stewards—has agreed that 30 to 40 cargo-handling and clerical jobs will go to registered dock labour. The dockers insisted that the men now employed at Chobham Farm should be absorbed into the firm's other enterprises, underlining the fact that the

by Bob Light
(TGWU Royal Docks)

dockers' fight was with management, not fellow workers. By their militant picketing, the dockers have won more in six weeks than their unions have in three years.

Now the blacking is spreading. Hull dockers have decided to run a blockade on

unregistered container depots on Humber-side while in London other firms are now facing pickets.

Regents Canal Dock is one such depot. It used to employ registered dockers, then closed down and re-opened to handle containers with cheap labour.

Another firm, J B Woodcocks, quickly saw the light. It took just one lone picket on Saturday to get the manager on the phone requesting immediate talks on employing registered dockers.

NORTH-EAST ROCKED BY STEEL STRIKE

MIDDLESBROUGH:—15,000 workers are involved in the biggest strike to hit the steel industry of the north east since 1926. Last Friday men from Lackenby, Redcar, Cleveland and Skinningrove walked out.

On Monday they were joined by Cargo Fleet

The British Steel Corporation claims that the strike is over an inter-union dispute.

But in fact it began when management deliberately and provocatively broke an agreement that all shift managers should belong to the main steel union, BISA KTA.

Instead the managers were ordered to work under members of a small professional association, the Steel Industry Management Association, which is not recognised by the TUC. When three refused, they were sacked.

The main characteristic of the strike so far has been the spectacular militancy and unity of the workers. Pickets have been out by the hundreds at the main works, particularly at Lackenby, where the enthusiasm and strength of the picketing is reminiscent of the miners' strike.

But one thing is puzzling local militants: Why local members of the union's national executive and its full time officials have been prepared to start such action and even to talk of spreading it to the rest of the country. For BISA KTA is a union whose leadership has always opposed militant action.

DOWN TOOLS

Militancy has been growing in the area for some time. Earlier last week members of the Number Five branch at Lackenby struck for 24 hours in protest at the noise level in the foundry end of the beam mill. They secured an agreement to get a new rate for this work.

Then all the craft unions in the works downed tools after a worker was suspended for carrying out action in pursuit of a similar claim.

Many militants believe that this was the background that forced the local members of the national executive—two of whom have to stand for re-election soon—to re-assert their leadership of the union, whose rank and file were rapidly taking the struggle into their own hands.

It is also a fact that the future of the industry will be in the new automated plants, and there is an intense struggle for trade union organisation in such plants.

If such militancy can be displayed over this kind of issue, then it must be on the agenda in the struggle for a substantial wage claim. Militants know this and BISA KTA, a union noted for its lack of democracy and a right wing leadership that has never led a serious fight, is unlikely to be the same again.

The 7000 who face the axe

THE British Steel Corporation has a master plan to run down the industry's labour force. That is the message behind last week's announcement that all the open hearth furnaces in Scotland are to be closed and 7000 men sacked.

A few weeks ago the International Socialists came into possession of a copy of the master plan and circulated it to union branches in the major steel works. BSC managers in every case denied that they had a long-term scheme for destroying jobs. But the closures announced since are exactly as described in the document.

Already 5000 jobs in 22 plants have disappeared this year.

In many of these areas more than half the male workers will be thrown out of work.

It is no wonder that BSC want to pretend that they do not have a long-term plan for extending such havoc.

The difficulty for steel workers is going to be that the issue they face is not sudden crash closures, but the gradual run-down of works. Management can achieve their objectives by stopping recruitment, which hits young workers most, by laying off men during slack periods and re-employing them on a temporary basis, by diverting orders and starving existing plants of work.

The present response of the union leaders in the industry is quite incapable of combatting the redundancies. Steel workers on the shop floor have to resist any attempt to run down works by a policy of opposition to productivity deals and overtime, and by preventing the movement of plant or orders from works that are threatened.

Action committees must be set up in every works to formulate demands and press for a national link up through a steel workers' delegate confere

In order to promote these kinds of policies, steelworker militants from Teesside, South Wales, Sheffield, Rotherham, Corby, Irlam and Clydeside are supporting a new paper being produced for rank and file members of the union. Copies will be available from R Clay, 3 Lazenby Lane, Lazenby, Teesside.



Bill Freeman (far left), the strikers' spokesman, speaking at mass meeting

Print unions back workers' takeover at colour works

LONDON:—A hundred and fifty workers took over Briant Colour Printing in the Old Kent Road, South East London, last Wednesday to stop its closure after a surprise announcement by the management that the firm was going into voluntary liquidation.

Hundreds of print workers from different firms attended a mass meeting outside the factory on Friday, which was told the occupation would go on until the jobs were saved.

Three of the print unions involved—SOGAT, NATSOPA and SLADE—have already promised support for the work-in, and the workforce is absolutely solid. Brenda Horton, deputy Mother of the Chapel (shop steward) for SOGAT, said that the 30 women workers 'are not behind the men—we are with them.'

'We don't work because we have nothing better to do. We work because we have to. So we're here till death.'

'Most of the women are married, but their husbands are right behind them. We have all been involved in the occupation right from the start. There was a suggestion

that the women shouldn't stay after 10 o'clock at night in order to avoid rumours and avoid anyone discrediting us. But we decided we would be treated like anyone else in this.

'It seems to me the more people this government can put out of work the better they think it is. We have got to stand firm against them and the employers here. We have to have our jobs back again.'

Workers at Briant's have taken an important stand in an industry where for too long the unions have been willing to sell jobs through productivity deals and to accept closures and redundancies.

At present the workers are talking of a 'work-in'. This is unlikely to prove feasible, as businessmen will not be willing to place orders with a factory being run by its workers.

But the workers have the company's valuable assets under their control. They must refuse to let these be moved until their jobs are guaranteed.

It is essential that other print workers in London provide them with financial support, and prepare for industrial action if any attempt is made to move the Briant's workers by force.

SHOP STEWARDS LEAD FIGHT TO DEFEND UNION RIGHTS

TWO HUNDRED people, mostly local shop stewards, attended a meeting in Hull last week to set up a local Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Speakers included leading militants Walter Cunningham, the local dockers' steward who treated an instruction to appear before the Industrial Relations Court with the contempt it deserved, Tom Waddington, an NUR docker who has been leading opposition to the closure of two Hull docks, and Bill Gawthorpe, leader of a recent 16-week engineering strike at Hawker Siddeley Aviation.

All the speakers stressed that only militant industrial action could defeat the law.

The meeting decided unanimously to set up a Liaison Committee based upon delegates from local trade union organisations.

GREENOCK:—750 engineering workers at the Lower Clyde shipyard of Scott Lithgow are continuing their strike for the engineering union's national wage claim and against the miserable settlement agreed by Boilermakers' president Dan McGarvey for shipbuilding workers.

Vigorous picketing is stopping all transport from entering the yard, although other trades are still at work. Tugmen have refused to tow away a partially finished ship that the company wanted to send to Spain for completion. Electricians and other finishing trades are supporting the strike but not boilermakers.

CHESTERFIELD:—Workers at the Chesterfield Tube Company have been sitting in for three weeks. They had put in for a claim to bring their wages up to the national average—an increase of about £5. The stewards decided on an overtime ban, but when the men returned from their holiday the management would not let them resume work.

Donations to Tom Webster, GMWU, Chesterfield Tube Company, Derby Road, Chesterfield.

EAST LONDON:—A one-day strike by workers in four Plessey factories last

Strikers seal off shipyard

PICKET LINES

in other plants. Coventry could be the next storm-centre in the national pay claim struggle.

HARTLEPOOL:—The 16-week strike by welders at the Expanded Metal Company ended last week. The strike was for parity with other skilled workers in the factory, and the settlement more than halved the differential.

WOLVERHAMPTON:—120 workers at the Tarmac civil engineering plant depot are on strike for a substantial pay increase, and extra week's holiday and a reduction in the working week from 45 to 40 hours.

HULL:—Workers at the BOCM-Silcock mill recently enlisted the aid of two local 'left-wing' Labour MPs in an effort to prevent its closure. But after four hours of talking the MPs, John Prescott and Macnamara, came out with what amounts to acceptance of the management's terms. The workers continue the struggle for their jobs.

Monday has begun a campaign against the planned closure of one plant at Upminster, Essex, and redundancies in the other three.

The management is demanding 800 redundancies in all, 350 of which might be absorbed through redeployment. Last week it refused to agree to proposals from the stewards' negotiating committee for increased severance pay and early retirement with extended pension rights.

COVENTRY:—All 7,000 shop-floor workers in GEC's eight factories came out last week in support of the national engineering pay claim. It is the first united action by all eight plants for many years, and the first strike in Coventry over the claim.

With a strike starting at Chrysler on Monday and negotiations coming to a head

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