

Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

VIETNAM 1965 - 1975



A Vietnamese child, 1965: napalmed by American bombers. One of the most enthusiastic supporters of American bombing was Congressman Gerald Ford.

'The bombing deprives the enemy of a population, doesn't it?'

General Westmoreland, Commander-in-chief, American forces in Vietnam, 1966

'We must be willing to continue our bombing until we have destroyed every work of man in North Vietnam, if that is what is required to win the war.'

General Curtis Le May, US Air Force, 1 April 1967

'People ask me who my heroes are. I have only one—Hitler. We need four or five Hitlers in Vietnam.'

Air Marshal Ky, prime minister of South Vietnam, 4 July 1965.

'The new improved napalm now used in Vietnam contains polystyrene which makes it more adhesive. The flaming jellied gasoline is impossible to scrape off once it touches the skin.'

Felix Greene, writing in Vietnam! Vietnam! 1966

'There were 40 or 45 people that we gathered in the village . . . men, women and children, babies. Lieutenant Calley started shooting them. And he told me to start shooting. I might have killed ten or 15. Lt Calley started pushing 70 or 75 people into a ravine and just started using automatics on them, men, women, children—and babies.'

US Army private Paul Meadlo, describing massacre of My Lai, 24 November 1969.

'Defoliant chemicals 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D which are widely used by the American Air Force in Vietnam have caused the birth of thousands of deformed babies. The births of deformed babies have multiplied so enormously that the Saigon Health Ministry has made all statistics secret.'

Professor E W Pfeiffer, American biologist, after a visit to Vietnam in 1972.

'It became necessary to destroy the town to save it.'

US Army major after sacking of Ben Tre, South Vietnam, in a news despatch, 7 February 1968.

Killed in Vietnam since America entered the war: two million

Orphaned in South Vietnam since America entered the war: 300,000

And they dare to talk about humanity!

VICTORY IN VIETNAM - pages 7,8 and 9



A Vietnamese child, 1975: saving the conscience of President Gerald Ford. Napalm and hypocrisy mix easily. They're both part of the same war.



GLASGOW: THREE WEEKS OF

THE STRIKES ARE SOLID!

FACT

1973: The cost of the army using its vehicles in the firemen's dispute for 11 days was £50,000.
 1975: Six times as many army vehicles have already been operating for 21 days. The expected bill will be more than £1 million. The Liverpool drivers' settlement, given to the 500 drivers in Glasgow, would cost £65,000 a year.
 On 15 May, Glasgow Corporation paid the Director of Social Work £76,875 as 'a golden handshake' following local government changes. He is entitled to continue work in another department on his existing salary and pension.
 Glasgow Corporation refused to say what the total costs of such handouts have been. In Edinburgh, 14 such changes cost £403,279.

by Jimmy McCallum

DESPITE the combined efforts of the Labour council, the local press, the government and the troops, the dustcart drivers' strike is still solid. They have now been out for 13 weeks in their struggle to make the Labour councillors keep their promises.

Throughout, the Transport Workers' Union has refused to make the dispute official. In fact, the union leaders have done as little as possible to aid the men.

Last Friday, Alec Kitson—National Officer of the TGWU—told the drivers' shop stewards that although national talks had broken down there was still no chance of the strike being made official.

The attitude of the T&GWU leaders has sickened many of the dustcart drivers, who feel they have not been given the backing they need to confront the troops on the picket line. Instead of issuing instructions to step up the picket when the army moved in, the Scottish TGWU officials told the drivers not to obstruct the troops in any way.

FIGHT

The feeling among the drivers is that Jack Jones has betrayed them. Nevertheless, they will stay out on strike until the Glasgow Council gives them parity with the Heavy Goods Vehicle drivers employed by private hauliers. As Matt Laidlaw of the Strike Committee puts it: 'It really is up to the mass meeting to decide, but there is no chance of the shop stewards retreating in this fight'.

He added: 'These strikes are decisive for the trade union movement. If we can't mobilise trade unionists against the use of troops we might as well pack it in.'

The real difficulty is that the strikers have not been supported by other trade unionists. The importance of the troops being used as strike-breakers has been underplayed by the trade union leadership up and down the country. In the process, the real threat to trade union rights and freedom of action has been obscured.

The argument about the troops being used because of the health hazard has now been dropped.

RATS

Few people in Glasgow were really taken in by the scare stories about rat infestation. Most working class families in the city are too acutely aware of the squalid conditions that exist all over Glasgow to be fooled by a rat scare.

Glasgow remains the city with the worst housing conditions in Europe. More than 21,000 homes are officially described as being below acceptable standards of accommodation, and areas such as Maryhill were plagued with rats long before the dustcart drivers went on strike.

The people responsible for the health hazard in Glasgow are the same people who provoked the strike: the Glasgow Labour Council.

The trade union leaders, locally and nationally, have not been pre-



John Glen speaking to last Sunday's Troops Out of Ireland demonstration in London. Below, he suggests why some of them are getting out of Glasgow...

Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

'Spread the strike' call as sparks leaders blunder

MORE THAN 1000 local authority electricians are now in their twelfth week of strike action, seeking to force their bosses to honour a long-standing agreement that gives council sparks the contracting rate of pay.

Talks in London aimed at ending the dispute broke down last Friday when the employers continued to refuse to pay the agreed wage rate, which would involve an increase of £9.20 a week, and instead offered only £5.30.

At a report-back meeting on Saturday, West of Scotland electricians told full-time official Alf McLuckie that they would stay out until the agreement was implemented. The strikers also voiced their displeasure at the EETPU Executive's handling of the dispute and demanded that the action be escalated to bring out all members employed by local authorities. They also called for stoppages at selected construction sites in Scotland.

It is doubtful if the executive will do this. They are already taking

THEY NEED YOUR DONATIONS

ELECTRICIANS: Hugh Higgins, 2 Primrose Street, Glasgow, G12.
DUSTCART DRIVERS: D McNaughton, Trade Union Centre, 81 Carlton Place, Glasgow.

the strongest section of the local authority electricians out of the dispute.

Last week they allowed Glasgow Airport electricians to return to work after a deal with British Airport Authorities, who have taken over the terminal and replaced Glasgow City Council with whom the sparks were in dispute.

To get the sparks back to work at the airport the British Airport Authority paid an £11 a week increase—£2.50 more than the local authority sparks are seeking. This move by the executive was a blunder of the first order.

The closure of the airport had cost more than £1 million in revenue and a few weeks more strike action would have meant an intolerable pressure building up on the local authorities.

The new pressure point in this strike is the high rise flats. In Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow many tower blocks are without lifts, although the strikers operate a life-or-limb emergency service.

Win

The 'popular' press are now shedding crocodile tears about the inconvenience and danger to pensioners and the chronically sick. Frank McElhone, Labour MP for Queen's Park, Glasgow, has called a meeting of Glasgow MPs which he hopes will decide to contact Frank Chapple and urge him to instruct the sparks to put one lift in operation in each tower block.

The threat behind McElhone's appeal to Frank Chapple is that, if it fails, the troops now breaking the sparks' strike by using the city's incinerator will be used to repair the lifts.

The electricians are determined to win but finance is going to be crucial in the coming weeks, with tax rebates drying up and the union tightening up on strike pay. Many sparks will be on the bread line. Money should be sent to the Strike Committee in support of the electricians.

The soldiers who complained...

By John Glen

THE ROYAL Highland Fusiliers, who have been strike-breaking in Glasgow for the last three weeks, have moved on to other places—Belfast. They have been replaced by the Royal Scots and the First Light Infantry.

Maybe three weeks' muck-shifting is enough for any soldier. But from what has been said by a few squaddies in Glasgow, other things have influenced the decision.

IS members have been berating them while they were strike-breaking, sometimes while they were

drinking. The leaflets asked the soldiers if they knew why they were in Glasgow, and if they liked being scabs?

At an IS street meeting in the city centre, a soldier listened to the arguments and announced that the speaker had only said what was being said in the barracks. 'A lot of the guys are saying that the CO—Brigadier Riddell-Webster—is only a Tory'.

On another occasion, a couple of soldiers told an IS member that a deputation of soldiers had met some officers to complain about being used to break a strike.

pared to put this across to workers and have continually backed away from the issue.

At the Glasgow Trades Council meeting last Wednesday, the drivers' strike was discussed early so that no commitment would be demanded.

In the end, the meeting called upon the local committee of the Conference of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union (CSEU) to organise a West of Scotland shop

stewards meeting. The date was left for the CSEU officials to arrange—another example of the 'over to you' technique of avoiding initiatives that the Communist Party leaders of the Trades Council have made their own.

The troops have now been in Glasgow for three weeks and no serious opposition to the strike breaking role has developed. The longer they remain the more difficult it becomes to convince other trade unionists that something can be done.

Obviously, some of the troops are anxious about coming in against trade unionists, specially when they are doing it in their own home town. About three-fifths of the troops are Glasgow men

What has really worried the troops who have taken the leaflets is that they have no rights in a situation like this. They have no trade union and no representation.

The Commanding Officers are aware of what can happen to the average soldier if he is exposed to arguments like this for too long. That is why they are changing the guard on the rubbish tips.

It is the responsibility of every trade unionist to see that the drivers and sparks are given the support they need to have the troops withdrawn.

Make no mistake about it, soldiers will be used in other disputes if the government get away with it now.

The intention of the government is obviously to use the troops in any strike, anywhere, when the workers involved are prepared to stand out for what they are claiming.

ARMY STRIKE-BREAKING

We must close our ranks

by
HARRY McSHANE

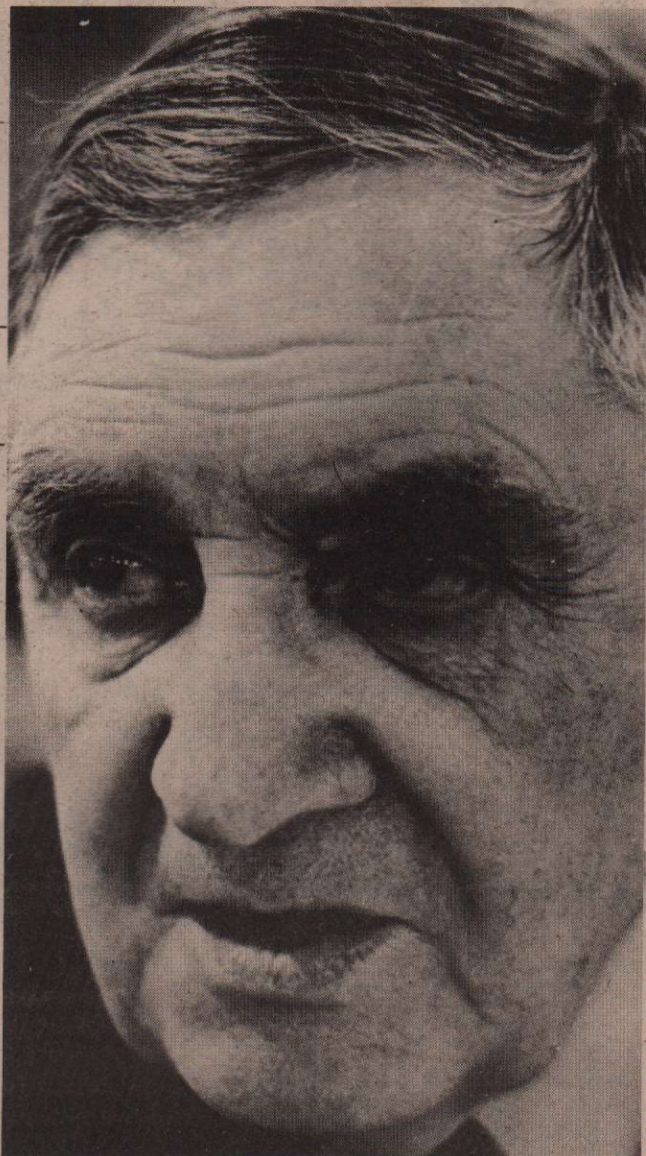
WE ARE RIGHT in opposing the use of soldiers in this strike. They are being used to break it. But some housewives showed hostility because of the problems they are faced with—and we must face the fact that public opinion is against us.

We are running against the stream, but many justifiable movements in the past have done that. There is another thing—wherever I go in Glasgow I see posters about the use of soldiers in this strike. They're not trades council's posters nor are they Communist Party posters, they are put up by young people whom the secretary of this trades council calls ultra-lefts.

They have done more on this issue than all the rest of the movement put together. The secretary told the Sunday Mail that they spread like fleas in a bed. I don't know what fleas do in bed but I regard the comparison as uncouth.

The secretary has threatened these young people with violence and has even challenged them to fight. We have a Muhammad Ali in the room. There is an element who, at one time, called all those on their right social fascists. That term was dropped after it helped Hitler to power.

They now have a new term—all on the left are ultra left. This must stop. The ranks must be closed. The future of the movement rests in the hands of these young comrades. The campaign against them must be brought to an end.



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

HOW I.S. WON SUPPORT FOR STRIKERS

THE ONLY serious fight to mobilise support for the strikers and activity against the strikebreaking troops has come from the International Socialists.

In the week before the army moved in, IS members in factories and trade union branches pushed through resolutions of support for the electricians and the dustcart drivers.

SYMPATHY

The Glasgow area political committee of IS backed up these initiatives by organising leafletting of all the major factories in Glasgow. The leaflet took up the drivers' case and repeated the demand for a shop stewards' meeting to organise sympathy action.

To spread the campaign, the area committee organised fly-posting teams to cover the city centre and factory areas.

The poster put the case plainly—No troops in Glasgow. It was followed by a second edition and then a third. Each covered changes in the situation.

As soon as the troops moved in, the area committee put out a second leaflet underlining the demands for sympathy stoppages and calling a mass picket. And it organised the leafletting of the troops.

All these efforts were backed up at trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and on the factory floor by IS militants.

IS MEMBERS and Socialist Worker supporters must press for:

- No co-operation with the army by all trade unionists. The TGWU (contractors) and the GMWU (binmen), in particular, must be forced to instruct officially their members not to co-operate with the troops.
- A West of Scotland shop stewards' meeting, from which effective solidarity action can be organised.
- Blacking of the scab contracting firms.
- Publicity on what's really happening. Speakers from the Glasgow District of IS for IS public and branch meetings through the national office.
- Collections for the strikers along with trade union resolutions condemning army blacklegging. Send copies of resolutions passed and money collected to Corporation Dustcart Drivers & Electricians Strike Committees, TU Centre, Carlton Place, Glasgow. If your shop stewards won't support a collection, have a whip-round among your workmates.
- Support from other corporation workers. Approach them direct and discuss with them the possibility of spreading the strikes.

AS SOON as it was announced that the troops were being sent in, the Edinburgh District of IS moved into action.

An emergency resolution was put to the Trades Council from the AUEW Pilton branch condemning the use of troops, and an amendment was passed calling on the Trades Council to organise a meeting of work place and union branch representatives to co-ordinate support for the strikers.

IS members proposed at this meeting that the Trades Council produce leaflets explaining the facts of the dispute and the need for sup-

port. They also called for a protest picket at the City chambers.

But these proposals were not allowed to be discussed and all attempts to organise support were squashed. Communist Party members on the platform were more concerned that the political nature of the dispute was kept in the background.

Resolutions of support for the strikers, condemning the use of troops have been passed at the AUEW Pilton branch, NALGO Gas, ASTMS University No 1 branch and T&G 7/124 Brewery branch, who also sent a £5 donation.



Socialist Worker

12 APRIL 1975

NUMBER 420

WHAT WE THINK

If the troops win, we all lose...

WHEN THE TROOPS first went into Glasgow, the press set up a daily howl about the health hazard, with scores of pictures of photogenic rats.

We have since had something different: a deafening silence. The aim of this press black-out is to make trade unionists forget one of the most important events of the moment—the use of the state's armed forces to break the power of a significant group of workers. Any success the troops enjoy in Glasgow will be used as a precedent for confrontations with other groups of workers.

Talk of clearing up a 'health hazard' is a pretext. It would be much cheaper to clear the rubbish by paying the drivers, if the government was really concerned about health.

But the government knows that once it has established the precedent of using troops, there are a whole range of different strikes that could be represented as a 'health hazard'—strikes by electricity and gas workers, health service workers and even, with a bit of press imagination, strikes by railway, dock and transport workers.

The troops are there to defend the Social Contract, and for no other reason. The government faces a massive barrage of public sector wage claims. It knows that such is the power of some of the workers involved that it has to make some concessions—as with the power workers last week. But it also wants to show that it can stop other groups of workers following such examples.

Battleground

So, despite the talk about the Social Contract being 'to help the low-paid', it has sent in the troops with the aim of defeating a typical low-paid group. And it has chosen Glasgow, the scene of so many strikes against the Social Contract, as the battleground.

The tragedy is that, so far, much of the trade union movement has allowed the government to get away with it. Not a murmur of protest has come from the trade union leaders, even those that claim to be left-wing. They seem quite happy to see a small group of workers defeated by the most powerful weapon in the government's armoury. By their silence, they have encouraged the press black-out and made it easier for the 'health hazards' argument to be used against strikers.

But the conspiracy of silence has not only affected the top most ranks of the movement. Too many rank and file activists—branch secretaries, district committee members, convenors, senior shop stewards—have also avoided the issue.

In Glasgow, the Communist Party, which organises many of these militants, has deliberately played down the issue, opposing calls for a West of Scotland shop stewards' conference.

As a result, the confidence of the strike-breakers is growing. The troops have been joined by sub-contracting firms, using TGWU members, such as Youngs, Golightly, Page of Blackhill, all of County Durham, Melville Plant from Bathgate, and Redland Purle. The amount of rubbish being cleared has shot up from 500 tons a day to 2500.

Unless the conspiracy of silence is broken by rank and file militants throughout the country, there is a danger that the army will show that it can break strikes. And that will be a black day for the whole trade union movement.

**THE
GENERAL
ACCIDENT
SAGA:
HARDLY THE
APEX OF
TRADE
UNIONISM**

ATTEMPTS BY APEX, the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs, to recruit members in General Accident, the insurance company, which ASTMS has been fighting to unionise for 50 years, have ended. Following threats of suspension and expulsion, APEX has withdrawn.

General Accident, which employs thousands of office workers, has a history of anti-unionism. To keep ASTMS out, an employer-dominated staff union was formed, called Staff Association General Accident. But, over the last few years, ASTMS began to make ground.

A secret ballot of SAGA members voted more than three years ago for ASTMS and against SAGA. Management was forced to withdraw its sole recognition of SAGA. Some SAGA members joined ASTMS, others forced SAGA to negotiate a merger with ASTMS.

Last year, with negotiations well under way, APEX—with no members in insurance—suddenly

THE UNIONS

stepped in and offered SAGA a different deal. The undemocratic structure and management interference were to be maintained. The low level of subs was to be phased up over a five-year period.

IGNORED

But, most important for General Accident, they would get APEX's Bridlington protection, and keep ASTMS out.

After the TUC Disputes Committee decided last August in favour of ASTMS, the full TUC endorsed the decision. But Roy Grantham, general secretary of APEX, ignored the TUC,

and signed a transfer of SAGA engagements to APEX.

He then issued a writ against the TUC, challenging their interpretation of Bridlington in the Disputes Committee's decision.

The General Council gave APEX until the end of March to end all its activities in General Accident and sever its connections with SAGA, or face suspension and eventual expulsion from the TUC. This brought the APEX leadership to heel, and last week they withdrew from General Accident.

The field is now clear for ASTMS, but months have been lost because of the manoeuvrings of the APEX leadership.

But now APEX members must argue that white-collar union members must be part of the trade union movement. Some branches have already passed motions condemning the behaviour of the Executive.

This needs to be stepped up as part of a campaign to build a more responsible leadership.

What the press barons mean by freedom

by CHRISTINA POTRYKUS

READERS of national newspapers must have been amazed in recent months at the sudden hysteria over the freedom of the press.

Most trade unionists and journalists, to whom the idea of a free press has always, at best, seemed a bad joke, have detected quite different motives behind the campaign to those espoused by the press barons.

The real motive is simply this: there is a determination on the part of the employers to prevent journalists from implementing closed shops.

The government's Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill seeks to restore this basic trade union right, which enables workers to achieve strong enough organisation to take on the centralised power of

the employers.

Over recent years, the newspaper employers have viewed with alarm the development of the National Union of Journalists from a genteel professional association into a trade union.

Last autumn's strike in London over the sacking of journalists and printers on the Kentish Times convinced the employers of the need to turn their powerful propaganda machine—the press—on to their own employees.

These masters of distortion searched for the smelliest red herring they could find to throw into the

debate on Labour's Bill—and called it The Freedom of the Press.

By raising caterwauls over the threat which the closed shop would pose to freedom of expression, the press barons hoped to cloud over the real threat, the threat which effective union organisation makes to their profits and their power.

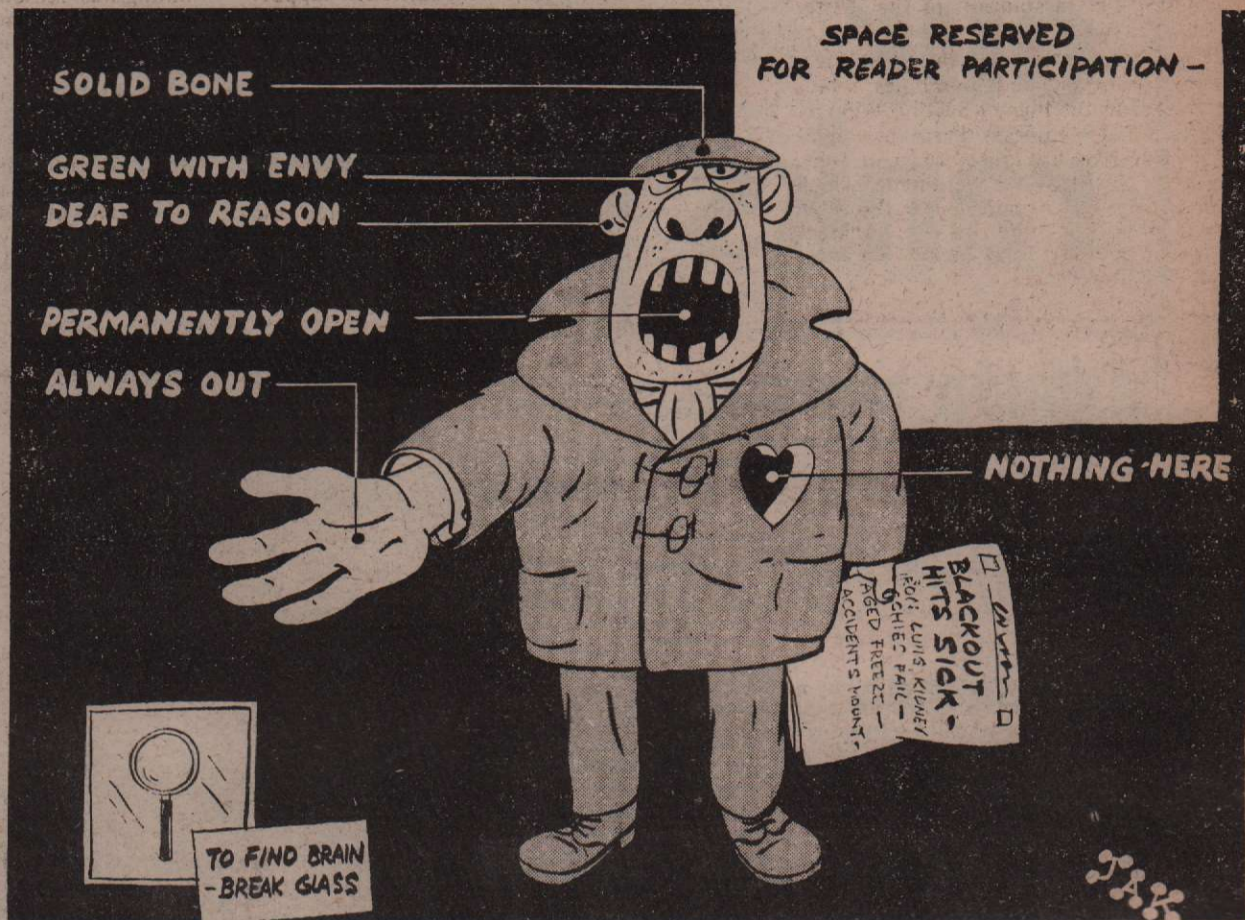
While their hypocritical articles raised little more than a yawn among provincial journalists and book and magazine employees, the national executive of the NUJ was keen to play its part in this great and historic debate.

Last year's Annual Delegate Con-

union.

Obviously the union establishment would be worried by any rank and file activity that might disturb their cosy relationship with British Rail management, hence the attack in the TSSA Journal.

The divisional council's attempt to get me stopped from going to annual conference failed as I was given a unanimous vote of confidence by my branch, but I resent the suggestion that IS members are attempting to 'infiltrate' the rail unions. IS members don't 'infiltrate'. In the railways and everywhere else we work openly and honestly to win support for our politics.



They mean the freedom to attack trade unionists—like this London Evening Standard cartoon during the 1970 power workers' dispute.

decide whether they should join the union.

Second, editors in or out of the union will be allowed to continue normal working during a dispute.

The executive also want to set up a separate class for these editors. The next bombshell is that no person eligible for the union, who is already working in an office, will be pressurised to join the union!

Though these clauses effectively undermine 100 per cent membership and effective action during disputes, the circular states that 'the NEC reaffirms its policy of encouraging chapels to secure 100 per cent membership'.

Action

During industrial disputes, the main aim is to stop production. What kind of position will the NUJ be in when it calls on print unions not to cross picket lines, while allowing NUJ members to continue working!

The situation created by the NEC, bad enough in terms of Fleet Street, is even more catastrophic in terms of the other 25,000 of its 28,000 membership.

In the provincial press, the editor is often nothing more than a sub-editor, with a staff of three. In the book and magazine field, it is difficult to find someone who isn't called an editor.

Circular 106 threatens our future as a trade union. Faced with increasing redundancies, the ravages of inflation and the attentions of the scabby Institute of Journalists, we have never been in greater need of strong workplace organisation.

Clearly this is a subject which calls for emergency resolutions to conference. We must seek:

- 100 per cent post-entry closed shop
- No separate category for editors
- No toleration of 'normal working'
- For the union not the individual to decide who should be exempt from union membership.

RAIL BULLETIN ANGERS UNION

by John McCann (TSSA, Glasgow)

have been producing in the Glasgow area. The bulletin is not an IS publication, although IS railway workers have been involved in its production.

The bulletin started in the wake of the defeat of two strikes by railway workers at the end of last year, Fighthill National Carriers Ltd drivers and High Street Parcels Depot. The major lesson from these strikes was the need to organise at rank and file level, which is the stated aim of the Railworkers Bulletin, although it has always been made clear that it's not an attempt to set up a separate

THE Scottish Western Divisional Council of the TSSA, the railway white-collar workers' union have become the latest members of Glasgow's fastest growing club—the anti-International Socialists Society.

This month's issue of the TSSA Journal contains a report from the divisional council's March meeting which consists mainly of an attack on myself and IS, supposedly for 'unofficial activities'. No doubt what they mean is activity of any sort in a union that has had only one official strike in its history.

The cause of their annoyance is the Railworker's Bulletin, which militants among the three rail unions

IRELAND

Why the truce is breaking down

HAROLD WILSON's recent announcement that the Convention election would be held on May Day was a signal for the beginning of Northern Ireland's sixth election campaign in two years—and for yet another outbreak of optimism that a solution to the 'Ulster problem' is in sight.

These hopes have been shattered by a series of shootings and bombings which have resulted in the biggest death toll in any two days for 15 months. Every period of peace is followed by murmurings of 'new hope' from the British government, which in turn is followed by another outbreak of sectarian violence. The British government cannot deal with the fundamental causes of violence in Northern Ireland.

by Eamonn McCann

The government has hoped that some sort of coalition administration will emerge from the Convention with sufficient support in each community to isolate the 'extremists on both sides'.

That is possible in theory. But the institutions of the Northern Ireland state, developed over half a century of continuous one-party rule, are sectarian by nature. If they continue to operate in the old way, they will frustrate any reformist settlement, no matter what compromise is hammered out on the Convention floor.

The fact that the institutions are working in the old way was vividly illustrated at

Belfast City Commission on 27 March when Corporal Roy Jones of the Royal Regiment of Wales was acquitted of murdering 23-year-old Patrick McElhone at Pomeroy, Co Tyrone last August. Mr Justice McDermott said the killing was 'reasonable'.

Patrick McElhone had been sitting having tea with his parents in their isolated farmhouse when an Army patrol called. They took him out and into a field beside the house while his parents watched, terrified, from a window. The McElhones saw the soldiers push their son roughly into the field in front of them. Then a shot rang out. The bullet hit Patrick McElhone in the back and passed through his heart.

Jones did not give evidence. Police witnesses said he had claimed at first that the

gun went off accidentally, then changed to story that McElhone had tried to run away.

The police, the army and the judge (there are, of course, no juries in Northern Ireland) were agreed that McElhone had not been involved in politics.

Nevertheless, commented the Judge, soldiers in Northern Ireland have an arduous time and are entitled to 'consideration'.

The solicitor for the McElhones described the verdict as 'unbelievable'.

The previous day, inquests had been held on six Catholic men shot dead on Belfast's New Lodge Road in February 1973. Evidence was given that two of the men, teenagers, had been gunned down outside a cafe by Protestant assassins. The other four had been killed by soldiers.

The Army had moved in after the two sectarian killings and opened fire on the Catholic crowd which had gathered, in the process doubling the sectarian killers' score.

The inquest heard that scientific tests on the men's bodies and clothing indicated that none had been handling firearms. Evidence from civilian eyewitnesses confirmed that all four had been shot in cold blood.

None of the soldiers who fired the fatal shots appeared. Instead, statements of a general nature—alleging that 'aimed shots' had been fired at 'definite targets' and that 'four bodies were later recovered'—were read out by a member of the Army's Special Investigation Branch. No cross-examination was allowed.

When the solicitor for the next of kin objected to this procedure he was told it was 'normal practice which applies to inquests on dangerous and other such matters'. Open verdicts were returned.

On 26 February, an 18-year old from the Catholic Andersonstown area got 12 years for possession of a machine gun. One hour later in the same court a 21-year old Protestant got 2½ years for possessing a sub-machine gun and 122 rounds of ammunition.

Killing

Two weeks before that, a member of the UDA was charged with possessing two sub-machine guns. Forensic evidence showed that both guns had been used in the sectarian killing of Catholics.

The UDA man refused to tell where he had obtained the guns or to throw any light on the killings. He is now doing 18 months.

Anomalies such as these are in no way uncommon in Northern Ireland. They are not the exception, but the rule. And it is not simply that magistrates, coroners and judges are consciously biased, although they may well be. Sectarianism is built into the system here.

The very boundaries of the state were drawn precisely to ensure a permanent Protestant majority. British governments have since supported and, when necessary, armed the sectarian institutions which controlled—indeed comprised—the state.

And every attempt at reform has crumbled on the rock-like resistance of these institutions.

Thus, almost certainly, will the Convention crumble, opening the way for the British government to make yet another accommodation to the sectarian war-lords.

The problem is not the way Northern Ireland is run. There is no other way it can be run. The problem is the existence of Northern Ireland.

And the solution British socialists should insist on, especially when, as at the moment, spurious non-solutions are being plugged and promoted in the capitalist press, is the withdrawal of the troops so that the Irish people as a whole can decide their own future.

Hong Kong: Britain's corrupt colony

HONG KONG is one of the last British colonies. It is riddled with corruption, it is ruthlessly exploited by companies from all over the world. HO YEN is a socialist from the city state, and he talked about the situation to Socialist Worker.

There are 130,000 police in Hong Kong—one in 320 of the population. This would be like 1,500,000 in Britain. The governor is appointed by the British government, the people only elect the urban council which has no power.

British export companies like Jardine Matheson have a big economic role. And out of 4,000,000 people there are over 600,000 industrial workers—in textiles, electronics, clothes plastics and so on. About 130,000 are in unions led by Maoists and another 25,000 in the right wing unions.

The average wage is under £40 a month, women get less, and there are many children of only 13 working in factories. Many workers have a six day week and no paid holidays. Unemployment is nearly one in five, though there is no unemployment pay. Prices rose by almost 50 per cent between 1971 and 1974.

There is terrible overcrowding and workers have appalling housing. It's common for eight people to live in a room 10 feet square. Many workers live in shanty towns without electricity or water. There's no health service or state education.

Militant

In the early 1960s the older industries like textiles were in decline and there weren't many struggles. There were some anti-British revolts in 1967, and from 1969 a lot of militancy among students. In 1971 there was a big campaign to make Chinese an official language; this is important because most workers don't speak English.

In the newer industries like plastics and electronics most of the workers are young, and they have been very militant over wages and conditions even though they aren't unionised and have had no support except from some small radical groups.

Last May there was a big demonstration of some 3000 against inflation, organised by the Socialist League, (a youth organisation led by Fourth Internationalists). Now there are big struggles against rents which are going up by 50 per cent.

One weak point in the struggle is that the Maoists who lead the main trade unions don't demand that Britain gets out of Hong Kong at once. This is because China has a policy of supporting Western Europe, Japan etc against the super-powers, Russia and America, and doesn't want a clash with Britain.

What, we asked Ho Yen, could British workers do to help the struggle?

Ask the trade unions to set up research groups on working conditions and workers' rights in Hong Kong, to show how British imperialism is using cheap labour. But above all demand the withdrawal of British troops and the end of British rule.



Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

Troops Out: Keep up the argument

THE picture tells the story. Of the thousand or so demonstrators who marched through London last Sunday demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, more than three-quarters were members or sympathisers of the International Socialists. This fine turn-out, which brought IS members from as far away as Cardiff, Southampton and even Glasgow, was proof again of the determination and strength of IS organisation.

The marchers were cheered by a fine speech from John Glenn, of the Glasgow Corporation electricians strike committee, who said that his strike was now being broken by troops who were used for similar reactionary purposes in Ireland. He wanted to see the troops out of Glasgow and out of Ireland.

Many IS members were disappointed with the size of the demonstration—and its lack of impact. But, as Duncan Hallas of IS made clear in a forceful speech before the march, the Irish issue has to be raised consistently in the British working-class movement.

The ten deaths in Northern Ireland over the weekend show how the truce is breaking down. None of the causes of the violence have been dealt with, and it can be expected to erupt on a greater scale than ever in the next couple of months. The impact in Britain could well be further witch-hunting of the Irish community, further deportations of Irish trade unionists, further repression against the whole of the left.

The demonstration was intended to prepare at least part of the labour movement in Britain for that eventuality, by showing that there are people prepared to go on to the streets around the demand 'Troops Out'. The need now is to follow up the demonstration with preparation for the important national conference of labour movement delegates called by the Troops Out Movement for 24 May. Every IS branch, fraction and cell should start organising delegacies for that conference.

Write for delegates' credentials to: Troops Out Movement, 103 Hammersmith Road, London W14.

Could you stomach this food bill?

THE new Labour Research Department pamphlet, *In or Out**, provides a mass of useful information on the Common Market.

It has to be said right away that it also advances some very dubious arguments. Its general line is not a million miles away from that of the Communist Party. But, if you take some of the arguments with large pinches of salt, here is a handy pocket source of information.

On the fraudulent claim of the pro-marketisers that the Common Market is 'Europe', it notes '... the EEC includes only nine of the 30 countries in Europe and only 270 million out of the total European population of 646 million.'

Rise

On the Common Agricultural Policy: 'Food prices rose [in Britain] by 40 per cent during our first two years in the Common Market. A considerable part of this rise was caused by the quite exceptional rise in world food prices. But if we had been outside the EEC we would have been able to avoid part of this rise.' This is correct and important.

International Socialists say:

NO to bosses' common market

YES to workers' unity all over Europe

Incidentally, it needs to be borne in mind that the full effect of EEC rules on food prices has not yet been felt. As the Transport House document for Labour's national executive, which was leaked to the Sunday Times, says: 'Import levies have been rising and British consumers are already paying more for their food as a result.' And this is a continuing process.

Where world food prices have fallen back, the CAP has held up Common Market prices. 'The EEC price of beef is £21-24 per live cwt while outside the EEC the price is as low as £8-10. In Britain, still

protected by transitional arrangements, the price is about £16.' As the planned 'harmonisation' with EEC rules goes on, up goes British food prices, even when world prices are falling. 'Harmonisation' will be completed by 1977 if Britain stays in the EEC.

Part of the EEC's dear food policy is the sale of cut-price food outside the EEC, subsidised by EEC consumers. For example 'the Soviet Union ... bought surplus butter at 7p a pound in 1973 and 40,000 tons of surplus beef in 1974 at a price 40 per cent below the EEC price.'

At a recent meeting I was

challenged when I said that the CAP was an anti-working class scheme, the argument being that British farmers had been subsidised before EEC entry. So they had, but out of taxes. Now to the extent that the tax system is at all 'progressive'—that is, that the rich pay proportionately more than the poor—the changeover to subsidising farmers by artificially rigged high prices to the consumer directly penalises the working class as a whole and the poorest people hardest of all.

Planning

In or Out has no difficulty in demonstrating the essentially capitalist nature of the EEC: 'A major expansion of public ownership in Britain to a point where resources were allocated by a conscious process of planning would be totally incompatible with membership of the Common Market, which requires that they are allocated by competitive market forces.'

That is certainly true. But the conclusion drawn is pure pie in the sky. 'Freed from the restraints of the Rome Treaty and its competition

policy we shall be able to extend public ownership and advance towards socialism at a pace solely determined by the British people and their parliamentary democracy.'

Come off it comrades. It is not the Treaty of Rome that is stopping the 'advance towards socialism'. It is the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour Party leaders. Their support for the EEC is only an aspect of this general policy.

The fight against the EEC is part and parcel of the fight against the right wing of the Labour movement. It is not helped by pretending that but for the EEC our right-wing Labour government would somehow be transformed into a force for socialism.

*26p, including postage, from LRD Publications, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF.

Duncan Hallas

NO TO THE COMMON MARKET: Posters and leaflets available for local propaganda. Send orders to Sue Baytell, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN. Leaflets—25p per 100, posters—75p per 100. Money with orders please.

5 FIFTH COLUMN on Shelepin and the British Press SHELEPIN'S APRIL FOOL



FOR READERS of the daily papers a glance at last week's crop was a moving experience. For Alexander Shelepin, the Russian secret policeman who made good as boss of the Soviet trade unions, was in town. Not a day went by without moving editorials, and stirring news reports of angry demonstrations against him.

Should we 'bow down as a nation of creeps before the sick-making hypocrisy of this most provocative and unwelcome visit?' asked the Daily Mail.

No. Nor should we bow down before the sick-making hypocrisy of the Daily Mail. Take a trip back to 1973, and deal with the visit of another secret policeman, now sadly out of a job, one Dr Marcello Caetano, then the fascist dictator of Portugal.

At that time the Times newspaper had exposed a massacre of 400 villagers in Mozambique by the Portuguese army. What was the reaction of the Mail and the Daily Express?

The Express set to work with particular fervour to disprove the stories.

That massacre, along with many others, did take place, as has been further proven, by, amongst others, the Portuguese Army.

What did the Mail say of Caetano's visit? 'We may not admire the Portuguese government—some of us may deplore its policies but this is no reason why Dr Caetano's visit to Britain should be cancelled.'

Mob

A lot of people didn't admire Caetano, and were on the streets demonstrating against him. Here's how the Express described them on 17 July 1973. 'Mob fury surged around Portugal's Dr Caetano last night ... More than 100 banner waving chanting demonstrators ...'

But last week? The demonstrators were no longer a 'mob'. They were 'chanting crowds with placards', in the Express. 'After demonstrations' in the Mail.

One aspect of Shelepin which was ignored by the Daily papers was Shelepin, the family man. Not so with Caetano.

Barbara Griggs interviewed his daughter, Ana-Maria.

She was 'immensely chic' she wrote in the Daily Mail. 'It is when she speaks of her father that real warmth, real enthusiasm, light up her face. "He is a wonderful man, a great personality" she told me simply. I admire him tremendously.'

The Mail's sister paper, the London Evening News also showed its big heart when Caetano showed

SIEGE CROWD TAUNT SHELEPIN

Daily Mail, 1 April

YOU'RE NOT WELCOME, COMRADE

London Evening News, 1 April



Evans

us. They showed an editorial in commemorating the Last Mayor of London, Lord Swan.

It spoke of London when he was appointed to the Portuguese prime minister for the demonstrations during his visit. Wild allegations have been made, but there is no proof. The shouters and chanters prove nothing except how easily mindless prejudice spreads.

Strangely the tune was different for Shelepin. 'The arrival of Mr Alexander Shelepin was chill and furtive—as becomes the former head of the world's most odious police apparatus.'

Two thugs, one Portuguese, one

Russian, Caetano representing a regime that has murdered its way across Africa and Portugal, Shelepin representing a regime that destroyed socialism, and murdered socialists.

But there was money in Caetano, Western money, and the guns in his hands came from London, Washington and Paris. And the campaign against Shelepin had the virtue, or so the papers hoped, of tarring the socialist movement, including many good, dedicated socialists in the Communist Party, with Shelepin's brush.

It's not who you murder, but who you murder for ...

MEANWHILE, IN BANGLADESH

AFTER THE Beef Mountain and the Butter Mountain the Common Market has come out with the Dried Skimmed Milk Mountain. There is no guaranteed price for cheese—so farmers make butter, and the residual skimmed milk is dried—and stored. All over Europe it is rotting, all 361,841 tons of it. Thousands of tons have been sold at 'give-away prices' reports the Irish Times, 'because it was unfit even for animal feeding'.

In Bangladesh a country is rotting. They have no food.

CIA man reminisces...

THERE WAS A general election in Italy in 1948. It worried a lot of people, particularly the United States government, who were concerned with the possible victory of the Communist Party. Apart from making the Christian Democrats (the Italian equivalent of the Tories) a variety of offers they couldn't refuse, mainly taking the form of large heaps of dollars, the USA played its own inimitable role in the campaign.

Details have recently been published from US State Department documents. Unfortunately they have had to delete most references to the use of 'clandestine operations'.

Unconventional

Never mind, old Harry Rositke, an ex-CIA official has been reminiscing over old times in Foreign Affairs, an American political science journal. 'In 1948, spurred by the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia and the Italian political crisis, the National Security Council gave the CIA the responsibility for political, psychological, economic and unconventional warfare operations.'

With only the assistance of the United States navy, army and airforce in the area the CIA did a really good job. The Christian Democrats have been presiding over the shambles that is Italian capitalism ever since.

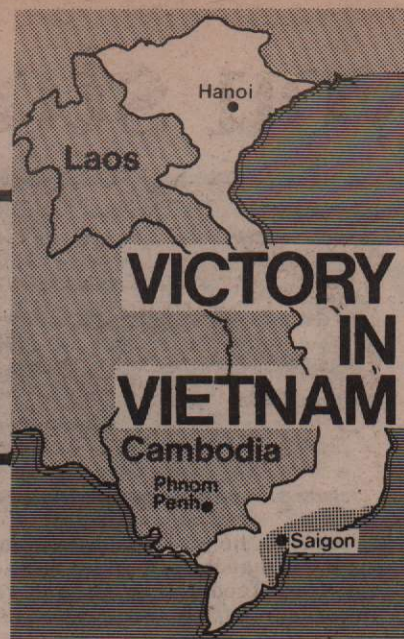
Still that was a long time ago. One shouldn't rake over old coals. Doubtless Federico Villagram, editor of the Spanish paper El Correo de Andalucia would agree. He's in jug at the moment.

He reported in his paper that the US Navy has just landed 7000 marines in Spain. They were believed to be planning a visit to a nearby country—Portugal.

●● The US Air Force dropped the equivalent of 720 Hiroshima-size atom bombs on Vietnam, more in total than was dropped in the whole of the Second World War.

●● One-seventh of South Vietnam—10,000 square miles—has been poisoned by chemical defoliants and is barren. Chemical bombing has affected 1,300,000 people.

●● More than two million people have been killed during the US involvement in Vietnam. There are more than 300,000 war orphans.



OVERPAGE:
Why so many are running away

And they dare talk of suffering ...

THIS WAS a hospital in North Vietnam's most populous province, Thong Hoa. The picture was taken after the United States Air Force had passed through.

There were no editorials in the Daily Mail about it. There were no harrowing films on television. There was just the distant sound of a country being crucified by the USAF, the US Army and the US Seventh Fleet.

The US government have committed mass murder in Vietnam. Now a few pathetic orphans in Saigon have become a publicity campaign. For newspapers that 'care'—about their circulation—like the Daily Mail with its 'mercy airlift'. For Gerald Ford and other Americans who 'care' about the shattering defeat their policies have suffered in South East Asia.

Some uncle

After the bombs and the blood, there's nothing like a few babies to restore the image of 'Uncle Gerry', as The Sun so obscenely called him last Monday. A man who spent the 1950s and 1960s assisting in the organisation of the murder of the babies' families. Some uncle ...

American politicians, businessmen and generals dreamed that American money, investment and power in South East Asia could be saved from social revolution. But they reckoned without a people that had fought foreign domination for 30 years.

During the Second World War, the people of Vietnam, like the people of other colonial countries, fought back against occupation by Japan. But they also fought the French, who had held their country for 70 years. The guerrilla army that waged that war was the Viet Minh, made up of communists and nationalists.

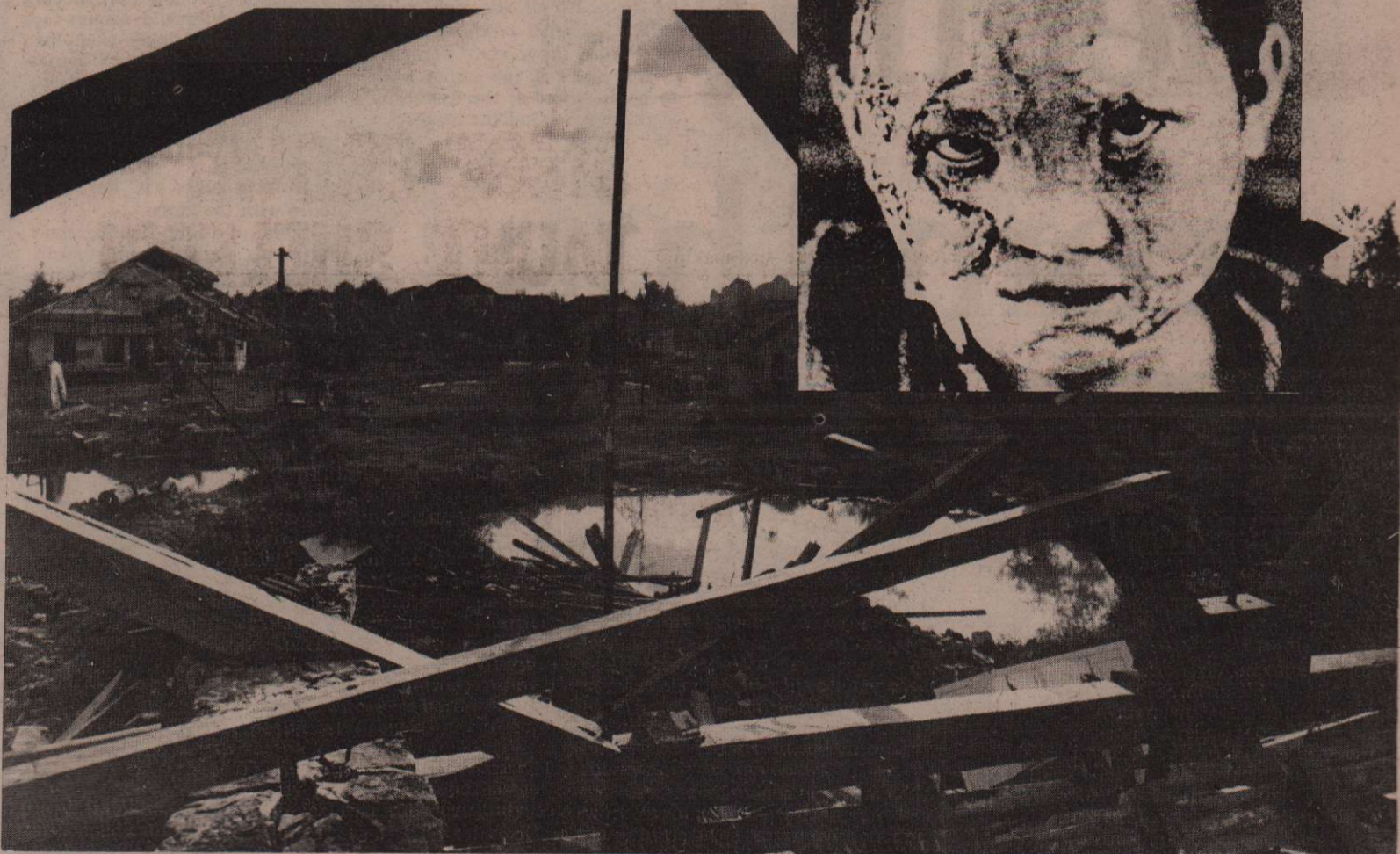
After that war against Japan was over, the Viet Minh controlled much of the country. Against them were the British, who re-armed the Japanese to police the country, and the French, who were given the country back to rule.

Wealth

The Viet Minh fought on. By 1954, the French had been defeated—but a new power stepped in: the United States, who had financed the French war.

The French left nothing except a war-torn country and a collection of Vietnamese who had collaborated with them, with the Japanese, with the British. They had done so to preserve their estates, plantations, factories, wealth.

To the peasants they were the



This child was a victim of the United States' new, 'improved', adhesive napalm ...



By
NIGEL FOUNTAIN

enemy, the landlords who stole their crops and starved them.

The United States built its dreams on this group. The 1954 peace agreement stated that Vietnam would be re-united in 1956. The US ignored this and constructed its own solution.

The collaborators with the old imperialism were to be the new men, upholding 'democracy', bringing a new way of life to the South.

They chose a man called Diem to be the embodiment of the dream. They called him the 'Churchill of Vietnam'.

He was well qualified, thought the US government. He hadn't fought with the French. He hadn't fought with the Communists. He hadn't done anything. He had spent the previous 20 years in the US.

So the old firm set up in business with a new boss—the US. Increasingly, the countryside started to fight back. By the late 1950s, the guerrilla

war was in full swing once more—and Diem was losing.

By 1963, Diem was alone. Even his generals had deserted him. The country was largely under the control of the liberation forces.

So the United States backed Diem's murder. Perhaps the dream would work if another man could be found. They settled for a General Khanh. But he was useless, so they went to Air Vice Marshall Ky.

Heroin

Here was a fine man to represent 'Western democracy', they proudly proclaimed.

But Ky—who announced that his hero was Adolf Hitler—was demoted and went back, with CIA assistance, to the more profitable business of shipping heroin into the US.

The new man, Thieu, has remained ever since. But the country he ruled did not exist. It remained a figment of public relations from the US government.

Four hundred thousand US soldiers were sent in to fight a war which Thieu's army was unwilling

to fight. The Seventh Fleet and B-52 bombers blasted the country.

In the 1950s and for most of the 1960s, it was a war fought by South Vietnamese in the National Liberation Front. The US persisted in the lie that the war was an invasion from the North.

Some Americans actually believed it. The USAF bombed North Vietnam in the belief that this would stop the war in the South.

The reverse was the case. Bombing strengthened morale in the North.

The North Vietnamese regime is no socialist utopia. Its leaders are men and women who came out of the traditions of Stalinism. But, unlike their counterparts in Europe, those leaders hadn't been imposed by the bayonets of the Russian Army.

The building of their power in the North lessened their desire to get involved in the South—so that, in the 1950s, they provided little aid or encouragement to the Southern guerrillas. Only in 1959 did they give the struggle official support—and this was merely a

token until the mid-1960s.

But the regime in the North, and the National Liberation Front in the South, had substance. They expressed the desire of the Vietnamese to free themselves from a century of Western domination.

And the government in Saigon? It was the corpse of the old French colonialism, kept twitching by massive transfusions of American money fed through the US military machine. It has no life, it can create nothing—except a thriving black market, a massive drugs trade, terror and death.

Death

Since 1973, the corpse has been on its own. The money flowed in from the US, but the soldiers had gone. As it thrashes, more people die, waiting for its death.

President Thieu will now be wondering where to settle. Switzerland? The South of France?

Perhaps the United States? After all, he did his bit to keep the American dream going ...

Picture: Romano Cagnoni (Report)

Why are so many fleeing from this...

WHEN THE PARIS cease-fire agreement was signed in January 1973, many people thought that after more than 30 years of almost unbroken war, Vietnam was going to know peace. Now, after two years of continuous skirmishing, full-scale war has broken out again.

Even before the cease-fire was signed, the Thieu government in South Vietnam was making plans to continue the war against 'Communism'—which, to it, meant anything or anyone aiming to improve the miserable conditions of the ordinary people.

On 23 January, 1973 (before the cease-fire), the New York Times reported from Saigon:

'The President is said to have reminded the commanders that under the present state of martial law the police and armed forces are authorised to shoot on the spot people who incite

'Applaud the Reds'-and be shot on the spot

riots and 'applaud the Communists'.

'He also pointed out that they were empowered to arrest summarily anyone who distributed Communist propaganda, flew a Communist flag, interfered with Government officials attempting to maintain order or urged others to move to Communist-controlled areas.'

On 18 February, less than a fortnight after the 'cease-fire', the New York Times reported that between 200 and 300 hamlets had already been taken over by the Thieu government forces.

Thieu maintained his grip in Saigon

only by the use of vicious repression. In March last year, an investigation by Catholic priests estimated that there were at least 200,000 political prisoners in South Vietnamese jails—or about half the total of political prisoners in the world.

Prisoners suffered torture, flogging, and electric shocks. In some cases up to 14 prisoners were crammed into tiny cages three yards long by two wide.

Thieu has systematically set out to destroy any opposition. Even the most moderately critical newspapers have been

suppressed and their writers imp

At the same time, the corrupt Thieu and his friends became so and blatant that even strong Communist Catholics began to protest demonstrations.

Although Nixon solved his problems by getting US troops out of Vietnam in 1973, the Thieu regime continued to be propped up by money and American men.

In the first six months of a cease-fire, the US government sent the Saigon air force with 142,000 rockets and flares, and 13.8 rounds of ammunition.

As well as direct military aid, money was syphoned in other forms. For instance four-fifths of the Food for Peace programme went to Thieu's army, navy and air force.

And while the US troops were being withdrawn, US 'advisers' remained—perhaps as 20,000 of them.

AFTER two years, the British press and television have rediscovered Vietnam.

Journalists who had nothing to say when Nixon was bombing hospitals in Hanoi back in 1972 are now shedding floods of tears over the plight of refugees and orphans.

Of course, any socialist must be distressed at the sight of a million refugees plodding hopelessly along the roads of Vietnam.

But that's all the more reason to be disgusted at the hypocrisy of those who find the refugees a

By IAN BIRCHALL

convenient means of glossing over the political issues.

The idea that hundreds of thousands of people are fleeing because they would sooner face starvation and death than lose their 'freedom' to the Communists is appealing to many people.

Blood

Unfortunately, it has little to do with the facts.

Some of those running away are doing so with good reason. They are the landlords, drug-pushers and parasites who made fortunes out of the war; the

T Dan Smiths and Andy Cunninghams of South Vietnam who now, quite rightly, fear the revenge of those whose blood they have been sucking for years; the tens of thousands of army and police officers who have been killing and torturing for years.

Even among refugees there are class distinctions. If you had money—up to £600—you could get on a boat leaving Da Nang for the south. If you hadn't, you had to walk.

Many others are fleeing because years and years of propaganda have made them afraid of the Communists.

In 1954, when Vietnam was partitioned, propaganda was deliberately used to increase the number of refugees. Catholic Action dropped leaflets in the North saying 'Christ has gone to the South' and 'The Virgin Mary has departed from the North', encouraging Catholics to flee South.

And the Americans—as is now revealed in the Pentagon Papers—put out forged Communist leaflets to frighten people into fleeing.

Destroy

But most people are just trying to get away from the fighting.

There are still vivid memories of what happened during the big National Liberation Front offensive in 1968, when the Americans simply destroyed towns that had fallen into enemy hands, with no regard for civilian casualties.

As an American major put it after the battle for Ben Tre, where about a thousand of the town's 35,000 inhabitants were killed: 'It became necessary to destroy the town to save it.'

The corrupt and incompetent Thieu government was so unwilling to admit even the possibility of defeat that no preparations were made for refugees. After months of stubborn defence, towns were abandoned overnight without warning. The population was naturally plunged into chaos.

The French newspaper *Le Monde*, which has a record for thorough and honest reporting from Vietnam, reported on 26 March that a French tea-planter had been among the thousands of refugees who fled from Pleiku in the Central Highlands.

Flee

On 14 March, the Vietnamese Army colonel responsible for the area and the American adviser had assured him there was no immediate danger. Two days later there was an instruction—from no clear source—to flee.

The planter reported that the refugee convoy had hardly seen any Communist forces.

But any cars in the convoy unfortunate enough to break down were overturned by bull-

FACT

American propaganda for years that the American Vietnam was Vietnamese dominated. But the secret Pentagon—now the Pentagon Papers—outlined its real story into Vietnam in

to

QUOT

I have never talked with a p... ledgeable in India... fairs who did not... had elections b... the time of the... 1954, possibly... of the population... voted for Ho Chi... —President Chi... his autobiography... for Change.

So far as H... government are... repeat, as I hav... times before, t... made absolute... support for t... stand against C... filtration into S... —Harold W... 1965

It was Mr Wilson... disassociate... American policy... including the bo... North, that reg... White House. —Daily Te... February, 1968

dozers with their... aboard and aband... of the wounded... And that was the... the casualties. The ordinary pe... Vietnam seem to... to fear from the... name Army th... Communists.



Picture: Romano Cagnoni (Report)

A land, and a people at war—a travelling theatre group in a village in North Vietnam.



THE LAST act of the 30-year Vietnam war is being played out. The devastation and the horror is immense.

The responsibility for this agony, for the long lines of refugees, for the thousands of starving children, lies with the American government, which ravaged Vietnam rather than see its own ability to dominate the world put in question.

And it lies with the Saigon government, representing one of the most corrupt and unpopular ruling classes in the world, determined to hang on to its wealth and its privileges until the last possible moment, regardless of the cost in terms of blood and suffering.

The Thieu and the Kys know they are defeated, that Saigon cannot continue to support their extortion, their drug rackets, their corruption for more than a

WHAT WE THINK

few months at the most.

Yet rather than admit defeat, they are prepared to ensure that thousands more die, that hundreds of thousands starve.

There could hardly be more tangible proof of the socialist contention that those who live by exploitation will never give up their position peacefully, that they will seek to drag down humanity rather than see their system challenged.

Only decisive action to smash their power can stop the agony being prolonged. That is why we support fully the liberation forces, the National Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, in their endeavours to smash the Thieu regime militarily.

The US government and the British press are trying to hide the reality of the situation with a hullabaloo about the need to evacuate orphans to the West. They have continued in their efforts, despite repeated statements by various charitable agencies to the effect that such evacuation is not needed.

What is needed is a government in Saigon that can feed the children—and that will not come until Thieu's forces are defeated. Yet the same planes that fly out orphans carry in more arms to prolong the war.



Meanwhile, the western press has more or less ignored the call of the Provisional Revolutionary government for food to feed the two million children and their mothers in the areas it has recently occupied.

There is no anti-communist propaganda to be made out of giving aid to the PRG. And so 'left wing' Labour minister Judith Hart takes part instead in the orphan-grabbing hysteria.

For socialists, however, there is also another, much more heartening lesson. The imminent collapse of the Saigon regime shows that the world's most powerful ruling class, that of the US, has been unable to defeat a determined struggle by the people of one of the world's smallest countries.

The implications are immense. Already the Americans are expressing doubt over their ability to intervene to protect capitalism in Portugal—although they will try if they get the chance.

Vietnam shows that those who own and control the most massive concentration of wealth and destructive power in history are not all-powerful.

Their power rests upon feet of clay that determined, organised, popular action can sweep away.



A crippled girl, a napalmed baby, two lives shattered by the US Air Force, to re-emerge as statistics of 'kill ratios' from the Pentagon's computers. BELOW (right), the instant of death in Saigon for a NLF guerrilla, from the hand of Saigon's secret police boss.



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ganda claimed the reason for presence in to 'protect democracy'.

et files of the published as papers—reveal a The Pentagon sons for going 1964.

It assigned 70 per cent to avoid a humiliating US defeat, and 20 per cent to keep Vietnam and neighbouring territories from the Chinese.

The official reason, the one pumped out by the western press, to aid the Vietnamese so they could get a better life, received only ten per cent.

this?

The Southern troops, demoralised and without any discipline, are running riot. In Da Nang, *Le Monde* reported, the main concern of South Vietnamese army officers was to get themselves and their families onto the planes ahead of other refugees.

In the coastal town of Nha Trang, retreating soldiers were looting and firing their weapons when asked to pay in restaurants.

A French teacher who escaped from Da Nang hanging to the bottom of a helicopter told *Le Monde* how the helicopter had had to fly high over the town for some hours while South Vietnamese troops shot at it.

Bitter

It is not necessary to believe the reports in the North Vietnamese press of cheering welcomes for PRG forces to see that they do not pose a threat to the vast mass of ordinary Vietnamese people.

The war has been a long and bitter one, and there will be acts of revenge—some of them perhaps excessive and unjustified. But the main aim of the North Vietnamese and the PRG will be to reconstruct the South Vietnamese economy wrecked by 15 years of American aggression.

Already the Hanoi government is preparing to send supplies and technicians to the South. They are scarcely likely to indulge in the massacre of ordinary workers and peasants, let alone of orphan babies.

A South Vietnamese soldier who had been behind the lines of the liberation forces told the *Sunday Times* how orderly life was, in sharp contrast to the chaos in Saigon.

In the space of a few hours, the Vietcong had set up a complete apparatus of local govern-

ment. They were issuing their own identity cards to the people of the city and they dished out parcels of food. They ordered shops to reopen and ordered people to resume their daily lives as normal.

Hate

Meanwhile, in Saigon, far from being carried away by anti-Communist hysteria, students in one technical school struck and demonstrated in protest at the lowering of the conscription age.

And the *Le Monde* correspondent in Da Nang quotes a South Vietnamese air force captain, as saying:

'I hate the Communists. For 20 years I've been told that everything must be sacrificed for the freedom of the country. But what freedom? The freedom to

be thrown on to the streets, to be massacred by looting soldiers, to die of hunger and thirst, to be abandoned by the politicians?'

'When the Communists come, I shall offer to co-operate. I don't want to know any more about this cynical and incompetent government.'

We do not believe that a PRG victory will make Vietnam into a socialist paradise. Indeed, we believe there will be more sharp struggles ahead for the Vietnamese people.

But, in the short term, there is only one answer to the misery and suffering in Vietnam.

It is not charity; not sentimental, crocodile tears about orphans.

It is the total defeat of the Thieu gang and the reunification of Vietnam.

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LETTERS

Send your letters to LETTERS, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2. Please try to keep them to not more than 250 words. Let us have your name and address but specify if you don't want your name published.

Wages, not import controls, are the key

THE FISHERMEN'S blockade has once again highlighted the hypocrisy of the bosses' press and the class basis of the 'rule of law'.

When building workers organise an effective picket and so provide a shining example to the rest of our class, they are physically attacked on the sites, slandered in the press, charged under the conspiracy laws and given savage jail sentences.

But when farmers have a punch-up with the police in Liverpool or Seiner-skippers block the Humber, to and behold they are treated sympathetically by the press—Hearts of Oak, ran a headline in last Tuesday's Express—and the law.

Now, as socialists, we don't call for equally savage sentences for building workers,

Slogan on one of the trawlers blockading Hartlepool harbour last week. They get 10p a pound for cod that's sold in the shops at 50p



farmers and fishermen, but it is important for us to point out and explain this difference in treatment.

The farmers and fishermen, with their calls for import controls, help divert attention away from the wages struggle.

Of course, when we talk of fishermen or farmers we must differentiate between the owner skipper and United Fisheries.

The former, like all small businesses, are being hardest hit by the crisis, and stand to go out of business.

It is important that workers who sympathise with their plight (and in Grimsby they have a great deal of support) do not accept their solutions.

Import controls are a blind alley. Our immediate demands must be on the wages front.—DAVE PHILO, Cleethorpes.

Nurses on the poverty line

A MEETING of nursing shop stewards in Liverpool recently voted to reject the latest pay offer put by the Whitley Council.

Our union, NUPE, is asking for a minimum of £30 a week for a first-year student nurse, with time and a half for Saturday and double time for Sunday to bring them into line with the rest of the hospital workers, time and a third for night duty, and a cost of living safeguard.

Nurses are still one of the lowest-paid groups of workers. The higher authorities rely on the fact that there are certain nurses who won't strike and so keep them grossly underpaid.

It's time the nurses of Britain woke up. The so-called rise we were getting through the Halsbury Inquiry was a farce. We got nothing out of it. The people who were better off were the people who told us not to go on strike!

There are nurses who are starving. Some say the cost of food has gone up so much that they can only eat for the first two weeks of a month.

Nurses just can't afford to live at poverty level any longer. We perform a job and want paying in keeping with our responsibilities and abilities.—R GREGORY, Secretary, Liverpool Eastern District Nurses Branch, NUPE.

WHY WE MUST DEFEND OUR HEALTH SERVICE

THERE IS a fight going on in the hospitals—a fight to protect the National Health Service and prevent private practice from taking over more of the NHS hospitals equipment and beds.

I don't know if British workers realise what it's like to have no public health service. Here are two examples of the 'health service' in the United States.

The first comes from Workers Power, the paper of the International Socialists in the US. A woman had been told she must have a crucial operation on her jaw. She and her husband have no money. The doctors won't do anything until they are guaranteed the money.

Her husband, who is 58, is trying

to sell one of his eyes to raise the cash.

The second case I know from personal experience. My father, who lives in the US, fell ill. After three weeks of x-rays, liver scans, bone scans, etc, they discovered he had cancer. He has health insurance, so you'd think all was fine.

But, during that time and since, he has had the strain of filling in long insurance forms, medicare forms (the US government pays a percentage of some of the bills of pensioners), querying two bills sent for one operation etc. The worry of sorting out the bills has, needless to say, done nothing to improve his condition.—JENNY JACKSON, London N.16.

POSTAL POINTS

WHO IS FOOLING WHOM? . . . An editorial in the Daily Express gave an interesting example of the distortion of facts perpetrated by the press and parliament. It directly relates the huge electricity price increases to the recent miners' wage settlement, and yet on its report on page two it quotes Energy Minister Eric Varley's announcement that an additional 7½ per cent would be added later . . . to cover recent increases in fuel costs.—JOHN MERRIMAN, Nottingham.

ONE DEVELOPMENT in the press is the threat by employers, such as GKN, who are telling their employers that to withdraw from the EEC will most certainly endanger their jobs. Statements like these must be taken up and argued against, almost before the ink is dry.—LOSBORNE, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

THE CORPORATION of the City of Glasgow have placed a school crossing . . .

on the south-bound carriage-way of the Kingston Bridge . . . Two children were hit by a van, and the local mothers rebelled, called out the workers in the nearby engineering factory, and held a demonstration. Harry Selby, local MP, marxist, said 'the situation had been exaggerated out of all proportion. You know what happens when a bridge is built; children start dropping stones on the traffic!'—BILL THOMSON, Glasgow.

SOME CRITICISM for the lack of organisation at the National Front counter demonstration in Islington . . . the Left can claim some form of victory in that it mobilised four or five times as many people as the NF. But, the NF marched and were still allowed a platform, even though it was in a dark rathole of a back street.—JOHN HAYES, STEVE FOREY, Kensal Green, London.

PRISON LIBRARIES do not cater

particularly well for the needs of political prisoners . . . We appeal to your readers to help the many Irish political prisoners serving long prison terms in this country . . . by sending us books and pamphlets about socialism, and the great men and women of the Irish and English working class.—MAURICE MOONE, Prisoners Aid Committee, 318 Lillie Road, London SW6.

THE RACE Relations Board recently found the publican of the Railway Tavern, Mile End, guilty of racial discrimination. The brewery, Charringtons, have pledged that none of their pubs will operate a colour bar. The publican has resigned for 'personal reasons' and will not run another Charrington's pub. This victory came after a campaign by local residents and trade unionists to boycott the pub. A series of pickets turned away many prospective customers. This is the way to win!—JENNY JACKSON, London N16.

Shrewsbury Two: We must fight as a class

I RECENTLY attended a trades council meeting in Blackpool on the Shrewsbury pickets and the contributions from the platform, aimed at convincing the audience of the individual innocence of the Two, were devoid of political debate and criticism.

You cannot merely show a short film and speak briefly on the issue without giving the (unwanted) impression of pleading to be believed.

There was no direction at all of how to organise, who was to co-ordinate action, and why what had been done so far has failed to free comrades Warren and Tomlinson.

It's no good simply reducing the issues to a few crooked employers in one industry, and a couple of crooked judges. No effort is made to show how many workers, victimised by the courts, employers, unions and anti-working class laws, suffer a similar fate, and how we need to look at the wider issues, and that the task is for all workers to fight as a class.

Say the trade union movement did organise on a scale sufficient to free the two remaining comrades in prison. What happens then? Do they all disband, go home and feel justly proud that 'they showed 'em' and wait until the next time?

As more and more people realise the evil of this system, so the sharpness of class politics needs to be drawn tighter together.

The working class and revolutionary organisation need each other. This becomes more and more obvious each week.

Socialist Worker sells more than ten times the IS membership, and its influence is even greater. All these peoples should do more than 'think' about joining IS before it's too late.

You must admit, that sooner or later, unless more people join, Spain, Greece and Chile will happen here. Don't let it.—JOHN WORTH, Blackpool.

Giving the lie to racism

READING Tony Cliff's 'The Crisis, Social Contract or Socialism' teaches us to compare what he wrote with what we hear at work and in society.

When people say that black immigrants take all their money back to their own countries Tony's book counteracts this. He writes that billions of pounds are taken out of this country by the bosses.

With the crisis getting worse and workers going on the dole this is when the politicians step in with people like the National Front and Enoch Powell. The majority of black workers in this country work in the most poorly paid jobs with the worst conditions.

Many of these jobs have many vacancies, but no-one wants to know them when there are plenty of jobs around—like public transport.

When the workers travel on public transport to join the dole queue many will believe what fascists say about the blacks stealing jobs, taking money out of Britain.

We must organise against these parties that grow in crises like this one. For the fortunate people still working full time we must throw out productivity deals, short time working etc. On the Burnley buses we threw out productivity deals following our small pay rise.

If we hadn't the long service bus workers would have joined the dole queues and our many vacancies would suddenly have been filled. Black workers will be blamed by fascists for hurting our fellow workers. To counteract this when there is any sign of redundancies the answer is occupation, with blacks and whites supporting each other.—JEFF ALI, Burnley.

A CAUSE FOR CONCERN



Sponsored by: Fitzborough TGWU shop stewards committee, Rotherham Branch, Construction Section, AUEW, Holman's Colliery AUEW shop stewards committee.

5p (plus postage) from Rank and File Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

WOMENS VOICE



April issue now out. Articles on the women workers' fight against redundancies in Hull and Glasgow, women in the Portuguese revolution, the right to abortion, the Women's TUC, the nurseries campaign, among others.

6p, plus 6p postage, (£1.50 for a year) from Women's Voice, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Their army - or ours?

I WAS IN THEIRS - BUT IT HELPED TURN ME INTO A SOCIALIST

HARD CASES, they called us. And Liverpool bred many in the dark days between the wars with a built-in sense of humour that saw us through adversity.

With millions unemployed and employers dictating wages, we had no spare cash but we managed a laugh, even if the joke was on us.

We never passed a chip store without cadging scraps. We were at least fortunate in having shoes to wear. It was commonplace to see kids going barefoot.

The scholarship I won offered me the benefits of extended schooling and higher education, but it was a luxury beyond our means and I had to quit school to earn my living or join the never-ending dole queue.

Although our young intellectuals could not assess the full implications of the inevitable, and growing, crisis of capitalism which affected our lives so vitally, we sensed the sickness in a society where advancement depended upon your ability to outsmart, twist and tread the other fellow down.

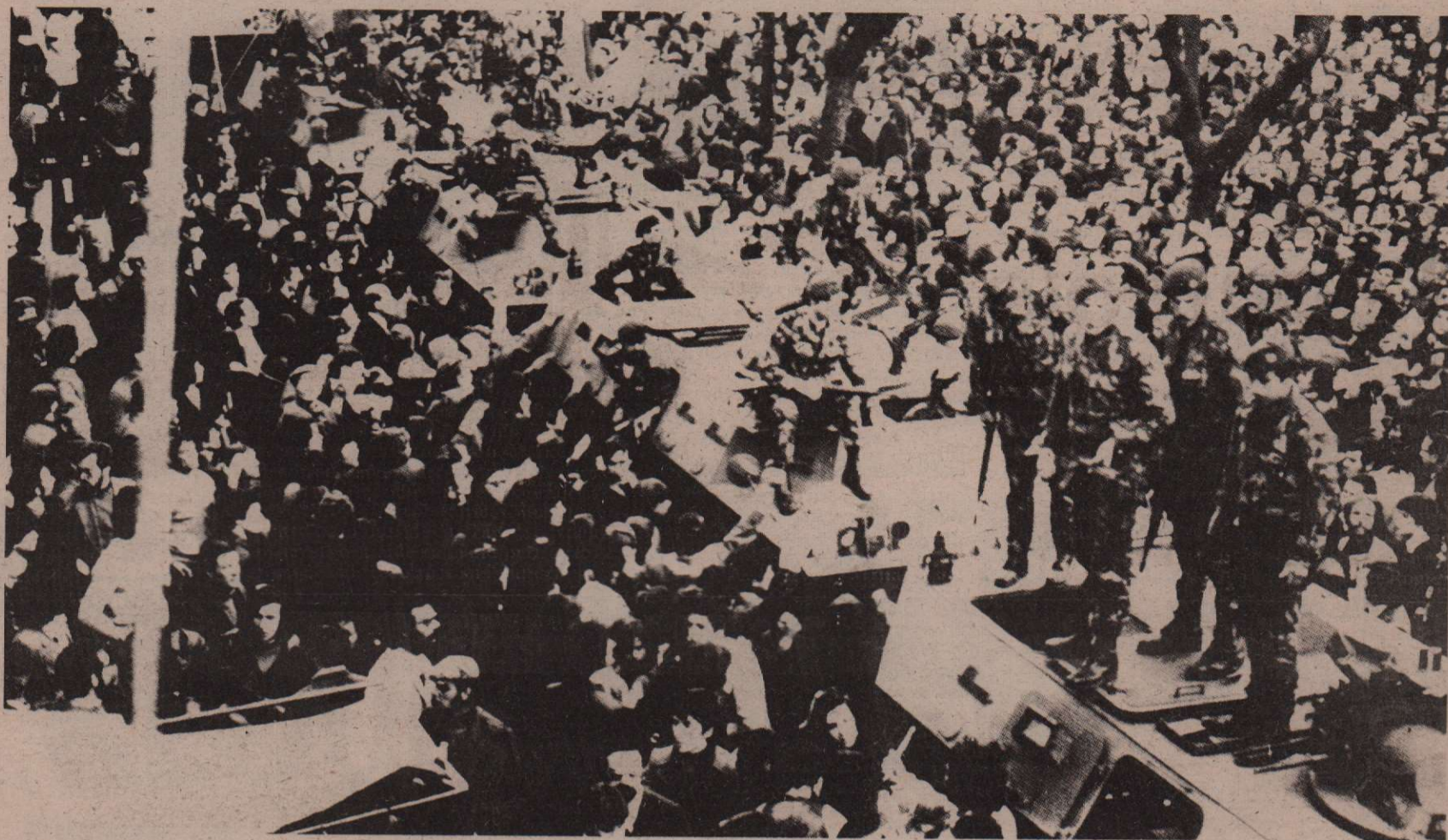
Vacancies did exist. The recruiting office always had the welcome mat down, conning the unwary with high-sounding guff about the physical and educational advantages 'seeing the world, learning a trade'.

Dotted line

I suppose becoming an accomplished, licensed killer is a trade of sorts. Believing the world really was inhabited by uncouth and lawless types who couldn't survive without the benevolent restraining influence of the British Army, I signed on the dotted line.

Disillusionment was a gradual process. It was hard to accept that our outfit was typical, but I was to discover the same standards applied through the whole worm-eaten system: stooges, crawlers and yes-men were earmarked for promotion.

As NCOs, these servile creatures abused their power, destroying the character of good men. Martial justice was a sick joke with false testimony and cooked evidence. Like a lottery, you paid your money and took your chance with the innocent guilty, and vice versa. Commanding officers were often too senile or



When troops come over to our side

THIS IS PORTUGAL . . . and the cheering crowds have no doubt whose side these rank and file soldiers are on.

Hours before, their regiment—RAL 1—had been attacked in the abortive coup. Now they are on their way to guard key bridges against possible sabotage by right-wing officers.

This was the momentous day of 11 March. A month

earlier, soldiers from this regiment had been sent to deal with a workers' demonstration against unemployment and NATO . . . and had greeted it with clenched fists and cries of 'Long Live the Working Class'.

Valuable background information for British trade unionists appears in the latest issue of *Our Common Struggle*, the bulletin of the Portuguese Workers' Co-ordinating Committee.

The bulletin goes on to nail many of the press lies about Portugal. And it calls on trade union branches, trades councils, and shop stewards' committees to affiliate to the newly-formed Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese working class which the co-ordinating committee has initiated.

It points out how trade unionists can aid this campaign:

INVITE a member of the PWCC to speak at your branch, trades council, shop stewards' committee, weekend school.

PASS resolutions, through your branches and trades councils to go to annual delegate conference, of support for the Portuguese working class in its struggle for socialism, and call on your national committee to:

Chile

Urgently put strong pressure on the British government to prevent imperialist intervention in Portugal and avoid another 'Chile' situation.

Invite a speaker from the PWCC to annual conference.

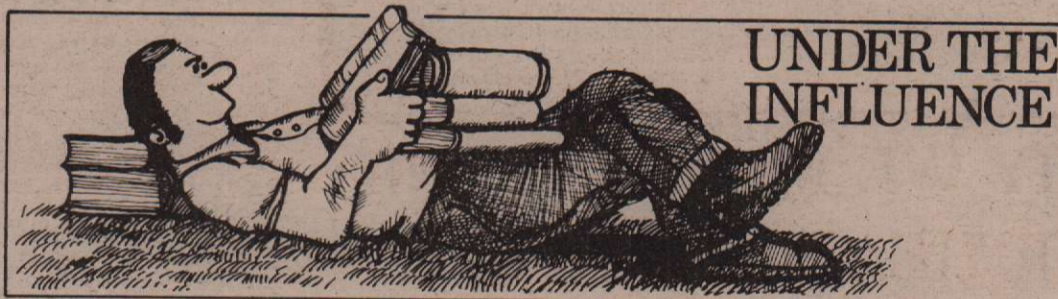
SEND us immediately copies of any resolutions passed which we will forward to the sister trade union in Portugal.

SUBSCRIBE to our newsletter (£1 for a year from PWCC, 18 Fleet Road, London NW3).

AFFILIATE to the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class.

Your affiliation will enable us to expand the flow of information on Portugal and will entitle you to a free copy of our monthly newsletter and any other material we publish.

(Annual affiliation fee: trade union branches and trades councils £5; district and regional organisations £10; national organisations £25.)



By GEORGE OWEN

drunk to know what was going on.

As selectors of the unit cricket XI, we had the temerity to drop the sergeant-major and a top sergeant, who were more ornament than use. I was on the carpet and instructed to pick another team including their nibs. I declined and life was made very uncomfortable.

India was a revelation, a dirty frontier war against 'trouble-makers' who dared to demand a say in running their own country.

The British Raj, playing God as usual, with sickening self-righteousness, sent us to blast pitiful villages off the map and brain-washed us into bloody acquiescence.

The system of promotion being what it was, the leadership was inept and uninspiring. Morale consequently suffered. Officers and NCOs, corrupted by soft living, were thoroughly incompetent—a fact forcibly brought home to me later in battle conditions when we came through in one piece, despite our leaders . . .

The case where a staff captain

lost his nerve and relinquished command to the chaplain was not an isolated one.

My soul-searching began on the North-West Frontier thanks to a particularly smart gunner, a Liverpool lad like me.

A quiet, studious type, he had passed all his higher examinations, had a brilliant intellect and senior NCOs used to solicit his advice.

The obvious question sprang to my mind? why no promotion? The answer came in a whisper. He was a 'Red' with a chestful of dangerous literature.

After giving the matter thought, I decided he must have something and I spent many pleasant and rewarding hours hearing his plain commonsense theories.

I will be eternally grateful to him for removing the blinkers and indicating the only way forward towards justice and the Brotherhood of Man in a socialist world where armies are obsolete.



WHAT made you a socialist? A book, a play—or an experience like George Owen's? Under the Influence has brought forth many memorable recollections from socialists throughout Britain. Let's hear yours. Write to Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2.

ON THE BOX

SUNDAY

ITV (London area): 11.15pm, a new one-hour current affairs slot—**THE LONDON PROGRAMME**, some competent reporters in a series about life/politics in the capital.

MONDAY

BBC-2: 9.30pm. **HORIZON: THE OVERWORKED MIRACLE** examines how bacteria are developing resistance to antibiotics, and thus enabling certain diseases to make unwelcome comebacks.

TUESDAY

RADIO-3: 9.35pm. **A WEEK LIKE ANY OTHER** is a dramatisation of a feature in the Russian literary magazine *Novy Mir*. The BBC claim it is 'a vivid documentary of an average woman's life in the Soviet Union . . . which has considerable relevance to the working wife in this country.' On ITV at 10.30pm is the postponed **ST HELENA: A TALE OF A COLONY**, in

which Kenneth Griffith covers the past and present of this piece of rock in the Atlantic.

Back on BBC-1 at 9.35pm is **THE TUESDAY DOCUMENTARY: GETTING ON**. It revisits five people covered in a programme seven years ago, then about to start 'retirement' and observes how they've got on.

WEDNESDAY

BBC-1: 8.10pm. **Doom** is an increasingly popular dramatic theme (wonder why . . .) and **SURVIVORS** deals with the aftermath of a plague which wipes out 98 per cent of the world's population. Presumably leaving only a few Equity members and some plague resistant cardboard sets . . . BBC-2 at 7.45pm is about the rediscovery of **LA TRINIDAD VALENCERA**, off the Irish coast, the fourth largest ship of the Spanish Armada. The cartoonist creator

of 'The Fosdyke Saga', is featured in **BILL TIDY'S WEEK** at 10.15pm on BBC-2.

THURSDAY

BBC-1: 9.25pm. The red star of the week goes to the repeat of John McGrath's fine play linking the Highland clearances of the past and the oil boom of today. **THE CHEVIOT, THE STAG AND THE BLACK, BLACK OIL**. It is performed by the 7.84 theatre group (seven per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the wealth . . .). If your TV has exploded turn on **RADIO-3** at 9.35pm where the works of the Russian **ANNA AKHMATOVA**, poet of the years of Stalinist purges are discussed.

FRIDAY

BBC-2: 9.30pm. **THE MONEY PROGRAMME** examines **TAXMANSHIP**—how to fill in an income tax return.

AUEW Rank and file action, not elections, the key

IS members of the Engineering Union met in Birmingham last Saturday and discussed the failure of the Communist Party and its Broad Left to deal with increased votes for the right wing in this year's union elections, and the abysmal results of this year's federated pay settlement.

Officials from the Broad Left have shifted to the right because of the Social Contract and the pressure of 'the crisis'. Consequent disillusionment with Broad Left figures and lack of campaigning enthusiasm by union militants was a major cause of the poor vote.

The meeting rejected the notion that the election results indicated an overall shift to the right by the rank and file. This view could not be justified under the present conditions of rising union membership and increasing rank and file militancy.

It could not explain the high vote for Laurie Smith, a revolutionary socialist who topped the poll in the first ballot for National Organiser, with well-known Broad Left candidate Len Brindle third.

The problems of redundancies and short-time working were sharply posed. The need for tight district control of voluntary redundancy was particularly stressed.



The meeting, determined to improve fraction organisation and local work, elected a new fraction executive. Plans for the development of a platform for an active rank and file base against the right wing were supported overwhelmingly.

Such a platform must see the encouragement of rank and file trade unionism and not electioneering as the key to fighting the right.

It should not only involve existing activists in the Broad Left, but all sections of the rank and file anxious to stop the right with fighting policies.

The suggested outline for such a rank and file platform was agreed:

JOBS AND WAGES

For-across-the-board national increases with official campaigning and propaganda within the membership for such claims.

Full equal pay and job opportunity. 35-hour week.

Opposition to all redundancies, for official occupations of factories threatened with redundancies to force the government to nationalise without compensation as a means to guarantee five days' work or five days' pay.

Tight district control of overtime working and voluntary redundancies.

Strengthen shop-floor control of manning levels and work speed.

UNION DEMOCRACY

For bi-monthly district steward meetings from which a majority of the District Committee should be elected.

For official encouragement to the building of combine committees.

For abolition of the postal ballot—full circulation of election addresses.

For average engineering wage for full-time officials and full accountability to the membership.

APPRENTICES AND YOUNG WORKERS

100 per cent trade union membership.

Full adult rates at 16.

For Junior Worker Committees inside each factory, representation on Joint Shop Stewards' Committees, and the right to direct negotiations on wages, conditions etc.

IS public meetings

MANCHESTER IS public meeting: The Past Year of Labour Government. Speaker: Paul Foot. Thursday 24 April, 8pm, Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall Street, Hulme. All welcome.

DUNFERMLINE IS public meeting: No to the Common Market—Yes to a socialist Europe. Thursday 17 April, Carnegie Baths. Speakers to be announced.

IS NORTH AMERICAN GROUP public meeting: Political Situation in the US. Speaker: Pat Denny (founder member of Portland, Oregon IS branch). Thursday 17 April, 8pm, The Roebuck, 108a Tottenham Court Road, London, W1.

NORTH LONDON District IS public meeting: Troops Out of Glasgow! Speaker: A Glasgow trade unionist. Thursday 17 April, 8pm, Red Lion pub, High Road, Tottenham (corner of Lansdowne Road).

SOUTHAMPTON IS public meeting: Troops out of Glasgow! Wednesday 16 April, 8pm, UCATT Hall, Henstead Road.

AVONMOUTH IS public meeting: Health and Safety at Work (with special attention to the chemical industry). Speaker: Pat Kinnersly (author of the Hazards of Work). Wednesday 16 April, 7.30pm, Room B, Twyford Community Centre, High Street, Shirehampton. All welcome one in a series of meetings.

WEST MANCHESTER IS public meeting: One year of Labour government. Speaker: Paul Foot (editor, Socialist Worker). Thursday 24 April, 8pm, Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall Street, Hulme.

CAMBRIDGE IS public meeting: The Workers' Struggle in Portugal. Speaker: Joanna Rollo (IS Portugal Group). Monday 14 April, 8pm, Duke of Argyle, Argyle Street (off Mill Road).

Meetings for IS members

LONDON IS NALGO fraction meeting: Wednesday 23 April, 7.30pm, Earl Russell pub, Pancras Road, NW1. All London NALGO members to attend.

BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY IS AGGREGATE: Sunday 13 April, 7.30pm. All members should contact their branch secretaries for details and make every effort to attend.

IS ATTI Fraction: Aggregate meeting, Saturday 19 April, 11am, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. If you have not received notice and information, contact Vince Hall, 24 Estcourt Terrace, Leeds 6. IS members of ATCDE also welcome. Admission by IS card.

IS AFRICA GROUP day school: Sunday 20 April, 11am-6pm, Central London Polytechnic, Marylebone Road, London NW1. Sessions on Africa—the world context, South Africa and detente. The Future of Mozambique and Angola, New colonialism in Africa, Solidarity action in Britain. Accommodation available. Further details from IS Africa Group, c/o 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

AN IS Shipyard Workers fraction is being established. The first meeting will be in Liverpool on Saturday 19 April. Further details contact IS national office (01-739 6273).

IS ASTMS Fraction: Aggregate meeting in Birmingham Digbeth Hall, Sunday 13 April, 2.30pm.

EDINBURGH IS District aggregate meeting: Thursday 10 April, 7.30pm, Trade Union Centre, 12 Picardy Place (Room 7). Pre-conference discussion and area reorganisation. All IS members to attend. Entrance by membership card.

IS TGWU members' national fraction meeting: Saturday 7 June. Keep this date free.

IS EEPFU fraction meeting: This Saturday 12 April. Contact fraction secretary or IS national office (01-739 6273) for details.

IS Motor fraction executive: Sunday 20 April, 11am, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.



ENTRIES for this column must be posted to reach Socialist Worker by Monday morning—and remember the 'first class' post takes two days as often as one. Due to pressure of work we cannot take What's On entries over the phone. Entries here are free for IS branches and other IS organisations.

LONDON IS Teachers' aggregate meeting: Wednesday 16 April, 6pm, Earl Russell, Pancras Row (near Kings Cross). All IS teachers in London to attend.

NATIONAL IS Teachers' aggregate meeting: Saturday 26 April, in Birmingham. All-day creche, and accommodation available. If you have not yet received details, contact J Holborow, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

SOUTH EAST LONDON IS District aggregate meeting: Wednesday 23 April, 7.45pm, Charlton House, The Village, SE7. Discussion and decisions on national and district reorganisation, election of district committee, resolutions to conference. All IS members to attend.

IS STUDENT CONFERENCE: Weekend 17-18 May. Details will be circulated.

BRITISH RAIL IS FRACTION first meeting: Saturday 19 April (note changed date) in Manchester. More details next week. Important that all IS members in ASLEF, NUR and TSSA attend.

ESSEX IS Conference Aggregate: Sunday 27 April, Chelmsford Labour Party HQ, London Road, includes important meeting for all SW organisers and branch treasurers. More details next week.

IS notices

Speakers notes now available on **THE REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL**, 2p each plus stamped addressed envelope from Pete Marsden, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT IS Social: The Mermaid, junction of Warwick and Stratford Road, Saturday 19 April. Bar till 11.30pm. Disco, jazz band and other entertainments. Tickets 50p in advance from IS Books, Birmingham. (Phone 021-643 5717). 60p on door.



What we stand for

THE International Socialists are a revolutionary socialist organisation open to all who accept our main principles and who are willing to work to achieve them. These principles are:

Independent working-class action We believe that socialism can only be achieved by the independent action of the working class.

Revolution not reformism We believe in overthrowing capitalism, not patching it up or gradually trying to change it. We therefore support all struggles of workers against capitalism and fight to break the hold of reformist ideas and leaders.

The smashing of the capitalist state The state machine is a

weapon of capitalist class rule and therefore must be smashed. The present parliament, army, police and judges cannot simply be taken over and used by the working class. There is, therefore, no parliamentary road to socialism. The working-class revolution needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state, based on councils of workplace delegates.

Work in the mass organisations of the working class We believe in working in the mass organisations of the working class, particularly the trade unions, and fighting for rank and file control of them.

Internationalism We are internationalists. We practise and campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries, oppose racialism and imperialism, and fully support the struggles of all oppressed peoples. We are opposed to all immigration controls.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation. Russia, China and Eastern Europe are not socialist but state capitalist. We support the workers' struggle in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

The revolutionary party To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party, and all the activity of the International Socialists is directed to the building of such a party by fighting for a programme of political and industrial demands that can strengthen the self-confidence, organisation and socialist consciousness of the working class.

WE ARE

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials. No secret negotiations. All settlements to be voted on by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism. Against all victimisations and blacklisting. Against anti-trade union laws or curbs on the right to strike and on effective picketing.

Against productivity or efficiency deals. Against any form of incomes policy under capitalism.

Against unemployment, redundancies and lay-offs. Instead we demand five days work or five days pay, and the 35-hour week. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' control.

For militant trade union unity, joint shop stewards committees at plant and combine level.

For the building of a national rank and file movement which will fight for these policies in the trade union movement.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black people. Against all immigration controls. For the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.



by Mike Walsh
YESTERDAY we started a paper sale outside the West Gorton factory in Manchester of ICL. I was the only one there, and while standing on some cobbles by the pavement at the main gate the works gate-man came up and told me to move off—he said the cobbles were the company's private property! He then went back to his office and returned with a smartly suited guy. This latter told me to move on to the pavement, a distance of about two feet.

I did this, and, after exchanging a few words, he turned to go but instead suddenly swung round, punching me in the stomach, quickly followed by an attempted knee in the balls, twisting my glasses frame and trying to get the copies of Socialist Worker off me. I was rather surprised, and ended up on my back.

Telling me not to bring any papers back again, they went back to their office.

I phoned the police, and, after hearing what I had to say, they went to look for the man. When they came back they told me his name and that he claimed to have hit me while I was on the company's cobblestones (wrong and irrelevant).

They said they couldn't do anything about it, but if I wanted to pursue it I could take out a private summons. I later found out that Bob Hilton is the boss of the security section at the factory, and is an ex-chief inspector of police in Manchester.

This morning we had six people at the factory gate and had a very successful paper sale, complete with photographer in case of trouble. There were no incidents, apart from ICL phoning the police as we were 'causing an obstruction'.

RALLIES AGAINST THE MARKET

RALLIES are being organised around the country this weekend by the Left Labour Tribune group:

LONDON: Thursday 10 April, 7.30pm, Central Hall, Westminster.

MANCHESTER: Friday 11 April, 7.30pm, Free Trades Hall, Peter Street.

CARDIFF: Saturday 12 April, 2.30pm, Great Hall, Joint Students Union, Clerk Place, Cathays.

GLASGOW: Sunday 13 April, 7.15pm, City Hall, Candleriggs.

Manchester IS has organised a picket of the meeting there, using the Common Market posters Socialist Worker has produced. Other IS branches are urged to do the same, sell copies of Socialist Worker, and distribute leaflets.

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY DIES

ART FOX, one of a handful of American revolutionaries who refused to sell out or give in, died of cancer last month at the age of 54. He built a rank and file opposition, the United National Caucus, in his union, the United Auto Workers. The UNC is now fighting the massive lay-offs in the car industry, and for maintenance of the Supplemental Unemployment Benefits fund. Art worked with the American International Socialists in the UNC. He also made contributions as a marxist economist. Our tribute will be to carry on his life's work—a working class revolution.

If you agree with the views expressed in this paper and would like more information, or would like to join the International Socialists, then send this form to: **The International Socialists, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN**

Name _____

Address _____

Trade Union _____

Democracy: An important letter

WORKERS in a factory near Southampton recently voted to set up a small action committee which would meet in secret and be able to issue instructions, to be obeyed by the workers, to occupy parts of the factory.

They were unable to decide publicly in advance precisely which part they would occupy at what time because the management would have been able to barricade them out, or take other precautions. Surprise was the key to their tactics.

So the workers agreed their general aims, their strategy for achieving them, but left the tactics to the action committee. All the workers bound themselves to accept the committee's instructions, even if they disagreed with them. If the

SOCIALIST WORKER (22 March) suggested that to increase democracy in the TGWU the minutes of committees should be circulated. On another page in the same issue the report of the IS conference says 'it was unanimously agreed to stop the production and circulation of minutes of the leading committees... and administrative, financial and other confidential matters will not be divulged at all.' This seems to be a step away from the democratic control of the organisation by the membership and towards the secrecy and bureaucracy that all socialists should be fighting against in their own unions.-S. HART, Bodmin, Cornwall.

tactics failed, or if the committee worked badly, it could easily be recalled and replaced.

The workers were able to operate like this for two reasons. They could control the committee—and everyone had as much to gain or lose by the tactics followed.

A trade union is different. The full-time officials have interests which are not always those of their members. They tend to be paid three or four times as much as those they represent.

If their members are on strike, the officials don't have to wait

weeks for strike pay. They carry on drawing their salary. Their job doesn't directly depend on what they advise. A factory can close but they will still have a job.

And, unlike a shop steward, most officials are appointed, even in a union like the TGWU. Even those who are elected often don't have to stand for re-election. Some are elected for life, most appointed for life. Recall is in practice impossible.

Fighting to get the minutes of meetings held between officials is one way of trying to exercise some control over what they are doing.

But the action committee in the factory had to meet in secret because of the special job it had to do, and because of the relationship between the committee and its members.

IS is different again. Our full-time workers (like all our leading committees) are subject to annual re-appointment.

In the course of the year, members holding leading positions are frequently changed by the national committee, elected by our Annual Conference to do that.

In any case, unlike in a trade union, our full-time workers receive far less than the average wage of IS members or readers of Socialist Worker.

Useful

If it were just the democratic control over who holds what position which mattered, there would still be a case for issuing information about who our members are, where we have branches and so on. But like the action committee, and unlike the trade union, we have a job to do which makes that sort of information useful to employers, the police, and organisations such as the National Front.

Unlike the trade union, which groups together all workers to defend their conditions and organisation, IS tries to group together the best socialists and militants in a factory or work-place into a unit of a revolutionary socialist party aimed at replacing the system we live under with a workers' state.

Our internal organisation has to match up to this aim. While we must have democratic control, we also need to be able to act far more rapidly and decisively than any trade union.

Quoted

Like the Southampton action committee, much of what we decide about how to intervene most usefully in, for example, a factory occupation, cannot be discussed openly without weakening us by strengthening the employer.

This is not simply talk. In the last month, several IS internal documents have been quoted extensively in the anti-working class Daily Telegraph.

The Aims of Industry, an employers' organisation, has also circulated IS internal documents. This information is not just generally damaging to us. It threatens the jobs of many of our members.

No IS member hides his politics inside the factory, but we cannot expose our members to needless risks by allowing names and detailed information to be circulated.

Because of our size, because we have to rely on the post to circulate documents, there is no way we can guarantee any document we print will not get into the wrong hands.

In a book just published (Oswald Mosley by Robert Skidelsky) the writer describes how, in the 1930s, the Special Branch had access to all the decisions taken by the Communist Party within 24 hours.

Debate

It would be stupid to assume that the Special Branch is any less acute today.

All the political decisions taken by leading bodies of IS will be explained by Socialist Worker. This way they will reach far more people than they ever could in the old minutes that were circulated through branch secretaries.

There will still be debate and argument about what is decided.

But, while protecting and encouraging debate and argument inside the organisation and with the readers of Socialist Worker, we are also ending the practice of endangering our members and activities by publishing operational decisions.

Like the action committee, the general strategy must be discussed and debated, but the operational decisions need to be followed, and those responsible for them will stand or fall on their record.

By PETER CLARK

SPEKE: ACTION OVER REDUNDANCIES

by Tommy Healey

Secretary, Speke TU Committee

THIRTY delegates attended the second meeting of the Speke area Trade Union Committee last Sunday.

The committee, sponsored by Evans Medical Shop Stewards Committee, was launched on the issues of redundancies, short-time working, and lay-offs locally.

We felt the only way to defend ourselves against redundancies and factory closures was to set up a defence committee that could go into action immediately help was asked for. It would offer financial, industrial and moral support, and would involve the whole Speke area.

Delegates from shop stewards and branch committees representing Fords, Dunlops, Plesseys, Dista, Evans Medical, British Rail, Garston and Speke Bus Garages, Hunts Engineering, Silcock and Collins, Synthetic Resins, Speke Community Council and Liverpool Housing Department set up a ten-man defence committee and spoke of the need to fight redundancy.

TACTIC

At our previous meeting, we decided to support the May Day demonstration and print leaflets to hand out on it. We are also to carry our own banner.

One thing we are to hammer home is that short-time working is the bosses' softening-up process and can lead to redundancies, as we have seen at Vauxhall's at Ellesmere Port.

We have also, as a tactic to fight redundancy payments, to say that we will not allow any worker who has volunteered for redundancy to be employed in our workplaces.

Selling jobs is no answer. Once a job is sold it has gone for ever, so this decision must be seen as a way of protecting jobs. We will meet again in a month, but we will act immediately if asked.

We have received inquiries from other areas on Merseyside who are interested in setting up similar committees. We hope this idea will spread and that we shall have an all-Merseyside Committee.



Some of the 28 delegates at the Speke committee's first meeting: 30 attended the second meeting last Sunday.

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

1200 locked out at Hopkinson's

HUDDERSFIELD:—1200 engineers and foundry workers are locked out at Hopkinson's, described as 'one of the most anti-union firms in the district' by Stephen Guest, AUEW shop steward and convener of the Joint Shop Stewards.

The struggle began with a demand to bring wages in line with leading factories in the area—an increase of about £11 a week. Management insisted on redundancies though order books had never been more full. And they victimised stewards for reporting back to their members.

The workers struck for a day and a half, and then put on an overtime and piecework ban when the management made a derisory offer. The employers tried to provoke a strike just before Easter—presumably to save £20,000 in

holiday pay—by sending home service engineers who refused to work overtime.

When this failed, the management said 'normal working or else'. The workers had voted not to lift sanctions until there was a concrete pay offer. So, on 26 March, the bosses locked out all but the electricians, supervisory and clerical staff.

The workers are demanding: payment to stewards victimised over reporting back; additional threshold payments from November—when the previous agreement ended—of 60p for every percentage increase in the Retail Price Index; holiday pay for Easter; and a serious pay offer to bring them into line with other firms in the area.

Management see this as an important battle. The company secretary, previously a full-timer

for the local employers' federation, has derided other firms for paying threshold agreements. If the employers win, their hand will be strengthened in the coming round of local annual wage negotiations.

Local engineers also appreciate the significance of the battle. Shop stewards' committees at two local firms have offered £100.

Full-time union officials will be meeting with the company—but shop stewards insist they will recommend no deal that does not cover their demands. One worker said: 'We've lost many little battles here. But this is the big one—we'll win if it takes months.'

Messages of support and contributions to L. Robinson, 159 Almondbury Bank, Huddersfield.

CHILEAN MINERS TO COME TO BRITAIN

THE campaign to get trade unionists out of jail in Chile by finding them jobs in Britain has had several recent successes.

Chilean miners are to be offered jobs in South Wales after talks between the South Wales area executive of the NUM and the Coal Board.

Jobs are in the pipeline for three Chilean hospital workers in the London area.

Pressure from Rank and File teachers has brought discussion between the NUT and the Department of Education about jobs for 30 Chilean teachers. The problem is to get Chilean teaching qualifications recognised—but an agreement has been reached in principle.

The campaign is being organised by the Rank and File Organising Committee, who are still looking for jobs—particularly in engineering, the railways, and ordinary labouring jobs.

'We have received a letter from the wife of a jailed agricultural workers' union leader, from which it is clear that we need to get him out of Chile very quickly,' said



Roger Cox, secretary of the committee. 'We ask all supporters to approach their employers to secure a letter offering him any kind of job. He has worked in the past as a textile machinist and a driver.'

VISA

His wife and three children have hardly any money and have been blacklisted by the Chilean authorities. She has applied to the British Embassy for a visa, but the problem would be solved if a job and work permit could be found for her husband.

This is only the most urgent case

the committee is dealing with. There are still hundreds of trade unionists in jail in Chile. Many have been tortured.

The Rank and File Organising Committee is now able to broadcast details of its campaign direct to Chile through a radio station in Algeria, Voice of the Resistance, which is on the air for half an hour every night.

More than 70 trade union branches, trades councils and shop stewards' committees have been involved in the committee's campaign for Chilean trade unionists in the past six months, sending money to prisoners' families, taking part in demonstrations against the Junta, and recently sending a protest delegation to the Chilean Embassy in London which was reported in the national press.

Further details of the Chile campaign and especially the need for jobs can be obtained from the secretary, Rank and File Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

Apprentices: We must get organised

YOU need organisation in any factory, anywhere. Often it's more of a fight, even in well-organised factories, for apprentices.

Here in his own words is the story of one Manchester apprentice—how a strike led to his victimisation and what he's learned from it. He's still serving his time—so he, and the factory, remain anonymous.

Two years ago we were on strike for three months over a piecework question. During it many of the apprentices built up a strong sense of fellowship.

One night while some apprentices were in the factory some stacker trucks ran away and were found wedged in some door. I was one of those who got the blame. I was nowhere near the factory that night.

The dispute finished, I was taken off my milling machine, my trade, and put on a radial arm drill for three months in a corner. I had no one to talk to. This approach is used to make you knuckle down, but it didn't work.

I was brought off and put back on a milling machine where I got semi-skilled jobs. My first warning came when I was eight minutes late one day.

Suspend

The day came round when the apprentices who were up on the charge of causing wilful damage appeared in court, where they were fined £650. I got a pass out to go to the court and see the case, claiming a dentist's appointment. They found it was untrue and tried to suspend me. But the convenor and chairman wouldn't have it. So I was back again.

Meanwhile the apprentices were getting fed up at general bad treatment from management. We managed to book a room and arranged for a public meeting of all the apprentices. I was astounded at the turnout—getting on for 50 lads. We elected treasurer, chairman, and representatives from each section. Then we had regular weekly meetings. We had reps for day and night shifts.

Some sections weren't represented, so we tried working our way round the factory. The management started to put the pressure on again, but all the time there was a great feeling throughout the apprentices that we were getting something done and we weren't going to let them treat us like they had in the past.

Record

Because I took a big part in the organisation I had my neck on the chopping block. It came a lot sooner than I expected. I was called into the office and given a fortnight's notice 'for bad time-keeping'.

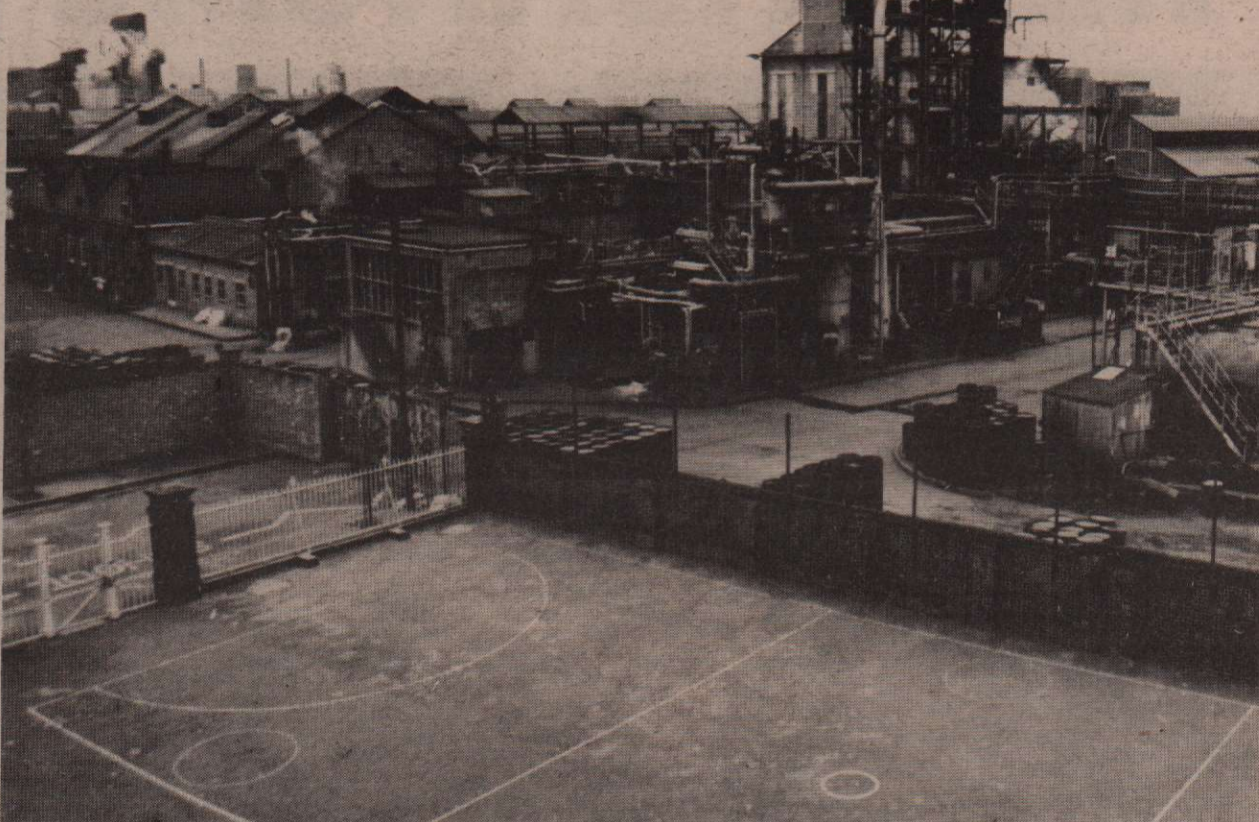
Months earlier I had been called in to be suspended or sacked. At the time I was working in the most militant section in the factory and the men in there wouldn't allow it, not because it was me, but because it was an apprentice. Besides, there were a lot of people with worse records than me.

A lot of organisation is needed outside the factory for junior workers. The last Engineering union district secretary in Manchester re-formed the district Junior Workers' Committee. Every factory was invited to send delegates; only a few did—mainly from three factories.

In some factories apprentices are just used as workers who can be paid less. In some factories thresholds have been scaled down. There is no reason why all junior workers should not get the full rate.

We need a national conference of junior workers, particularly from areas of low employment. There's many a person walking around the factory thinking that the man in the bowler hat is the ultimate, but the ultimate is workers' power. We have to show that we are willing to make a fight against the present vicious way of life.

Would you like your child to play here?



Picture: Martin Adams

ILFORD, Essex: More than 600 school children play in this playground in the shadow of a giant chemical factory where a process worker was killed in an explosion on Saturday.

Only a wall separates Laporte's plant from Uphall Road School, Ilford.

Robert Church, aged 51, of Forest Gate, East London, worked on the production of Sorbitol, a sugar substitute for diabetics. But the process for making Sorbitol can be deadly, and he died when a tank containing high-pressure oxygen and caustic potash ruptured. Three other workers were injured.

Residents near the plant have been fighting to make it safer since the Flixborough disaster last year which killed 28 people. They discovered Laporte's used a similar cyclohexane

oxidation process to that at Flixborough.

They formed an action group to fight for increased safety precautions. On Tuesday the group picketed the school, handing out leaflets to parents. About 100 children were kept at home that day.

But still Laporte have failed to act. They made record profits last year—an increase of more than £4 million.

Now they plan further extensions at the plant. As company chairman John Harvey boasted in the annual report: 'The company is poised for expansion and only matters beyond our control can retard that.'

Obviously the lives of workers, residents and children are considered 'beyond their control'.

AUEW BANS SOCIALIST WORKER

SOCIALIST WORKER has again been banned from reporting the National Committee of the Engineering Union (AUEW). In a letter answering our request for press credentials, Hugh Scanlon, the union's president, writes: 'All press representatives will be invited through the Group of Labour and Industrial Correspondents.'

This group is a professional organisation which is no part of the National Union of Journalists. Its purpose is to facilitate briefing and the collection of information.

David Young of The Times, its secretary, told Socialist Worker: 'It is not the group's function or intention to decide who should be invited to conferences or briefings. The group has no objection at all to anyone else getting credentials to any union conference.'

We urge all AUEW members to raise this matter in their branches. Edmonton No 1 branch of the union has already objected to the ban on Socialist Worker—and this should be followed by others.

Labour club colour bar

by John Rose

LIKE General Custer's last stand—that's how Bernie Bateman, Transport Workers Union branch secretary at Southall bus garage and president of Southall Trades Council, described the attitudes of white members in defence of the colour bar at Southall Labour Club.

Two months ago Bernie tried to sign two of his Asian members into the club as guests before the branch meeting. They were refused entry. That night the branch voted to withdraw from meeting on the club premises. Later club secretary Ken Matthews admitted that it was the club committee's policy to bar coloured people.

Southall's bus garages TGWU branch sparked off a campaign that has led Ealing Trades Council to recommend that its affiliated trade union branches withdraw from meeting on the club premises. Now Southall Labour Party, housed in the building for years, have also withdrawn amid protests from right-wing Labour

councillors that they will resign from the Labour Party and stand as Independents. Local MP Sid Bidwell is backing the local party's moves.

Bernie Bateman told Socialist Worker: 'An integrated society is within our grasp this generation, it's not a dream. It works at Southall bus garage and it can work anywhere.'

Trade union organisation seems to be the key, for he added: 'Asian and West Indian workers are among the best trade unionists. Last year we had a six-month overtime ban and ban on rest day working until a non-union member rejoined the union. The Asian and West Indian lads were solid. Racism simply doesn't exist in the garage.'

Bernie doesn't rule out stepping up the action—including putting a trade union picket on the club—since a condition of club membership is trade union membership. But he's a patient man, perhaps too patient, and is giving the club a little more time to come to terms with the reality.

Classified

Entries for the Classified column must arrive by first post Monday. Adverts will not be accepted over the phone. Charges are 3p a word. CASH WITH COPY to Classified, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2 9DS. Adverts that arrive without payment will be charged at double the rate.

FOREST SCHOOL CAMPS: want leaders for mixed groups of children. Wide age range, lightweight camping, educational organisation to build non-authoritarian community. Experience not essential. Hard work! Contact Aaron Harmer (C) 45 St Helens Gardens, London W10, 6LN.

NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN: Day conference to educate and mobilise women. All women welcome. Saturday 12 April, 10am-6pm, South Bank Poly, Rotary Street, London SE. Plus evening disco, 8pm-Midnight. Bar extension, everyone welcome.

COUPLE WANTED: To share house near Clapham Junction, London. Own attractive room, central heating. To September (possibly longer) £10pw and share bills. Phone R Funcham, 40 Mysore Road, London SW11.

FIGHT THE proposed anti-abortion law—the abortion amendment bill. No return to back street abortion. Meeting in House of Commons. Wednesday 16 April, Grand Committee Room. Broad platform of speakers includes MPs, trade unionists, National Abortion Campaign and Women's Right to Choose.

WEST LONDON THEATRE WORKSHOP, a socialist touring theatre company, with a campaigning play for higher pensions, 'HEROES FIT FOR HOMES', and a second project on the 1926 General Strike for Tech Colleges and TU audiences needs another administrator, with trade union experience and general administrative skills. Needs flexibility and desire to develop politics/perspectives of work. Involves organising of tours. Driving licence desirable. £30 pw. Tel: (01-969 9348). 11 Acklam Road, W10.

ENTERTAINMENT UNIONS Rank and File Bulletin No 2 is out for the ACTT Conference on 12/13 April. The Bulletin is for all workers in the entertainment industry, especially for those in ACTT, ABS, the Musicians Union, Equity, NATKE, and EEPTU. For copy write with a sae to Andy Reilly, 120 Horn Lane, Acton W3 6NY.

GENERAL WILL—Bradford based touring socialist theatre group require immediately two politically committed actor/singers. One to be a musician, piano essential, one to be a driver. Must be prepared to live in Bradford. Apply 25 Blenheim Road, Bradford 8.

MIDDLESEX POLY FILM SHOW: To live in freedom, Israeli-Palestinians in Israel-Palestine, Queensway, Enfield. 17 April 6pm, Room 525.

BOOKPEOPLE, 53 St Mary's Road, Southampton, now has an extended political section covering labour history, marxism, women's liberation, anarchism etc. Left-wing papers and journals stocked. Open, Monday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm.

PUBLIC ORDER—a one day National Conference on Picketing and Demonstrations, for trade unionists. Saturday 3 May, 10.30am-5pm, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1. Speakers include Bernard Dix (NUPE), George Smith (UCATT), George Henderson (Building Crafts Section, TGWU). Organised by the NCLL. Write to Ann Sedley, NCLL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1 for details.

DEFEND THE 14 CAMPAIGN public meeting: Saturday 3 May, 2pm, NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Inn Field, London WC1. Speakers include: Joan Maynard MP, Ernie Roberts (AUEW), Maureen Colquhoun MP, Ossie Lewis (CPSA), Paul Oestreicher (Amnesty International).

The Socialist Party of Great Britain says there is no physical reason why there should be wars, poverty, starvation etc on this earth today. The reasons are political and economic. Any reasonable person would pursue further enquiry. Write to Dept SW, The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN.

IN BRIEF

Reports from Crosfield Electronics, Roneo Vickers, Essex ambulancemen, Sterling Organics, Kingston council workers, Rubber Regenerating, Yarnolds, London telephonists, Walters and Dobsons among others

STAVELEY: 60 women are in their fifth week on strike at Walters and Dobsons. They are production workers, making car tyre gauges and car components.

The dispute arises from management's refusal to pay the second instalment of the last engineering National agreement. The women should have received £2.75 last March to bring their basic up to £24.50, the national minimum basic wage.

The women have regular weekly mass meetings and pickets during the day.

Appeals for support have gone to AUEW branches and shop stewards' committees. Hull dockers have agreed to black goods from the works. Mass pickets are planned.

In spite of getting strike pay, money is urgently needed, especially for widows and single women, who are given no social security money. Messages of support and donations to: Mrs C Smith, 20 Clarendon Road, Inkersall, Chesterfield..

CROYDON: Service engineering at the Roneo Vickers' offices are on strike for £300 London Weighting. The company

has offered the 60 members of ASTMS £200 in several stages lasting until 1976. A picket on the offices has turned away the post and oil tankers.

One picket has been wounded by a pellet fired from an air gun by someone inside the YMCA next door. An old lady passing the picket and two pickets were knocked over when an unmarked van reversed at high speed through the picket line. Both incidents have been reported to the police.

KINGSTON: Last Wednesday 300 local authority workers—dustmen, maintenance men, sewage workers, road men—demonstrated outside the town hall against allegations of 'fiddling' bonus schemes.

The men, members of NUPE and UCATT, held up the traffic in the town centre by driving 70 dustcarts and corporation vehicles around the one-way system.

The allegations were made in a secret report by the district auditor, the same man who was responsible for surcharging the Clay Cross councillors.

The men fear the report will be used

as an excuse for redundancies. A more prolonged stoppage is likely if the stewards are not shown the report.

MANCHESTER: Workers at Rubber Regenerating have won their demand for payment for bank holiday Monday. They returned to work on Tuesday after their first strike in 50 years. But they realised the fight with management is only just starting. They are now prepared to fight to win their negotiations for a 28 per cent wage increase.

NORTH LONDON: The workers' occupation at Crosfield Electronics is now in its third week. The workers are determined to stay in until management restore 80 jobs they chopped last month. They have full support from workers in other shops who themselves face short-time working.

But more financial support is needed for London's first major fight-back against sackings. All donations to W Hayward, 34 Dresden Road, London, N19 3BD.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE: Workers at the Dudley and Fandon plants of Sterling Organics are fighting for better working conditions. They are on strike for 15p an hour condition money for handling dangerous chemicals such as Cyanide and Phosgene, a war gas. The company is already paying sub-contractors above their rate for doing the same job.

A 24-hour picket has been mounted by the joint shop stewards' committee.

WOLVERHAMPTON: The Yarnolds strike committee urgently needs funds. The women have been out on strike for 18 weeks for union recognition and against victimisation of their stewards, and now have no money left. Donations and collections should be sent urgently to: Yarnolds Strike Committee, TGWU Offices, Berry Street, Wolverhampton.

EAST LONDON: George Davis was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for alleged armed robbery of an electricity office in Ilford, after only five of 43 witnesses picked him out of identity parades. The five were policemen of the same division.

A campaign has been mounted by Up Against the Law and by the family. There was a demonstration last Saturday supported by more than 300

ESSEX: Ambulancemen are the latest health workers to act against private patients. They are seeking to ban free transport to pay-beds in NHS hospitals or to private hospitals.

The move follows a recent attempt to admit a patient to the private Nuffield Hospital in Brentwood, which is owned by BUPA, the private health insurance company. Six different ambulance stations were asked to providetransport—and every one refused.

THE London Overseas Telephones No 1 Branch of the Union of Post Office Workers has carried the following resolution to go to the union's conference:

Conference deplores the passing of the second reading of James White's Abortion Law (Amendment) Bill, which will effectively reduce the availability of safe abortions and lead to an increase of illegal and dangerous practices. Therefore conference agrees that the union's policy of opposition to this will be pursued and as a first step the executive committee shall notify the UPW MPs of our position, call upon the TUC, Labour Party and any affiliated trades councils to fight this Bill, circulate the other UPW branches with information and calls upon members to write to their MPs.

THE No 15 (London) Divisional Council of ASTMS carried a resolution at their meeting on Saturday calling on the union's general secretary, Clive Jenkins, to withdraw his libel action against Socialist Worker, and condemning him for spending his time in this way.

Sparks battle on

THE battle goes on between local authorities and their electricians, who are demanding the same pay rates as electricians in private contracting industry. The strikes spread south after local authorities in Scotland refused to honour an agreement to pay their sparks the contracting rates.

Now sparks in Leeds, Cardiff, Sheffield and Hull are on strike too. Each week since the start of the dispute, Socialist Worker has carried reports from different areas. This week we print a report from Sheffield sparks:

'We're the forgotten few, on strike for over seven weeks—the local authority electricians. Our main problem? The non-union workers employed by local councils—scabs.

It is despicable when Labour councils, backed by the Labour government firstly ignore our valid pay claim and then use ratepayers' money, your money to break the dispute with highly-paid scab labour. It is typical of the authorities' high-handed bureaucracy. Like the wording on the superannuation scheme—which refers to staff and 'servants'. We'll leave you to guess who the servants are, or should it read 'slaves'?

'The EPTU boss, workers' friend, Frank Chapple, has done little except hold us back. Last week, they finally called out the city engineers.

'We haven't failed to notice that the Labour government had no hesitation in paying the power workers after their one day strike. We haven't got their strength—so other workers' support is vital to stop the strike breaking and help win our claim.

'We call upon you, our fellow trade unionists, to refuse to work on council contracts where non-union labour is used on electrical work.'

Donations and messages of support to Sheffield Electricians Strike Committee, SWD Depot, Worthing Road, Sheffield.

What's happening in Scotland—page 2.

DOCKERS' STRIKE: HOW WE LOST

by Bob Light (TGWU, London Royal Docks)

THE London dockers' strike ended last Friday after a mass meeting in the West India Dock voted to call it off on terms of abject surrender.

The coup de grace for the strike came when the dockers of Hull voted down a recommendation from their stewards to come out. Isolated after five weeks on strike, London dockers lost their confidence.

Now the strike is over the inquest has to begin. Something went badly wrong because, as we have said from the outset, this was a strike dockers badly needed to win. And victory was certainly in our power.

So what went wrong? The authorised version has it that it was London dockers that went wrong. That the men ran away from the battlefield.

There is an element of truth in that. Friday's decision to surrender was taken by a massive majority. Maybe ten to one, or more. And that was against the firm recommendation of the platform.

DOGS

But the cause of death was more complex than that.

From the beginning the strike was ill-founded. There was no campaign to arouse and involve the men.

For eight years the No 1 Docks Group did next to nothing to stop the mass murder of dockers jobs. Then suddenly one January morning the Docks Group unleashed the dogs of war. Better late than never, maybe. But men cannot be turned on like a light switch.

Six weeks later the employers engineered a show-down which caused the strike.

Once the strike began the Docks Group did next to nothing to win it. From the beginning they took the defensive. For them the strike was simply to assert our right to black lorries. At best it was to win a handful of jobs in two London container bases.

This might seem a petty point. It was not. Restricting the issue made it doubly difficult to extend the strike to other ports. The Docks Group could have come out clearly with the demand for the immediate extension of the Dock Labour Scheme. That would have been a platform that gave us the chance to bring in other ports—because they could clearly have seen their interest was at stake.

BRAKE

But that would have meant a political strike against the Labour government and the patron saint of 'lefties' everywhere, Michael Foot. That the loyal Labour supporters on the Docks Group could not allow. We even had the black comedy of a claim from the Docks Group that we were out in support of Mr Foot—which was hard to square with Foot's repeated demands that we go back to work.

So, compromised by their loyalties, the Docks Group called us out on strike, but put on the brake. Their attempts to spread the strike were pitiful. A few delegations to a few ports, asking for nothing more than the blacking of diverted ships. Again purely defensive.

Only after four weeks was any serious attack made on other ports. Then it was

the Royal Group stewards that seized the nettle and sent a flying picket to Hull.

But by then it was too late. With no campaign behind us, with the declared issue at stake one that only indirectly appealed to the Hull dockers, and in the face of a propaganda barrage from the press and TV, the Hull dockers rejected the strike call. From that moment on the London strike was fated.

But not only the Docks Group was at fault. Another casualty of this strike is the National Port Shop Stewards Committee. Despite the fine promises and a log-jam of Communist Party cards, it is a disgusting fact that not one single shop stewards' committee voluntarily called even a mass meeting to put the London case.

WON

And the greatest crime of all is: we could have won. There was no money-back guarantee on that, of course. But if from Day One we had taken the offensive and nailed our colours to the mast of an immediate guarantee of all registered jobs and had we taken the fight to other ports, we could have won.

But the sum total of the strike is not all minus signs. There is a positive side. Something has come out of this defeat.

The Port Employers deliberately provoked this strike, because they did not think London dockers would stand up and fight. They got their fingers burnt.

For five weeks and four days this was the most sustained demonstration of unity in London Docks for a generation. Even last Thursday, at the height of the press frenzy about 'mass scabbing', only 350 men were at work in the whole of the Port of London. That is less than 3 per cent of the work force.

After five weeks out that is the kind of unity that will have to be rebuilt, because now we have to clear up the mess, to overcome the bitterness of London dockers towards other ports, to stave off demoralisation, to give dockers back the confidence in their own power, and to rebuild a national stewards' movement on an honest basis with the will to fight.

Because, make no mistake, the decisive battle over job security in the docks industry has yet to be fought. Michael Foot can offer us nothing but 'peace in our time' bits of paper.

Leyland stewards back meeting

THE British Leyland Combine Committee has agreed to support the call from the Chrysler Linwood Joint Shop Stewards Committee for a meeting of shop stewards from every plant in the motor industry.

The Leyland meeting set the date for the conference as Wednesday 23 April in Birmingham and for all stewards from the big four combines and from components firms.

This meeting is the most important step taken in the industry to fight against layoffs and redundancies. Every shop steward in the industry should raise the meeting on his or her stewards' committee and get as many stewards as possible to attend.

As part of the drive to strengthen shop-floor organisation in the industry, the first issue of new rank and file paper The Leyland Worker appears this week. It has been sponsored by the shop stewards' committee at Tractors and Transmissions in Birmingham.



After weeks of spotlighting the minority of dockers who wanted to return to work, the millionaire press just ignored those who spoke against the return at the final mass meeting. PICTURE: Chris Davies (Report)

Copies are obtainable from 15 Berners Close, Tile Hill, Coventry.

2000 WALK OUT AT VAUXHALLS

THOUSANDS of workers walked out of Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port factory last Thursday after a move to put them back on short time.

A month ago 2000 had accepted voluntary redundancy—in return management had promised a return to full-time work, instead of the three-day week which had become the norm. One week after the 2000 left, Vauxhalls said the plant was returning to three-day working.

By Friday Engineering Union stewards had occupied all communications centres. The Transport Workers Union organised a protest demonstration. For the works committee, Wally Miller emphasised that

the protest was sparked by 'utter disgust' at management behaviour.

That afternoon management confirmed the production cuts, but said no move would follow until discussions with the joint consultative committee.

A mass meeting on Monday morning turned down the stewards' recommendation for a factory occupation—but an overwhelming majority backed direct action when management proposals were clear. Union officials floated the bringing forward of the Christmas holiday to Whitsun, and bringing forward one of the three summer weeks, which was coolly received, but not voted on.

'We're taking no more' was the mood. But a spectre haunts the shop stewards committee—500 names still on the list for voluntary redundancies. Some way has to be found to discourage workers everywhere from accepting voluntary redundancies, which saps the strength of the entire movement.

SHREWSBURY TWO

Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

The families need your support

THE Rank and File Organising Committee is calling for a big effort around May Day to boost the Shrewsbury Dependants' Fund.

This is now the only fund solely concerned with providing help to the families of the jailed pickets. The organising committee is determined that the families shall not have financial problems on top of all the other pressures.

A letter has gone out to all Rank and File Conference supporters urging them to make an extra effort during the various May Day activities, and to take special collections.

To make these collections effective they have produced sticky lapel badges to be given to those who donate, and wrappers for collection tins. Both are available free from the Rank and File Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

All trade unionists are urged to: Order stickers and wrappers now. Collect at all May Day demos and meetings.

Collect at all union and trades council meetings.

Collect at work. Ask other factories to collect. All money to the fund treasurer: Ossie Lewis, 25 Park Road, Cheam, Surrey. Cheques should be made payable to the Shrewsbury Dependants Fund.

The Shrewsbury National Co-ordinating Committee has called a national conference on Saturday 19 April, starting at 2pm at Congress House, Great Russell

Street, London WC1. The Rank and File Organising Committee have written to their secretary, Simon Fraser, suggesting a joint programme, but have not to date had a reply.

We outlined our activities around the Shrewsbury Factsheets, the film, lobbies of

the TV studios and the demonstration we've had. We felt it would be a tragedy if a lot of effort was duplicated. In particular the Dependents Fund needs real support'. Ken Appleby, Rank and File Organiser, told Socialist Worker.

Manchester AUEW No 15 branch is to

sponsor a 'Free the Shrewsbury Two' rally on the evening of 1 May.

The idea is to get other trade union branches to agree to sponsor the meeting.

The rally will feature a showing of the Shrewsbury film. It will be open to all trade unionists in the Manchester area.



Men gather for a mass meeting under the dome of Olympia amid the half-removed debris of the exhibition: INSET: Three of the sacked stewards on the picket line on Monday: Frank Campbell (convenor, Flushblocks), Steve Pulley (steward at NICSAR) and Dominic Hahir (a steward at Olympia). PICTURES: Chris Davies (Report).

Why must the show go on?

'It's the longest-running ever Ideal Home Exhibition,' says Frank Campbell, UCATT convenor, standing on the picket line outside Olympia, West London.

Frank and seven other stewards were sacked last month by employers in the exhibition industry who were anxious to weaken strong trade union organisation.

The employers deliberately chose the Ideal Home Exhibition to make their attack, hoping that a slack period in the industry caused by a long-running exhibition at Olympia would prevent any fight-back.

As soon as the exhibition was over, however, the stewards struck back. The men walked out on strike, leaving the Ideal Home Exhibition half dismantled. They called on the employers for full

reinstatement.

Last Monday the employers counter-attacked. The contractors with the weakest organisation encouraged their men to cross the picket line and start a move back to work.

A meeting at 9am, organised by the employers, whose two main representatives are former officials of the National Union of Seamen, called for a mass meeting and a return to work. But at a mass meeting later in the day the workers voted four to one to defend their stewards and stay out on strike.

A national commission is being held into the dispute as we go to press. It is expected to find in favour of the stewards, and the pressure will then be on the UCATT executive to declare the strike official.

£7447 Fighting fund a big step nearer target

WE'RE three-quarters of the way there. A magnificent total of £1453.22 flooded into our emergency £10,000 fighting fund this week, pushing it up to £7447.95.

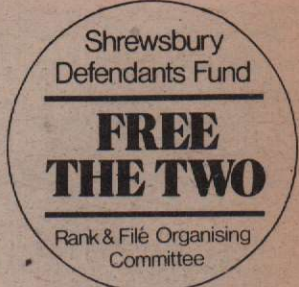
Now we need one big effort to hit the target... so we can keep up the important work the International Socialists have been carrying out, for instance in Glasgow, where we've produced thousands of posters and leaflets arguing the Corporation strikers' case.

Our thanks this week to:
 Pluto Press £290.80, Bath IS £10, A member of East London Hospital Workers IS £100, Cardiff £1, Newham teachers £7.31, Bootle IS £3, Bath IS £14.50, Leicester students £24.02, Portsmouth IS £14, IS Books, London £14.50, SW reader, Norwood £10, Halifax IS £7.34, GLC IS and readers' donation £4.26, Merseyside reader £3, Wigan IS £2.50, Cumberland reader £10, Southwark IS £22.75, Doncaster £3, IS readers, Newcastle, Staffs £5, Tower Hamlets IS £3.50, Widnes IS £6.50, South Lambeth IS £8.64, Evans

Medical IS £6, Woolwich IS £25, Woolwich readers £2, Peterborough IS £13, High Wycombe IS £18, Lewisham IS £10, Rugby IS £5, SW supporters, Brighton £10. Individual contributions £48.

Members' special levy: Manchester students cell £35, Ipswich £3, Dunfermline £15, Birmingham teacher £104, Willesden teacher £50, Acton £3, Cambridge £15, Exeter £7, Maidstone £6, Kirkby £3, Stockport £23, Woolwich £82.60, Ipswich £3, Newham £21, Individual members £380.

Rush donations to: Mel Norris, IS National Treasurer, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



The new lapel badge

Big vote for IS student candidate

AT the National Union of Students Conference in Llandudno the International Socialists' student societies, the NOISS, have emerged as the main challenger to the Broad Left NUS leadership, an electoral alliance of Communist Party and Labour Party students which has dominated NUS for years.

The NOISS candidate for president, Terry Povey, got 156 first preference votes. Charles Clarke, the Broad Left candidate, got 316. The International Marxist Group, operating under a different name got 33. The Liberals and a right-wing candidate in the Radical Action Group got about 70 each. This represents limited growth for the right.

The Broad Left candidate got the presidency on a transferred vote because the right wing supported him against NOISS.

The NOISS candidates for vice-president and secretary, Caroline Clark and Pete Gillard, got 125 and 188 votes respectively. Hugh Lanning, who recently left NOISS to seek a bureaucratic position, managed to beat the Broad Left candidate for treasurer.

In another step forward for NOISS, Simon Turner, the IS student organiser, and Terry Povey debated with the NUS deputy president and Broad Left member, Al Stewart, on the first night of the conference. More than 300 delegates attended the meeting, despite the dislike of most of the Broad Left leadership for the idea

NALGO members will challenge Contract

by Barry White (NALGO)
 A CHALLENGE to the Labour government's Social Contract could come from NALGO members in local government this week. A special delegate group meeting is being held this Thursday, called by more than 70 branches to consider an interim pay claim for an increase of £5 a week from 1 February to the end of the present agreement on 30 June.

Attempts to call this meeting go back to the end of last year. Owing to the long-winded procedure involved it took almost four months to get the meeting off the ground. The NALGO leadership, who have the power to call a group meeting in a shorter space of time, refused to do so.

Because of this branches have been overtaken by events, with the union's submission of the annual pay claim, and many of the amendments to the main motion reflect rank and file concern to secure a settlement that will not leave us trailing behind inflation.

Of the 19 amendments, 11 call for the consolidation of existing thresholds and the ratification of any proposed settlement by a further group meeting. Many also call for a full pay settlement to operate earlier than the usual starting date of 1 July, with most branches mentioning 1 May.

Given the NALGO leadership's tactics on the London Weighting last year and their recent refusal to sanction industrial action voted for by gas industry members because it would have been against the Social Contract, we have no illusions about the need to mobilise the membership in the coming struggle.

Socialist Worker MAY DAY GREETINGS

Socialist Worker is including a special four-page supplement for the many trade union bodies, shop stewards committees and other labour organisations who wish to send May Day greetings.

The rates for advertisements will be:

'Special' Classified insertion (up to 20 words)	50p
Semi-display, per single column inch (size 1 in x 2 in)	£1
Display, per single column inch	£2

Advance space may be booked now by telephone. Ring 01-739 2639. All copy or art work must be received by Friday, 18 April.

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