

WORKERS' FIGHT

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4p

STOP THIS RACE HATE MARCH!

On SATURDAY MARCH 18th., the fascists are planning to march through the centre of Oldham.

The organisers of the march who call themselves Tru-Aim (Trade Unionists Against Immigration), have been attempting to muster national support for the march, and although they probably will not get workers from Oldham to march, they are hoping for coachloads from Yorkshire and London.

TRU-AIM is a fascist front organisation geared towards spreading racialism among workers. In their leaflets they talk about the one million unemployed being a result of immigration and they call for compulsory repatriation.

They do not mention the millions out of work in the thirties, when there were no blacks in the country.

They do not put the blame on the Tory government, which uses unemployment as a weapon against the working class.

In fact, they have no interest in fighting unemployment at all — their intention of dividing the working class can only have the effect of diverting attention away from the real fight against

unemployment on the shop floor.

Tru-Aim likes to put a distance between itself and its fascist mentors. They claim to be interested only in government by the best of all men — the best politicians, the best trade unionists, the best industrialists.

However, their fascist origins are not so well concealed.

FASCIST FRONT

Tru-Aim was set up in November 1970 and the attendance list for the inaugural meeting included the National Front, Britain's biggest fascist party; Colin Jordan, one-time leader of the 'World Union of Nazis' (membership of which required acknowledgement of the 'spiritual leadership of Adolf Hitler'); Mosley's Union Movement; the 'Powell for Prime Minister' group; and the Immigration Control Association.

Up to now Tru-Aim has not shown its face in the North West. It is not difficult to see why they have chosen to begin their campaign in Oldham — a town with a declining textile industry and a large Bengali and Pakistani community. The fascists have not had much influ-

ence in the Manchester area and clearly they see this as a foot in the door.

However, they may be in for a disappointment. The last time the fascists tried to establish themselves in Oldham was in 1965, when their demonstration was driven off the streets.

Since then they have confined themselves to painting slogans on walls. But a lot has happened since 1965. A series of racist Immigration Acts helped Enoch Powell onto the scene, and in his wake all the rubbish that has festered underground and out of sight is regaining confidence.

And this makes it all the more important that they are driven from the streets again.

In Manchester and Oldham an Anti-Fascist Coordinating Committee has been formed to organise a counter demonstration.

The beating that the fascists took in 1965 meant that for seven years they have not dared to show their faces.

If the demonstration on March 18th can be prevented from taking place, then we can hope it will be at least another 7 years before they start spreading their filth again.

Docks: unity the key

THE FIGHT FOR DOCKERS' jobs is becoming extremely urgent. Employers in London and Hull insist on their right to sack men back into the unemployed pool.

Meeting in London on March 4th the National Docks Shop Stewards Committee decided that it would take national action, including a national one-day stoppage, in support of the following demands:

1. No redundancies.
2. Retention of the National Dock Labour Scheme.
3. All loading and unloading of containers to be controlled by the NDLB.
4. All workers in a port to get the average wage in the port, and for the "pool" (officially called the Temporary Unattached Register) to be in fact temporary, and not the never-ending limbo, at £20 a week, that it now is.

The stewards decided to fight on these four demands rather than the full 9 points of their Charter. The other demands, still part of the Charter, but not to be immediately pressed for are:

1. Earlier retiring age.
2. Strict adherence to the Bristow Committee's definition of dockers' work.
3. A minimum national manning scale.
4. A 30 hour week.
5. Nationalisation under workers' control.

The Liverpool stewards opposed dropping these demands, and called for a series of national one-day stoppages in support of the full 9 points. And clearly it is a retreat of some importance.

Demands like that for a 30 hour week and for control of manning are of major importance in the fight against ports unemployment.

DANGER

There is grave danger that the problem which has dogged militancy on the docks for years will weaken the fight against the present attack of the employers — disunity. Unless a serious national lead is given, the concentrated use of the full strength of all dockers, will be impossible.

Already in Hull attempts to avoid unemployment have led the stewards to try and register themselves as port employers. Apart from its inevitable ineffectiveness, such action is no answer to national ports unemployment. It can, however, contribute to

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MURDERERS OUT OF IRELAND!
MARCH IN LONDON 26. March with the ANTI INTERNMENT LEAGUE

workers fight

Smash the Act

The new stage of the I.R.A. (not the I.R.A. which strikes at the Tory state, but the Industrial Relations Act, with which the Tory state is attempting to strike at the British labour movement) which came into force in February, makes illegal those tactics which won the miners' strike. Blacking of tainted goods, sympathetic strikes, the closed shop — all are now illegal.

The problem for the Government is going to be to make the illegality mean something. The problem for the labour movement is to ensure that its own power and strength are fully exerted so as first to treat the Tory pygmies and their legislation with the contemptuous disregard they and it deserve — and then to crack down on them hard if they attempt to invoke their law and their state against those who defy them. Had that strength been fully deployed the legislation would never have reached the statute books, and the Tory hatchetmen would have been driven from office long ago.

Who can doubt that, after the miners' victory? Only a fraction of the strength of labour was used — and the Tories were routed completely. The miners smashed right through the Government's undeclared Incomes Policy. Stonewall Heath's policy collapsed in a heap of rubble.

The miners are a 'special case'? Yes, because they made themselves a special case. So can all workers — builders, railwaymen and the others with wage claims in. Special cases are determined by strength, not by appeals to justice. Not every group of workers are as strategically well placed as the miners. But class-wide solidarity — blacking, mass picketing, the sympathetic strike — can magnify enormously the power of sections of workers. No section of the class must ever again remain isolated in its struggles. That is the lesson of the miners' strike, and many workers who have watched the trial of strength will have noted it.

And the Tories think that their legislation will be enough to frighten other workers from pressing home their claims through the breach in the incomes policy, and into abandoning the militant tactics which won the day for the miners.

We must raise the demand that the Unions must deliberately ignore every single provision of the Act. The law is the Tories' law; we owe it no allegiance. The Tories are not strong enough to force us to comply with it.

At the same time the exhilaration over the miners' victory should not lead us to forget the great reserves of strength of the ruling class. They still control society and its wealth, and the state and its reserves. They will never go down peacefully. They cannot allow many more victories like the miners', faced with that prospect they will organise and mobilise all their resources to smash down the working class.

Our history teaches us this bitter lesson. Once before, 'Red Friday' July 1925, the miners imposed on the Government a serious defeat, because they were backed by the strength of the labour movement. The Government and the bosses beat a tactical retreat, and used the time to

prepare for a total confrontation of the classes — the General Strike of May 1926. The state, the police, the army, Tory stooges in the labour movement — all were prepared, and the bosses watched their chance and took it. The labour and trade union leaders sold out the strike. And more than a generation had to pass before the labour movement recovered from the defeat.

The working class is immensely powerful and self-confident today, far more so than in the 1920s. The Tories have grave difficulties in Ireland: they probably couldn't turn out the present army in a major class confrontation, now. Once before too, a labour upsurge and a war in Ireland coincided; 1921, when machine guns were mounted at pitheads in Britain while the Black and Tans terrorised Ireland. The British bosses weren't strong enough to deal with both together, and had room to manoeuvre only because there was no common strategy linking the Irish workers fighting for national independence and the anti-bosses struggles of the British workers. The British ruling class first made a deal with the Irish middle class against the Irish people to buy off the struggle, and then turned on British labour, building up for its defeat of the working class in the General Strike.

History never repeats itself exactly — we must make sure it doesn't! — but the lessons are obvious.

We've seen our strength. But the weakness was also shown during the miners' strike, by the passivity of even the best union leaders, and the crawling of scabs like Chapple of the EPTU. (The verbal bandwagon-jumping 'support' of the Labour Party meant nothing.) The major reserve of strength possessed by the bosses are in fact these Labour and Trade Union leaders. They are the potentially fatal weakness which can undermine the vitality of the labour movement, through treachery, or ineptitude, or both.

The weakness and flabbiness shown by the official labour movement (in some places even by the NUM) during the miners' strike, and in the fight against the Industrial Relations Act, means that we must recognise — while there is still time — that the labour movement in Britain needs to reorganise itself, politically, organisationally and ideologically. If we are to win the coming battles and settle with the Tory class once and for all, we must face up to the implications of that fact.

I'VE SORTED OUT THE RINGLEADERS FOR YOU, MR SQUEEZSTONE — THEY'RE IN HERE!



From "Law and Order on the Shop Floor".

p&p by Workshop Books, 30 Primrose Hill, Coventry.

Just Part of the Job

"Well, that's just one of those things about this job."

How often have we heard this, or something similar, said about accidents at work? In heavy industry, building, mining, manufacturing, on the docks and many other places of work, accidents are common enough to become almost accepted as 'part of the job'.

In mining alone 6,500 men have died since the nationalisation of the pits. That's 260 killed every year, the hidden cost of our coal. Perhaps we could ignore the significance of these figures with a

shrug of the shoulders, saying that accidents in industry are 'natural', unavoidable, 'part of the job', or else, as some industrial psychologists suggest, simply a result of human nature.

But a recent conference in Paris, concerned with the effects of technology, showed up this sort of modern quackery.

Figures were produced which indicate precisely one of the major causes of industrial accidents — the drive for high productivity.

In manufacturing industries in 1958, the output produced by each worker was 92.3 units; in 1967 it was 110.7 units. On the other hand, in 1958 there was one accident for every 113.4 units of productivity, but by 1967 there was one accident for every 89.6 units.

In other words, whilst output per worker (productivity) had increased in these 9 years by 19.9%, output per accident (safety) had fallen by 21%. This shows clearly that accidents increased directly as productivity has increased.

TIGHTER SCHEDULES

What is happening here is that as machine processes are speeded up, as work schedules tighten, as less time is allowed for the completion of jobs, so the load on the worker increases, making him increasingly likely to make mistakes that might lead to an accident.

This 'load' isn't just simply physical, the amount of lifting, for example; it includes psychological factors which are often far more important.

Research has shown that people can only concentrate on a limited number of things at once, and if this level is exceeded or if work is done at near capacity levels of concentration, the worker will begin to make mistakes. Thus the increase in productivity and industrial accidents go hand in hand.

Of course, this is no new phenomenon. In 'Capital', Marx discussed the intensification of labour as

a necessary tool of the employers for the raising of their profits. The drive of the capitalist system towards higher and higher profits necessitates an ever expanding output from the factories, and this is laid on the shoulders of the workers in two ways: by lengthening the time worked, and the raising of productivity.

This is still their strategy today in the age of 'productivity deals'. The bosses strive always to keep the basic rate as low as possible, thus making workers put in longer hours in overtime and harder work on bonus and piece rate schemes.

Also, there is still, to quote Marx, "the tendency that urges capital, as soon as the prolongation of the hours of labour is once for all forbidden, to compensate it self, by a systematic heightening of the intensity of labour, and to convert every improvement in machinery into a more perfect means of exhausting the workman." . . . and, we might add, into a more perfect means of killing him.

Accidents, productivity, unemployment — and profit. These fit together, and to attack one we need to attack them all.

The fight for safe and decent conditions of work is part of the fight against capitalism as a whole, and will not be completed until there are no bosses to put profits and production above the lives, health and safety of the workers.

NEAL SMITH

Contd. from p1.

disunity — each port trying for its own 'solution', when only combined action on the full 9 point Charter can offer any solution.

Unity of ports, and unity of unions (the meeting was marred by a dispute about the right of the small Blue union, NASD, to be represented) is essential if we are to defend ourselves.

We will either get the unity of national dockers' action — or the unity of the dole queue. And we may not have a great deal of time to choose.

HAROLD YOUNG

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The Fight Against Redundancies

WE MUST LEARN FROM UCS

by Phil Lewis

THE GOVERNMENT'S announced intention of investing £35 million in Govan - Scotstoun - Linthouse divisions of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders marks an important new stage in the struggle of the Clyde workers for the right to work; and it is a good point to sum up the experience of the work in so far.

Much has happened since the decision of the UCS workers, on Friday 30th. July last year, that they would not allow the Tories to close the yards and sack 6,000 workers. The UCS work-in, taken together with the more aggressive and more quickly victorious strike-ins at Plesseys and Fisher Bendix, holds many lessons for the working class on how to fight - and how not to fight - against redundancies.

The workers' direct action at UCS promised to be the spearhead of a general attack by the working class on the festering disease of unemployment. Alas, this was not how it was to be, despite the determination and self-sacrifice with which the UCS workers have persevered in the battle.

From the very beginning the UCS shop stewards leadership consorted with people like Wedgewood Benn, who as Labour Minister for Technology had brought in the 'rationalisation' scheme which eventually led to sackings; and with union leaders whose negotiation of productivity deals had led to considerable redundancies.

The struggle and actions of the UCS workers were held back to a level acceptable to gentlemen like Benn, and even Scottish Tories concerned for local prospects.

Work continued as normal. Foremen and managers acted very much as before. Workers made redundant were paid from collections taken among the rest, whilst they carried on working, making ships for the Liquidator for nothing.

REID

Jimmy Reid, Communist Party leader of the stewards Committee, bent over backwards to paint the picture of 'reasonable, hard-working men, willing to bargain, docile as any capitalist, bent on exploitation, could hope for, Reid and the leadership of the stewards rejected the view that the fight against unemployment needed a total strategy on the part of the working class to deny the right of the employers to decide the fate of the workers.

The Communist Party in fact declared that the demands put by the Trotskyists (such as work sharing without loss of pay), worked out on a clear analysis of unemployment's role in the present capitalist crisis, would alienate the trade union bureaucracy and that in fact the yards could be made a viable, profitable concern under capitalism.

Statements from Reid about the possible need for an eighteen month wage freeze to put the industry back on its feet and on the need to increase productivity, show the incapability of the "Communist" Party to lead such a working class struggle.

COMPROMISE

Throughout the 'work in' the UCS stewards leadership showed its desire to compromise on points which would have strengthened the workers' bargaining power. In October the stewards agreed to enter into separate negotiations about the Clydeside division, and also agreed to discuss productivity and wage rates in return for certain guaranteed orders from Tory minister John Davies.

They did this despite the fact that general meetings of the shipyard workers had continually stressed that any negotiations could only take place with reference to all four yards of the UCS complex.

Reid and Airlie further weakened bargaining power by releasing the bulk carrier New Westminster City, despite the motion carried by a general meeting that no ships would be released until there were definite guarantees about the future of the yards.

They explained their action by saying that they were "anxious to show good faith" to the American firm of Marathon Construction, who were considering investment in part of UCS. But employers, who sack people in order to increase their profits, cannot be expected to change their skins and start giving jobs out of gratitude for our 'consideration' for them. Quite simply, they must at all times be fought, not crawled up to.

Also prominent in misdirecting the UCS struggle was the boiler-makers union leader, Dan McGarvey, who last week was highly praised by the Tories for his "consistently constructive and helpful role."

He did, in fact, justly deserve praise from the British ruling class. He not only begged Stenhouse,

Tory chairman of Govans, to seek 'no strike' agreements from UCS workers, but also said that his union would accept double-day and three shift working if the yards were kept open.

If this seems 'only reasonable' the point that it forgets is that given large scale nationwide unemployment any concessions of this sort only intensify the exploitation of workers in employment, and thus allow the number of jobs to be further decreased.

It is impossible to fight for the right of ALL workers to have a job and for the united action of workers threatened by unemployment if this is undermined by some workers giving in to the hopes and threats of the government and accepting one of the few available jobs on these terms.

CONTRAST

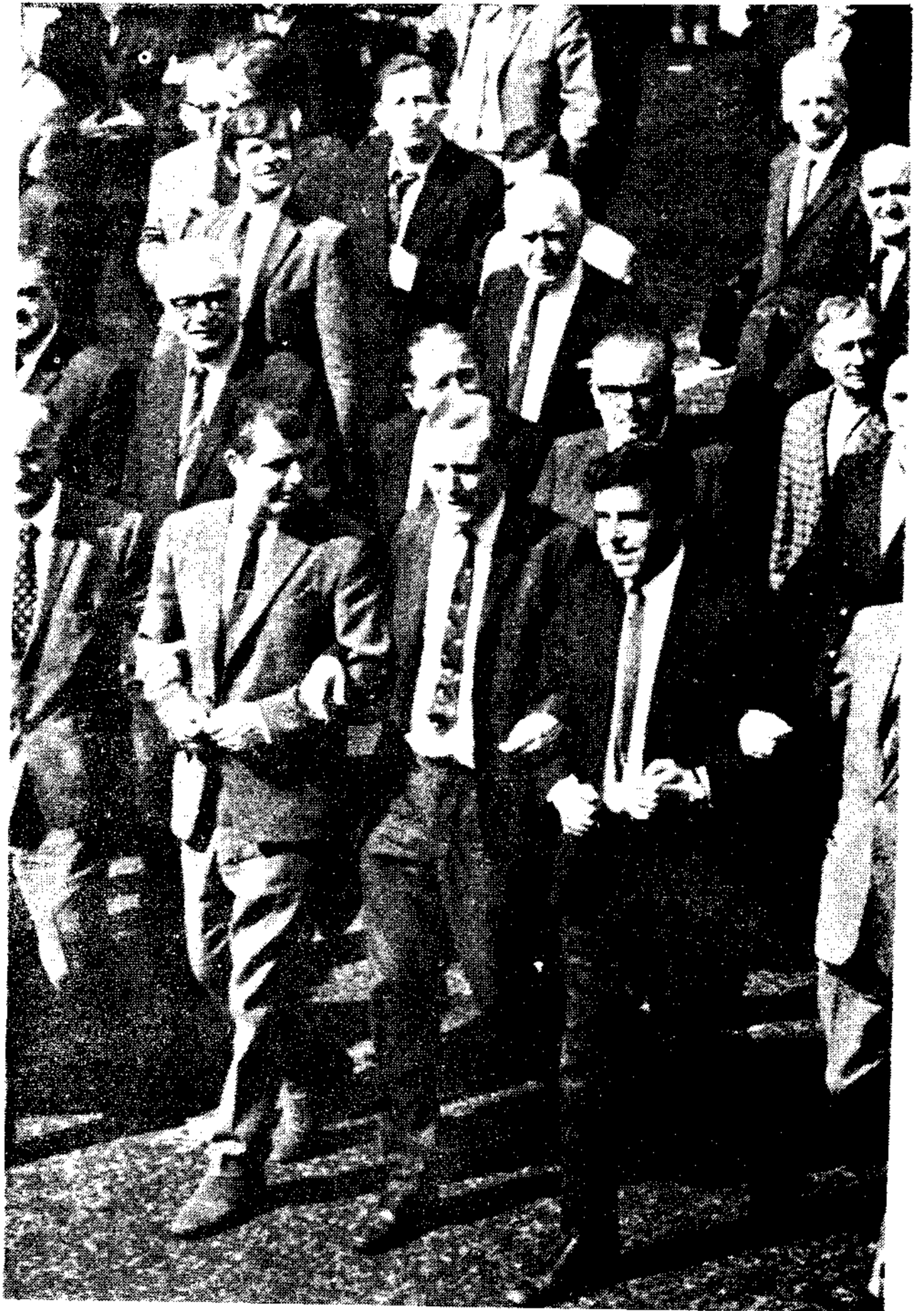
At this point it is valuable to contrast the occupations at Fisher Bendix (Kirkby) and Plessey (Alexandria). Without the example of the giant first step taken at UCS of challenging the rights of property, the Plessey and Fisher Bendix strike-ins would probably not have happened. And it is a measure of the speed with which working class militancy has advanced in the last 8 months that UCS is now no longer in the vanguard of the new militancy and the new tactics.

Plessey and Fisher Bendix were genuine occupations where managers were evicted and barricades set up in defiance of the employers, their law and their government.

The Plessey occupation followed the attempt by the employers to move valuable machinery to its Ilford factory or sell it at a huge profit. The Alexandria plant had formerly been a Royal Naval Torpedo factory and had been sold to Plesseys at knockdown price.

By their occupation, refusal to allow the movement of plant, and the solidarity action of other Plessey workers, the Alexandria workers won jobs for all the occupiers by making Plessey's create an industrial estate in Alexandria.

Even then they refused to let unfinished work leave the factory until permanent jobs were created, and refused to end the occupation until arrangements had been made to employ on a temporary basis in the meantime.



Airlie, Benn and Reid - all good friends

FISHER BENDIX

Fisher Bendix too was an example of a real workers' occupation. Gates were guarded with standby water hoses. Fully democratic meetings were held, involving the workers' families as well.

However, only a partial victory was achieved. Although the management have been forced to cancel the original sackings and have guaranteed no closure until 1973. But a joint management/union committee has agreed to examine productivity and there are still threats of further redundancies. The committee is under the chairmanship of Harold Wilson (as local MP...) and it is obvious that his role is to contain the strike.

As the government proposals for UCS are announced which still leave the fate of 4,200 workers undecided (1,700 redundancies are already decided in the government proposals), there are important conclusions we can reach.

In the fight for the right to work there can be no connivance with the employers or the Tories. There can be no reliance on help from the

corrupt Labour Party or trade union leaders. There can be no acceptance of productivity agreements and shift systems which lead to more redundancies later.

We can place no faith in the employers to create jobs; pleading with them never got us anywhere. Factories threatened with redundancies must be occupied and the demand raised for nationalisation under workers' control.

The employers' right to decide the fate of workers must be challenged by a fight for union control over hiring and firing. Whilst over a million are unemployed, overtime continues. We must demand no overtime and instead the shortening of the working week without loss of pay, to provide more workers with jobs.

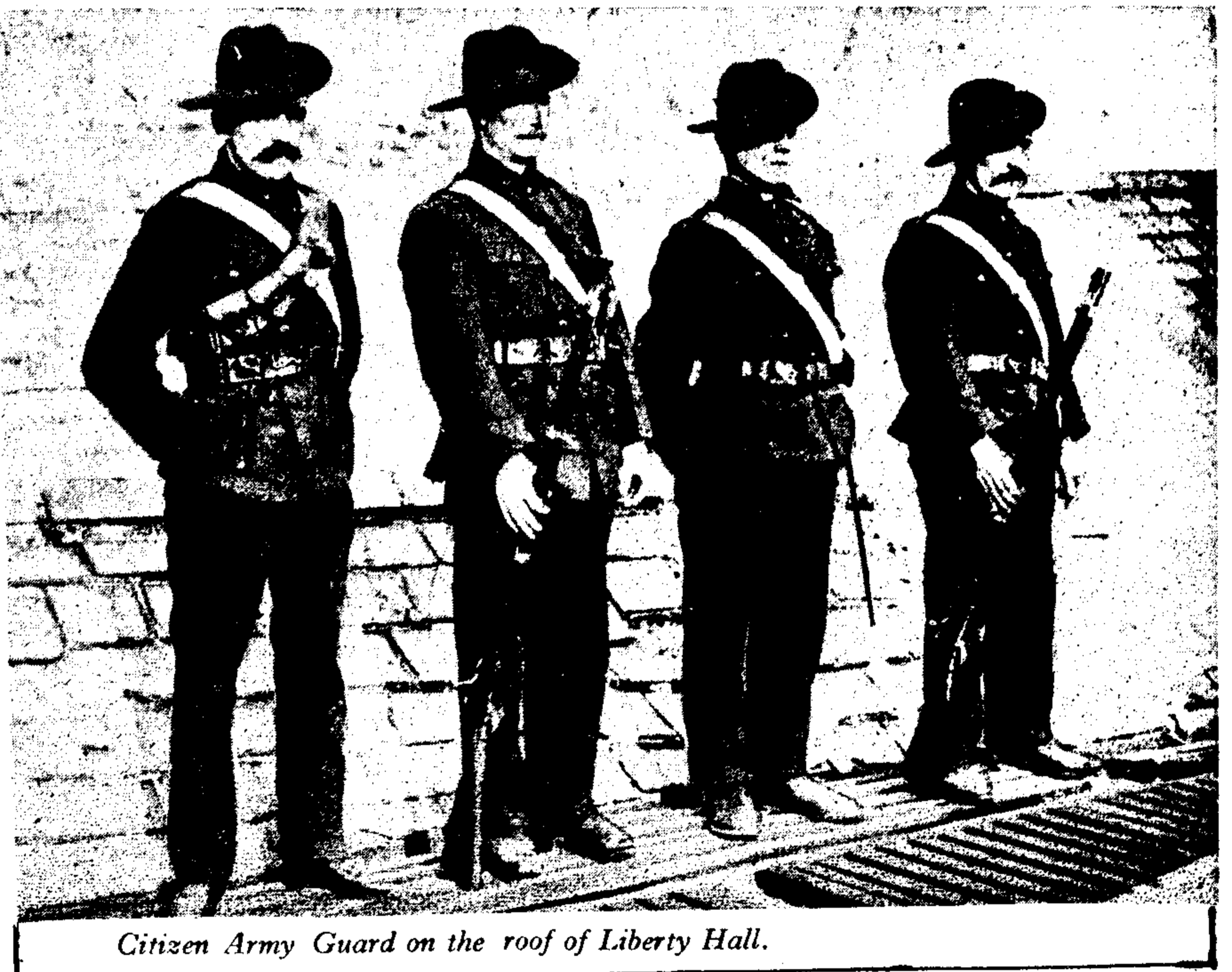
Those at present unemployed must not be deprived of their union rights as well as their jobs, or they will be used to weaken the position of those with jobs.

Work or full pay must be the central core of our demands. In the battle against unemployment any strategy must be total. Above all, we must not allow the bosses to solve their problems at our expense.

IRELAND'S

LONG

STRUGGLE



Citizen Army Guard on the roof of Liberty Hall.

FOR FREEDOM by Carol Coulter

THE ROOTS OF THE PRESENT situation in Ireland — North and South, the two are inseparable — lie in the fact that the country is at one and the same time a neo-colony, and part of the advanced capitalist complex of Western Europe. We can uncover these roots by looking at Ireland's tragic and terrible history.

Ireland's geographic position meant that it was always the last stop for the peoples who migrated Westward across Europe in primitive times. This meant that the social organisation in Ireland generally lagged behind that of the rest of Europe. Ireland was still a tribal society when Europe was dominated by Feudalism, although this did not mean that Irish civilisation was always at a generally lower level, because it also missed the Roman invasion and the subsequent barbaric invasions.

However Ireland's socially backward state made it very vulnerable to invasion from England. The establishment of a toehold by the thoroughly feudalised Normans in the 12th century was only the first practical demonstration of the superior organisation of English feudal society.

From the 12th to the 16th century Britain maintained a colonial enclave in Ireland, never seriously controlling more than an area around modern Dublin.

In the 16th century the Tudors decided to conquer Ireland thoroughly and completely in the interests of the growing British capitalism as well as those of the ruling — landlord — class.

Spurred on by fear that the Catholic powers of Europe would, during the wars of the Reformation, find Catholic Ireland a willing base for invasion of Protestant England, they found Ireland divided and still on a semi-tribal level and without a national state. After wars of conquest lasting decades they were finally able to smash all organised opposition to their rule.

During these 16th century wars of conquest against the Irish, the English rulers learned that an over-

lord's presence in Ireland was not enough. It was necessary to permeate and control every area of Ireland, and they opted for a policy of 'plantation', aiming to replace the Irish with settlers, as the American Indians were later to be replaced by colonists.

Under Elizabeth and her successors thousands of the native Irish were driven from their land and replaced by English and Scottish protestants. All the land was given into the hands of landlords: Irish ones — men who under native Irish law had no personal rights to land which was held as common property for all their people — and English adventurers being paid with land for their services.

The consequences of this policy, between the reign of Elizabeth and the bloody Cromwellian 'final solution' after 1649, dominated Ireland politically and economically and stultified its development for centuries to come.

ULSTER

The planters were not evenly distributed throughout Ireland. A large proportion of them concentrated in the north east, where they brought with them not only their Presbyterian religion but also traditions of manufacture and renting practices.

They gained a certain security and prosperity (though not, of course, without struggle against the landlords). These Presbyterians had a history of rebellion and dissent in England and Scotland, of struggle for democracy which was intimately related to their economic activity. They had to struggle — but their struggles were separate and on a different plane from those of the Catholic natives.

The Protestant tenants were subordinated to the landlords and the exploiters, as were their fellows in England and Scotland. But in Ireland both planter tenants and alien landlords had a common interest against the 'native' driven off the land, which the one newcomer now owned and the other settled.

The planter tenants were able to get liveable terms from the landlord, while the native Irish tenants were as conquered and degraded a

race as were ever the natives of Peru or Mexico.

This was the original root of the divisions to be found in the Irish people to this very day.

The planter tenants' relative security, with some rights recognised by the landlord, gave them serious advantages and allowed them a certain margin to accumulate a little capital which combined with their skills to lay the basis for the development of modern industry in that part of Ireland.

This nascent capitalism was a strong element in the development of democratic republicanism in Ireland, fusing with the rebellious traditions of the dissenting Presbyterian religion.

Not all lower class protestants were concentrated in the North. Landlord parasites swarmed all over Ireland and had around them a retinue of providers for their various wants. These people gradually came to form a manufacturing and trading community in the towns of the South, linked by religion to their masters but by objective interest to the peasants and artisans of the rest of the country.

From this group came some of the foremost democratic and republican leaders in Irish history, and indeed, Republicans and democrats in the front ranks of the revolutionaries of that time.

One of these was Wolfe Tone, born into the Church of Ireland in a Dublin trading family; a freethinker; a radical republican; a sympathiser and active supporter of the Great French Revolution of 1789, and a general in the army of revolutionary France: an internationalist in the best tradition of European revolutionary movements.

UNITED IRISHMEN

He was the architect of the United Irishmen, a revolutionary group that sought to unite all the oppressed, "the men of no property" in a united Irish Republic, pledged to the "Rights of Man" of the democrats of the time.

They wanted to sweep away every vestige of feudalism, including every landlord; to make religion a private matter and, freeing Ireland from British domination, to set up an

independent Irish Democracy which would free the peasants from the bonds of landlordism and pave the way for the development of an independent capitalist Ireland.

But this was not to be. The forces behind Tone were too weak to stand up to the combined weight of the British state and the Irish landlords. He was not backed by the middle class men of property, as the Parisian masses who carried out the revolution there had been at the beginning.

The United Irishmen's rebellion of 1798 was ruthlessly suppressed. The leaders were hunted down and exterminated and the whole peasant population terrorised.

SHOTGUN "UNION"

But England and her lackeys in Ireland had learnt their lesson — they had discovered the social dynamite still present in Ireland and the danger it represented to stability, and even to the very security of England in wartime.

The limited but promising success of the United Irishmen in bringing together oppressed Catholics with an oppressed section of the Protestants, (the Presbyterian, not, significantly, the Anglicans) had threatened, and was clearly seen to have threatened, the existence of their whole system.

They forced an Act of Union through the Irish Parliament by the bribery and corruption of men who hardly needed to be either bribed or corrupted. This Act stifled even the possibility of an independent development of the small Irish bourgeoisie, and with it Britain embarked on a conscious 'divide and rule' policy with regard to the rest of the population.

They built on the long-standing distrust between the Catholic and Protestant sections of the population, a distrust arising out of their historical, cultural and social differences.

They continued to buy the loyalty of the lower class Protestants with small privileges. One of the main vehicles of this was the Orange Order, an organisation aimed specifically at binding Protestants together. It was initially a movement of Anglican peasants in Armagh, banded against the local Catholic tenants in defence of the

colon's rights they had become accustomed to

The Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800 threw Ireland wide open to unfettered competition from the superior British industry, with no possibility of protective tariffs such as an independent Irish state could have provided. What little Irish industry had developed in the last quarter of the 18th century withered and in most parts of Ireland died.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

But in the north east the industrial revolution found a basis for economic expansion in the existing manufacturing establishments. Belfast and the surrounding area became a replica of Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and the newly industrialised cities of the English north. Belfast became integrated into that area through trade and a common industrial development.

The rest of Ireland became an agricultural offshoot of Britain, having been thrown backwards by the Act of Union. The possibility of an independent capitalist Ireland at the end of the 18th century had been destroyed by a combination of economic forces and their reflection — the strength of the English and the feebleness of the Irish middle classes.

The Protestants were cemented in unity with their ruling class both by small privileges as against their Catholic neighbours, and in their common interest in industrial expansion.

No substantial section of the Protestant population now continued to fight for Irish independence and freedom.

THE 'CATHOLIC' MOVEMENT

This left the struggle for independence one mainly of interest to Catholics.

Only Catholics were now discriminated against by the Government with regard to legal and civil rights. The leaders of the movement in the South reflected the interests of the middle class Catholics. The interests of the oppressed peasants were virtually ignored for a whole period.

This was typified in the politician Daniel O'Connell, who campaigned for 'Catholic emancipation' — that is the granting of civil rights to middle class Catholics — in 1829 when it was granted.

He combined this with support for anti-strike measures in the British Parliament, and with collaboration with the Establishment in the suppression of the Irish language. For him the rights of property were sacred; he was prepared to ditch even his limited aims for them.

He was, after a time, superseded by movements of a more radical, though still limited nature, starting with the "Young Irelanders" in the 1840s, and going on to the great Fenian movement in the 1860s.

They all involved themselves to a greater or lesser extent with the problems of the really oppressed people of Ireland — the peasants — but never succeeded in building a strong united movement on the basis of a fight for both independence and social emancipation.

The Irish resistance movement was totally incapable of preventing the mass murder of the peasants during the potato famine, when the landlords continued to draw from Ireland the wheat of the peasants while millions starved; the population was reduced by more than a quarter in less than a decade.

Nothing sums up so starkly the prostration and weakness into which Ireland was thrown in the decades after the Act of Union and the defeat of the revolutionary movement.

The first politician to combine successfully the struggle for independence with that for social justice was Parnell. He fought for Home Rule for Ireland (note Home Rule, not, as with the United Irishmen and the Fenians, independence from Britain) and for the end of landlordism.

Parnell, however, was not a revolutionary. He was a middle class parliamentarian and he wanted an Ireland which could have colonies

like the other European nations!

Britain now exerted herself to eliminate all potential weaknesses as she faced up to the intensifying struggle for world domination with other imperialist powers, eg Germany.

Her most clear-sighted politicians like Gladstone recognised that Ireland was still a powder keg at her foundation stones and energetically set out to remove it by placating the Irish peasants — who were still living at starvation level and without legal rights on the land, in some senses worse off than the serfs of the Middle Ages.

Britain's ruling class sought to remove the powder keg by passing a number of Land Acts between the 1880s and the early 20th Century.

These Acts allowed the peasants, with government finance and the prospect of a century of repayment, to buy out some landlords, and make themselves into proprietors still impoverished but the owner of a miserable patch of land. But it was this right of ownership that most of the peasants wanted, so they drew into the background of the political struggle.

THE WORKING CLASS

By now, a working class had begun to develop in the South. It was small, it was weak, it was disorganised but it was the only force in the circumstances that could lead the fight for Irish freedom. The middle class were Britain's stooges and the working class's enemies; the peasants had proven over centuries that they were unable to achieve anything; and the working class was born with the memory of the centuries of slavery as its only heritage and the battle for both Irish national freedom, and its own class freedom, as the only realistic prospects.

James Connolly, the greatest figure of the socialist Irish working class movement, put the situation very clearly when he said: "The Irish working class is the only true inheritor of the fight for Irish freedom."

But it was, and it is, a working class divided against itself. The industrial workers of the north-east of Ireland were the descendants of the colonists, still maintaining, in changed times and conditions, petty privileges over the Catholics — and large illusions of their own superiority.

The divide and rule policy was now easily employed against the modern working class too. The Orange labour aristocracy looked with contempt at the Catholic workers, and reacted with hostility when they did indeed attempt to continue the fight for Irish freedom.

At the beginning of the century, Jim Larkin organised the Catholic and Protestant workers together in Belfast for a brief period in 1907 — to the terror of the capitalists. It was a brief, shallow but prophetic unity, and was broken by the rising tide of opposition to Home Rule — the attempts to complete the normalisation of the Irish situation by granting limited autonomy to the Irish middle class.

After 1907 Jim Larkin came south and built up the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, with mostly unskilled workers. The methods he used were as new and bold then as is the strike-in today: particularly the systematic use of sympathetic strike action as the basis of union policy.

The standard of living in Dublin rose by about fifty percent in a few years, and eventually the employers were driven to unite in an attempt to fight Larkin and smash the Union. In 1913, all workers were told not to join Larkin's union. They were sacked when they refused to comply, and were locked out.

This led to a large scale battle for trade union rights, costing a number of workers' lives. Out of this was born the Irish Citizen Army, a workers' militia to defend the working class against the police.

The lockout of 1913 ended in partial defeat though the Union survived despite the bosses' intention to smash it. The workers in Dublin were forced to draw back for two main reasons: the refusal of solidarity by the British trade unions; and the intervention of the Irish Catholic Church.

The British labour movement sent ships full of food up the Liffey to help the starving workers. However, a special TUC Conference refused strike action in support of Dublin.

As James Connolly put it bitterly at the time: where the British working class organisations could have delivered a decisive blow at the employers, they held their hand, contenting themselves with giving aid in money and food, where they could not possibly deal a comparable blow at the ruling class.

The Catholic Church intervened, naturally, on the side of the employers. Many English working class families offered help, and to look after the children of the Dublin strikers during the eight months long strike. The Church denounced it as a plot to undermine the religion of the children! The priests organised gangs to forcibly prevent them leaving the country. So, in the words of a song born out of the strike:

*"But hungry houses and crying children,
They broke our hearts, we could not win"*

After this the struggle subsided for a period, until after the rising of Easter 1916, in which the Citizen Army participated, led by Larkin's comrade James Connolly. (Larkin was in the USA).

1916 was not directly part of a mass movement, but it resulted in a popular mass upsurge against British control. A war of independence — like the present one in the North — took place. Britain, too weak in the aftermath of World War to win in Ireland, was yet strong enough to impose a "compromise" which allowed her to still keep a tight grip on Ireland. This compromise was the partition of Ireland.

The real significance of the proposal to partition Ireland was not made clear to many of the people. First one wing of the middle class leadership of the independence movement capitulated (the Free Staters, the present Fine Gael party), then the other (De Valera, and the present Fianna Fail party).

The Irish working class, the main fighters in the War of Independence, had suffered the loss of its most clearheaded thinkers at the beginning of the struggle.

Now, at the end of that phase of the struggle, it bore the brunt of a bitter civil war against the first wave of Irish middle class collaborators with Britain. Tragically, it fought under the leadership of those who were soon to be the second wave. Inevitably it was defeated and for a long period demoralised.

PARTITIONED IRELAND

As James Connolly had foretold that it would, when partition had first been mooted in 1914, the border consolidated the working class behind the middle class, and reinforced the divisions between Catholics and Protestants, throwing back and destroying any possibility of working class unity for decades to come.

The Northern state rested on the oppression of a large Catholic minority. 'Divide and rule' was still a potent weapon north and south. For 50 years no mass movement could emerge among the Catholics. Northern Ireland was one large depressed area. To be a Protestant was part of a free-masonry, offering limited protection and privileges: and in areas like Derry, with unemployment permanently above 20%, the extra chance of a job was no laughable privilege.

The main opposition to the Stormont regime took the form of isolated republican guerilla activity. The best militants, those determined to fight the system, usually joined the Republican movement.

Socialism, and militant revolutionary trade unionism, went into an eclipse.

For 50 years partition has been a strangulation-cord around Ireland's neck. That's what it was meant to be.

The faint rays of the post war prosperity that trickled through to the Northern Catholics eventually produced enough self-confidence to generate demands that at least basic civil rights should be available to the Catholics. The early Civil Rights movement did not question Partition — it neither explained nor understood that partition, against the will of the vast Irish majority, was the root of the oppression of the Catholics by the Stormont-entrenched Unionists and Orangemen.

Demands for One man, one house, one job, one vote etc., could only appear as a threat to the Protestant possessors of the small privilege in the Northern Ireland political slum, of their precarious hold on a job and house.

Had the Civil Rights movement put forward a programme to build more house and to create more jobs in the process, and linked this to a general socialist plan to reorganise and revolutionise the whole of society, the results just conceivably might have been different. But given its middle class leadership, it was in any case incapable of putting forward such a programme.

What happened instead was that the divisions were deepened and widened, the Protestant workers were frightened and the Orangemen were able to organise anti-Catholic pogroms in August 1969.

This pushed the Catholic mobilisation into a new offensive — the first mass offensive in 50 years — for an end of the Orange puppet state.

They took up once again the age-old fight for national independence.

Now they fight for the right of the majority of the Irish people to have their own state, within which there will be every right for the Protestant minority — every right except the right to a separate state with institutionalised oppression of the Catholic minority, which would provide a base from which imperialism could attack or control the rest of Ireland.

But this movement is extremely limited while it is inhibited by a view that sees the struggle as one for reforms, which will then apparently allow peaceful agitation for a united Ireland, to be followed by the struggle for socialism.

That is the strategy of the Official Republicans.

The Provisionals' strategy is equally unrealistic: that Stormont must go, to be replaced not by workers' councils or popular assemblies based on the working and fighting people, but by regional bourgeois parliaments as a stage in replacing both Stormont and Leinster House by an All-Ireland parliament.

The social questions which are entwined with the national question will not be put off, indeed they are forcing themselves forward aggressively in the South. A programme which includes them and fuses them with the fight against imperialism, is essential. Otherwise the lives will have been lost in vain, and the struggle will be forced again into the juggling and manoeuvring of middle class politicians. Irish socialists are fighting to make sure this will not be the outcome of the present struggles.

The break with imperialism must be complete, and this involves a break with the order it nurtures — capitalism.

There are signs that the movement will develop in this way. The workers in the South and the working class of Britain are showing the bosses that they have more than the just liberation war of the Republicans to deal with. And the Catholics are beginning to find serious allies who want more than the reform of the system in both islands.

**“A Nation which enslaves another
can never itself be free”**

Karl Marx



Workers fight



VICTORY TO THE I.R.A.

PERISCOPE

"I was a Nazi for the CIA"

SOUTH AMERICA is a notorious haven for retired Nazi ministers, former SS officers and the like.

Hunters of Nazi war criminals believe that Colonel Hugo Banzer, right wing dictator of Bolivia, is sheltering Klaus Barbie, former Gestapo chief in Lyons, who murdered 4,000 people, sent 7,500 to the gas chambers and arrested 14,300 French Resistance fighters.

A certain rich businessman, Klaus Altmann, looks remarkably like Barbie, and by a remarkable coincidence has a wife and family whose names and birth dates are the same as those of the ex-Gestapo boss's own wife and children...

Barbie's vicious wartime record, and the mounting evidence against Altmann, forced President Pompidou of France to demand extradition. This has been refused by the Bolivian dictatorship.

The CIA — America's secret service — is watching every move of the French Government. After the war Barbie worked for the CIA, who refused to allow detailed questioning by the French. They are also reputed to have helped him to obtain the false Red Cross passport that took him safely to Bolivia.

The USA (which incidentally is not at all lacking in its own war criminals of more recent vintage than Barbie and his ilk), has a vested interest in maintaining right wing regimes and protecting their investments in South America. It naturally has no qualms about aiding the worst enemies of socialism and the working class.

Nixon and his stooges have little to worry about from Pompidou who is very keen to forgive and forget. But former freedom fighters may yet put pressure on the French government.

A.T.

CYPRUS—Nato seeks a base

CYPRUS IN THE PAST WEEK OR two has seen strange things.

Strange indeed when two Bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church have been besieged in their palaces by hostile, stone-throwing crowds of Greek Cypriots, kept at bay by the armed gangs of a Greek general.

Last September General Grivas arrived in Cyprus clandestinely and began to organise and recruit an armed force for a coup to bring down Makarios and install a puppet regime for the military rulers of Greece. Makarios responded by buying a quantity of arms from Czechoslovakia, to arm a Cypriot militia.

Greece's latest move has been to use the Greek Orthodox Church to bring pressure on Makarios to submit to Greece: the Bishops have suddenly discovered that it is "contrary to Canon Law" for Archbishop Makarios to hold secular office!

It seems that it takes all of 12 years of prayer and meditation for the proper appreciation of "God's Will" in these matters to filter through. For that is how long Makarios has already held office without Canonical protest.

Support for Makarios, against the idea of union with Greece — and against their 'own' Church — has come from the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots, who have demonstrated angrily against what they see as a "back door intrigue" to depose the President.

FLEET STREET

Convinced that everyone is worse off when British troops leave a place, the Fleet Street male voice choir gives out with cries of "Civil War" and that old favourite "inter-communal strife." And that's at a time when relations between Greece and Turkey, and the two populations in Cyprus, have never been better!

What the press's lies are trying to hide is Western Imperialism's attempt to secure a base for Eastern Mediterranean operations. The operations are directed against the Soviet fleet and the Middle East. Although the USA gained facilit-

ies in Greece in exchange for its sponsorship of the colonels' coup in 1967, it was soon to suffer a set back. Greece was gained, but Libya was lost. The "revolutionary council" which has wielded power since the September 1969 coup told the British to get out of Tobruk and El Adem and the Americans to get out of Wheelus... and to take their "intelligence" operations with them!

The US's only solution was to go to the British base on Cyprus under cover of the British troop movement. This move produced huge demonstrations in Cyprus led by Akel, the Cypriot "Communist" Party.

Imperialism was faced by three threats: coups as in Libya, political upheaval as in these demonstrations and impending higher costs, as in Malta.

The objective of imperialism in Cyprus, therefore, was to kill three birds with one stone. The way to do this was to overthrow Makarios and install a semi-fascist government like in Greece.

So Greece, imperialism's Mediterranean marionette, sent about 10,000 soldiers to Cyprus. It is these soldiers who are the base of the movement led by General Grivas against the Makarios government. These soldiers are apparently using as aliases the names of dead Cypriots to cover their own identity.

A glimpse at the last General Election results in Cyprus shows quite clearly that the pro-Enosis (unity with Greece) parties received hardly any support. In fact Akel did best in Limassol, which is the centre of pro-Enosis agitation.

So there's no "civil war". That notion is about as ridiculous as the other one that is current in "our" press: that Makarios is moving left. Evidence for this is said to be his agreements with the Soviet Union. A bit nonsensical this when you remember that the Colonels' Greece has trade relations with Albania, Comecon and China!

What we see in Cyprus is not so much an attempt to impose Greece on Cyprus but, nevertheless, to effect a "Greek solution". The call for Enosis is only a cover-up.

For Cypriot workers and small farmers the prospects are extremely gloomy. For years held back by the "communist" party Akel from any movement that could seriously challenge the ruling class for state power, they have yet to create a party with a genuinely internationalist proletarian policy.

And this task itself will be severely impeded by the capitalists' increasing readiness to resort to strong-arm methods. Its dependence on tourism and thus on "civil peace" will force it to turn from the blackjack of the casino to the blackjack of repression.

Aris V.

Internment:

The Ceylon "United Front" government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike is planning to introduce a new development in jurisprudence, according to a dispatch from Colombo by B.H.S. Jayewardene in the Feb. 12 Far Eastern Economic Review.

With more than 15,000 prisoners arrested in the aftermath of last April's uprising, the regime has shown considerable doubt about how to proceed. Bringing the alleged culprits to trial could be embarrassing since many are being held on no more evidence than anonymous denunciations. On the other hand, the young prisoners are undoubtedly a danger to the governing coalition, in a political if not a military sense.

The solution to this problem would not be possible without the benefits of modern technology. Bandaranaike, according to Jayewardene, will leave the determination of guilt or innocence to... computers:

"Computers have now completed processing data gathered on each detainee and determined the extent of each one's involvement. About 4,000 face charges only of attending revolutionary lectures.

dave brodie

ALBERT BLOGSWORTH, THIS IS YOUR LIFE

The scene is set.

Eamonn Andrews, complete with TV cameras, stands outside the gates of Irlam Steel Works.

Various individuals in well greased overalls stretch their necks to seek immortality on the television screen.

Eamonn carefully scans the faces of the 6.00am to 6.00pm shift workers leaving the factory.

Ah! A hint of recognition. He steps forward

"Albert Blogsworth?"

Albert, somewhat startled, "Aye Lad".

Eamonn is taken aback. "Don't you recognise me?"

"Aye, I knew thee as soon as I clapped eyes on thee. You're Val Doonican."

"I'm Eamonn Andrews, for Christ sake."

Albert spots his wife in the crowd. "Ee Maggie, this ertes that Eamonn Andrews off that there Opportunity Knocks".

"Jesus wept, that's Hughie Green" groans Eamonn.

Albert's wife Maggie thinks its time to interject. (To Maggie Eamonn rates alongside God, David Frost and Malcolm Muggeridge.) "Albert doesn't have much time to watch telly, Eamonn."

Eamonn assumes his best smile.

"Albert Blogsworth, puddler, furnace man. THIS IS YOUR LIFE"

"Ee fancy! He's doing you on't telly" gasps Maggie.

"I'll do him here if he's not careful."

The TV Rolls pulls up alongside the three.

"By Gum Albert. Bloody foreman can't afford one of these."

"Will we see David Frost?"

asks Maggie.

Eamonn is getting a bit desparate. "You can see Annie Walker, Ena Sharples and Len Fairclough's underpants if you wish. I'll even show you Michael Miles' mausoleum, but please get in the car."

The car pulls away with Maggie waving in regal fashion.

* * *

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

"The other day I was in Lancashire visiting a Steel works and meeting ordinary working folks. Since then I've had half a dozen hot baths and sent my suit to the cleaners.

"But more to the point, whilst I was there I met a man whose whole life has been so crammed with exciting events that I felt you people just had to meet him. After nineteen years in Irlam Steel Works I suppose we could say that steel was in his blood. A lot of his mates have their blood in the steel."

Eamonn turns to the wings.

"ALBERT BLOGSWORTH — THIS IS YOUR LIFE."

Albert shuffles on stage. And Maggie comes into view, as if wishing to disappear.

Eamonn opens the proceedings.

"We can't have your best friend Billy Blenkinsop with us tonight, sad to relate he fell into the melting pot yesterday. But we have the next best thing, here you are Albert, a photograph of the ingot he's probably inside."

"He allus were a clumsy bastard."

A voice sounds from the back of the stage. "Remember me Albert? I'm the one who planted the knocked off copper in your saddle bag."

Albert's face lights up. "It's Fred Grassington."

"You're right, Albert" chimes Eamonn, "Fred Grassington, the man who was made foreman when you were arrested for stealing the copper."

Fred Grassington appears on stage. "Hello Albert."

"By gum, how are you doing, Fred?"



Ceylonese style

They are due for early release. "The Government will decide later what action should be taken against the others. Those against whom there is substantial evidence of direct involvement will have to face charges of high treason which carries a mandatory death sentence"

There are undoubted advantages to leaving the judicial decisions to computers. Even the sternest of human judges might be moved to injudicious clemency at the thought of requiring large numbers of youths to face a mandatory death penalty — an emotional failing to which computers are not subject. Moreover, computers can be programmed much more easily than can juries to accept as valid evidence whatever the programmer desires.

Bandaranaike's pioneering role in computer jurisprudence may well go down in history alongside Richard Nixon's introduction of computerised bombing in Indochina.

It only remains now to develop a computer that can perform the actual executions, and the members of the United Front will be able to say with a clear conscience that there is no blood on their hands.

from Intercontinental Press

Release Angela Davis

ANGELA DAVIS, black militant and communist, has gone on trial this month for murder, after almost two years of solitary imprisonment.

She has become for the black people of America a symbol of the fight back against the reactionary and racist US state.

The prosecution are well aware of her influence and have mounted a vicious campaign against her.

Her imprisonment has aroused many formerly non political people, black and white, into forming defence committees. However, their solidarity has so far been limited to such campaigns as petitioning the Bar committee, a US legal body.

Any real defence campaign can only be one that takes in the struggle of Angela Davis herself — a struggle against Nixon's reactionary state and its police.

Off with his head?

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MALTA and Britain over payment for the base on the island has had an Alice-in-Wonderland quality. When did you last hear one party to negotiations still in progress pour such public contempt on the other, suggesting in so many words that he was a jumped up native who needed putting in his place?

In fact, the British have tried to provoke as much intransigence as possible in their dealings with Mintoff. Were they really trying to reach agreement, even if it did involve driving a hard bargain?

Many Maltese interpret their motives quite differently, and the following extracts suggest why. The first comes from a letter written to us by a British resident in Malta, the second from the Malta News; both are dated in the latter part of January.

"I'm sure the vicious campaign launched against Mintoff in the British mass media reflects a decision to get rid of him and his supporters (i.e. the Maltese workers). There was first the playing for time in September — a promise to settle negotiations for a new agreement in three months, with a refusal to budge from their initial offer at the end of the time.

"Then the bluff that after all Malta was of no consequence to them, coupled with the expectation that a threat to withdraw would terrify the Maltese and lead to the fall of the government.

"Now this bluff has been called on both sides: there has been a backs to the wall rallying of support by the Maltese common people, and separate new offers for a settlement by the Americans and Italians.

"Britain however seems ready to go it alone, and I foresee a pretense of withdrawal coupled with plans for actual intervention.

"Officially British troops are to be out of Malta by the end of March. In practice not a man or a weapon has been moved. A cruiser keeps guard in the harbour and commandoes have taken over the military airport at Hal Far. Meanwhile roof top flights and helicopter practices go on unceasingly."

Malta News: "Britain wanted Labour out of the way by fair means or foul. Several attempts by the British Secret Service to topple the Maltese Labour Government have failed. . . The British intelligence service studied several plans to get Labour out of the way.

* It was believed that the Maltese could have been incited against the Labour Government when Mr. Mintoff's administration would tell the British to get out and the British played upon the beliefs that Mr. Mintoff would resign if the Nationalist Opposition were to organise demonstrations against the government.

* The British Intelligence also considered a plot to bribe a member of the Labour government so that he would cross the floor." (The Labour majority is only 1.)

"Work to carry out their plan was started. This was investigated by the police, and the British Intelligence gave up.

"Whitehall issued orders that the Maltese employed with the Services should be given their discharge notices, contending that in this manner these workers who are mostly Labour supporters would start protesting against the government.

"However the plan misfired. When the demonstrations were held these were not against the Government but huge rallies of support for Mr. Mintoff."



Dom Mintoff

"I'm the Public Relations Officer now Albert."

"Ee fancy" comments Maggie.

"That's a good job" says Albert, impressed. "How did you manage that?"

"I found some letters the works manager had written to his boy friend."

"Ee fancy" says Maggie to Albert, "Why aren't you clever like Fred?"

It's time for Eamonn to come on the scene.. "You don't know what a thrill it gives me to bring you people together. Thank you Fred Grassington."

Applause. Applause.

Eamonn: "Well Albert, after seventeen years as a puddler you are made up to furnaceman. You have always wanted the furnaceman's job, and a stroke of good fortune brings it your way. Harry Grimrod is struck by a white hot ingot and loses an arm. He is sent to clean the lavatories, and you Albert get his job."

"Aye! it were a bit of luck that"

Eamonn beams "This meant you could afford a holiday at Black pool."

"Ee it were grand" says Maggie.

Eamonn continues "But the fresh air was too much for you Albert, and you were ill for three weeks."

"Tha's right Eamonn" coughs Albert "That fresh air's no good to nobody."

Eamonn winces. "Then Albert, while you are away there is a bid for power. Frank Postlethwaite has always had his eye on the furnaceman's position".

"He allus had ideas above his station" snarls Albert.

"His wife's got a fancy man as well" says Maggie.

"Yes Albert" Eamonn continues "By the time you return to work, Frank Postlethwaite has taken over your job on the furnace."

A voice sounds off stage.

"Yes. But I underestimated you Albert."

"Come in Frank Postlethwaite" yodels Eamonn. Enter Frank

Postlethwaite. "What happened, Frank?" queries Eamonn.

"He put rat poison in me boiled ham butties. I was in Salford Royal for a fortnight."

"So you never got your job back?"

"No Eamonn! But I bear no grudge. If I hadn't been so ambitious it wouldn't have happened. There's a lot of trouble in the world caused by people not knowing their station in life."

"You're a bit of a philosopher" "No Eamonn, we've allus been Church of England."

Eamonn turns to Albert. "Well, shake hands with your old mate then."

They shake hands. "Thank you, Frank Postlethwaite."

Applause. Applause.

Eamonn continues. "The power game is not over yet Albert. You set your sights on the foreman's position. But your bid for power is not to be. Herbert Grimthorpe is made up to foreman instead of you"

"Aye" shouts Maggie, "Because his bloody brother-in-law is works manager."

"Quite. Quite." cuts in Eamonn quickly.

"Its not what you know it's who you know" quips Albert, with great originality.

"Have you still got ambition Albert?"

"Ambition? You've got to admit I've come up in the world lad, a labourer's son becoming furnaceman. Nay lad, though I say it myself, I've not done too badly."

Eamonn beams. "I think we can say you've led a full life."

"You can that."

"Don't you envy anybody?"

"I don't envy nobody Eamonn. Can Frank Sinatra stoke up a furnace? I don't care how much money he's got, I bet he envies the likes of me."

The programme draws to a close. Eamonn hands over a 3p writing pad, with Albert's name embossed on it in letaset.

But just then the lights go out. Albert turns to Fred Grassington, and is heard to snarl — "Bloody miners. Why can't they be satisfied like you and me...."



FRANCE: 200,000 March Against Factory Gun-Guards

by Paul Itizé

ON SATURDAY MARCH 4th. in Paris a procession stretching over four miles accompanied the coffin of 23-year old Maoist worker Rene Pierre Overney, murdered by an armed thug.

The killer, Tramoni, was part of a private police force employed by the Renault management under the macabre title of 'Working Conditions Improvement Team', to back up the increasing repression in their factories.

On 24th February a group of Maoists attempted to enter the Renault factory while distributing leaflets. They were met by the private police of the company and in the skirmish that followed Overney was shot dead.

Overney had been a worker at the factory until June 1970 when he was dismissed, in the words of the Renault management, for "distributing non-trade union leaflets" and for "selling again at the work place a political newspaper approving violence." (Le Monde, March 1)

The funeral march was the biggest political demonstration since May 1968. It was supported by all the left groups, calling for an end to private armies of management, and for workers' self defence.

It was opposed by the Communist Party, who have been conducting a hysterical campaign against the left groups — and the dead man too — accusing them of plotting with the government to create disorder so as to damage the Communist Party's electoral chances!

HARMONY ?

The response to Overney's murder has (yet again!) astounded and terrified those who think social harmony and working class apathy the natural order of things.

May 1968 initiated a series of struggles involving the newly rediscovered sit-in tactics, drawing groups of workers (often immigrants) who had been scarcely involved in the May-June events as such.

Many new demands have been thrown up, such as for a restructuring of wages to narrow

the differentials between the unskilled and semi skilled, and the skilled and supervisory grades — who have till now made up a large part of trade union membership.

In the last year these struggles have tended to run into dead ends. With elections approaching, the Communist Party has again devoted all its energies to pursuing its incurable illusion of a calm but radical atmosphere which will give them and their allies electoral victory. Their union, the C.G.T. has moved in to emasculate the workers' tactics and smother their demands.

Management and government have sought to use the occasion to re-establish and reinforce a pre-1968 level of discipline. Police have violently broken up picket lines and arrested any sit-in strikers in a whole number of places. Militants have been sacked and private armies established.

The CGT has not protested too much. One of its members at Renault, on hearing of the shoot of Overney, is said to have told a group of horrified workers — "That makes one less of them; and you understand, comrades, before we did the policing; now they themselves are here to do it, and that's very good."

The French journal Lutte Ouvriere describes the growing repression at Renault:

"The papers and radio have not spoken of the tightening of discipline and of conditions in which the management makes its employees work, of the sackings, of the punishments of all sorts which have become regular in the last few months, particularly in the semi skilled sections of Billancourt and Seguin Isle.

"Gradually, especially since May 1971, the management have tried to impose a work discipline which is no different from that notoriously operating in Citroen for example, by the use of a much strengthened body of security staff and plain clothes thugs. Through 1971 and then again this January groups of Maoist and other workers have been sacked with little or no pretext.

Ben Bacrouk, a Tunisian

worker in Department 74, found himself outside the gates because, having obtained his supervisor's permission, he went out of the factory wearing a raincoat belonging to the firm.

"Another worker, a Portuguese, found himself similarly sacked because he missed work for several days after being arrested and held but then released uncharged by the police.

"The management has itself just announced that 198 punitive sackings took place in 1971.

"As for punishments which are short of sackings, but aim to drive workers out, these occur daily. Thus a CFDT union representative was suspended without pay for three days for having read a newspaper in working hours.

PUNISHMENTS

Workers are punished for 'slow work', for any action which stops the production line even for seconds, for finishing work a couple of minutes early, etc. The list is very long.

The management has imposed an intolerable regime through foremen and supervisors who fancy themselves as colonial overseers because they command immigrant workers, and thus seek to make them accept constantly worsening conditions, heavier work loads and insufficient rest times for production line work. They seek thus too to rid themselves of any workers, whether or not they are political militants or union delegates, who would prevent them acting as they please." (Lutte Ouvriere, 29th February.)

They have gone too far now. Renault workers hearing of the murder of Overney exclaimed — "armed guards, where are we getting to? It's enough now that at the check point someone should make a gesture they don't like and he can get a bullet."

The first responses in the factory were more of shock than action — and many for a time continued to believe the Communist Party and Management story of Maoist students from outside assaulting the factory with iron bars.

But not for long — there were too many witnesses, and too many had known the dead man. His old work mates from Renault carried his coffin. The mass demonstrations, made up largely of young workers, technical college and high school pupils rather than the more middle class students (as at first in 1968) mark the beginning of a new chapter.

The funeral was attended by 200,000 people, according to its Trotskyist and Maoist organisers. (The police estimate was 100,000; the Communist Party's 40,000...) The following day the conservative newspaper Le Figaro wrote: "That the figure of the participants is disputed does not change the fact; it was an important demonstration that took place on Sunday."

That 'Le Figaro' clearly relishes the embarrassment of the Communist Party demonstrates not that the revolutionaries play into the hands of the ruling class, as the Communist Party leadership claims, but that the Communist Party, a large and powerful party in France, can never be reformist enough for the bourgeoisie. Not, however, for want of trying by its leaders. But because behind the reformist leadership stands a militant working class, over whom the Communist Party leaders are likely to lose control if they gain power only to manage capitalism as the Labour Party does here.

The real left is stronger now than in 1968, workers are more wary of the Communist Party than they were then: more recognise it for the right wing sham that it is. The Government carries the discredit of tax and fraud scandals instead of the authority of De Gaulle.

Social harmony, in France as anywhere else, is not normal. It is merely a temporary lid clamped on a sea of discontent and a working class which will again, as in '68, challenge the bosses' power in society. And this time the "Communist" Party may not be as capable of saving the bosses as it was in May-June 1968.

Preston: BAC workers fight new work study scheme.

by Steve Corbishly

ON FEBRUARY 7th, 3,000 manual workers from three British Aircraft Corporation factories in the Preston area came out on strike.

The men work in the Military Aircraft Division of BAC, producing the joint French/British Jaguar, Strike Masters for New Zealand, air intakes for Concorde, and sections for the European MRCA project.

The men are on strike against the management's attempt to introduce a new wages-payment system, which uses the principles of MTM.

MTM, or Measured Time Motion, is an 'advance' on Measured Day Work now being pushed in Midland

car factories.

Stewards have been sent on management — and TUC — courses in preparation.

Before the strike began, there was a series of one-day strikes against the bosses' refusal to negotiate over annual review of wages. The bosses have insisted that all negotiations will be tied to agreeing on a procedure to introduce MTM.

The Unions in return demand 12½% across the board for all workers, and a £20 a week minimum wage guarantee, with NO STRINGS.

The management have offered 11½% — with strings — and have started spreading rumours that

MTM will benefit some workers by giving them higher bonuses.

MEASURED TIME MOTION

MTM is being introduced to help the BAC bosses over the problem of fixed-price contracts, and to solve some of the financial problems caused by projects done in cooperation with Common Market countries.

MTM is a more accurate method of measuring what a worker does, and how fast he does it. It is designed to cut 'waste time' by up to 15%. It will mean more control and supervision; and it is certain that over a period of years the older, and as one foreman put it "the less

intelligent worker" will go. They will be made redundant, or disappear down the 'natural wastage' drain.

S.S.

The Department of Social Security has, as usual, scarcely been neutral. By refusing the claims of single strikers and through the smallness of payments to others, it has attempted to pressure the men back to work.

In response, 150-200 BAC workers, together with members of Preston Unemployed Workers Union, on Thursday February 17th, occupied the local Social Security office for nearly 4 hours.

As a result of this and the local publicity it gained, the S.S. was forced to increase its payments. This victory itself raised the morale of all the strikers.

The Preston BAC strikers are leading the LOCAL fight against MTM and redundancy. But this strike is crucial for all BAC workers.

If MTM is introduced into Preston factories, the BAC management will use this to spread it into their other factories.

Similarly, the Preston strikers must realise that the workers of BAC are fighting other battles. For example in Bristol, the main fight is against redundancies.

Unless these different struggles are linked, the BAC bosses — because they are centralised and know what is happening — can win.

For the same reason the lack of any link-up between the different factories around the AUEW national 13 point claim will mean a weakening of the workers' side.

The Preston District Committee has the example of the Manchester and Sheffield District committees. With prices rising daily and the miners' outright victory over this Tory government to spur us on, this is not the time to hang back.

What their papers say.....

MIRROR concerned over Cops' credibility

Constance Lever

Last Monday (March 6th) the Daily Mirror devoted its first two pages to comment on why and how "the good name and reputation of the police which have become a matter of grave public anxiety" should be re-established, and public confidence in them "restored".

As the self appointed spokesman of us all the MIRROR said that the judge who sentenced two crooked detectives was "speaking for the nation" when he told them — "What you did was wicked... You destroyed respect for the law where it required to be preserved."

Well, he wasn't speaking for us, and we don't think he was speaking for most of the 'nation' either, whose interests were never much heeded by the law which protects the property and order of the rich.

The MIRROR thinks "Mr. Justice Sebag Shaw had the most abhorrent duty which can ever confront a judge" in sentencing the detectives.

Really? If we were a judge we might find it much more abhorrent to have to punish a man driven to drink by misery or to imprison a pensioner who stole food from a supermarket. We might be more appalled by a landlord who terrorised families onto the streets so as to put up his rents.

But, if the MIRROR is not bothered by such products of the everyday workings of the law, neither is it really very worried by the "wickedness" of the "few rotten apples" in the police barrel.

For, as the MIRROR says, "a nation's police ... are a reflection of the society they live in". And what really worries the MIRROR is precisely that unless the "good name" of the police is fast "restored", people might come to associate the crookedness of the police with the crookedness of a society where the difference between big business and big crime is largely a question of what you can get away with.

MAUDLING

At the top of the pyramid of the law stands Maudling the Home Secretary, first President of the Real Estate Fund of America, whose directors are now in New York prisons for fraud. But then, defrauding shareholders is not so easy to get away with as defrauding workers — that, after all, is the mainstay of the capitalist system.

The difference between racketeering and legal profit-making often depends simply on the power of the operators to influence the law.

Tobacco, which has been proved to cause various forms of grievous bodily harm and kill thousands every year, is quite legal. But 'pot' — against which conclusive proof has yet to be found — is illegal.

It's a crime to defraud the National Assistance of a few pounds — it's no crime to defraud the sick and the old by misinforming them of their rights.

It's a crime not to pay your electricity bill — it's no crime to drive a terrified old woman to suicide by knowingly sending her a falsely inflated bill.

A hypocritical press declaims at the barbarity of the prison sentence on young Timothy Davey in far off Turkey. But a lad of the same age we know, spending a similar time in approved school for taking a bicycle with which to visit his mother, (and the numerous others in borstals for much more minor drug offences than Timothy's) must be wondering why no such fuss was made over them and why only Turkish laws may be labled "barbaric".

We don't much like crooked policemen, but then we don't think they are isolated rotten apples.

More to the point, it is not the police who "betray their trust" who worry us most, but those who uphold it, who do their job of trying to intimidate those groups who have least cause to be content and law abiding (even if they in fact break no law) into accepting their lot — the unemployed, the immigrants driven by discrimination into slum rooms and unskilled labour, young people for whom society offers only endless boredom and dead end jobs, if any.

These sections of "the public" will not have their "confidence in the police restored" by "investigations of allegations of misconduct by independent tribunals presided over by a judge or QC."

The DAILY MIRROR thinks that "confidence between the police and the public must be swiftly restored." We hope it won't. We hope that the nature of the whole rotten set-up will become clearer and clearer and that revelations about police corruption might lead to loss of confidence in the law itself and in the whole corrupt social system that it protects.

Contact WORKERS' FIGHT at

Birmingham — Peter Radcliffe, 110, Gough Road, Edgbaston, B/ham 15.

Bolton — Stephen Boyd, 24 Crawford Avenue, Tyldesley, Nr. Bolton.

Bristol — Simon Temple, 42 Hampton Road, Bristol 6.

Coventry — Dave Spencer, 17 Winifred Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry.

Derby — Trevor Cave, 97 Schoolhouse Hill, Heage, Derbyshire

Liverpool — Paul Barker, 110 Edge Lane, Liverpool 7.

North London — Phil Lewis, 349 Alexandra Park Road, N.22

West London — Ken Stratford, 86 Rosebank Road, Hanwell, W.7

Manchester — Fran Brodie, A6 Thornhill Road, Droylsden M/1.

Middlesbrough — Tony Duffy, 39 Clynes Road, Grangetown, Teesside

Newcastle — John Foster, 55 Percy Road, Whitley Bay, Northumberland

Northampton — Dave Green, 46 Chiltern Way, Northampton.

Preston — Steve Corbishly, 29 Stanley Place, Preston, Lancs.

Stoke on Trent — Martin Thomas, 88 Princes Road, Hartshill, Stoke

Swansea — Bob Cook, 859 Carmarthen Road, Fforest Fach, Swansea, Glamorganshire.

Stockton on Tees — Phil Thome, 3 Heather Close, Stockton on Tees

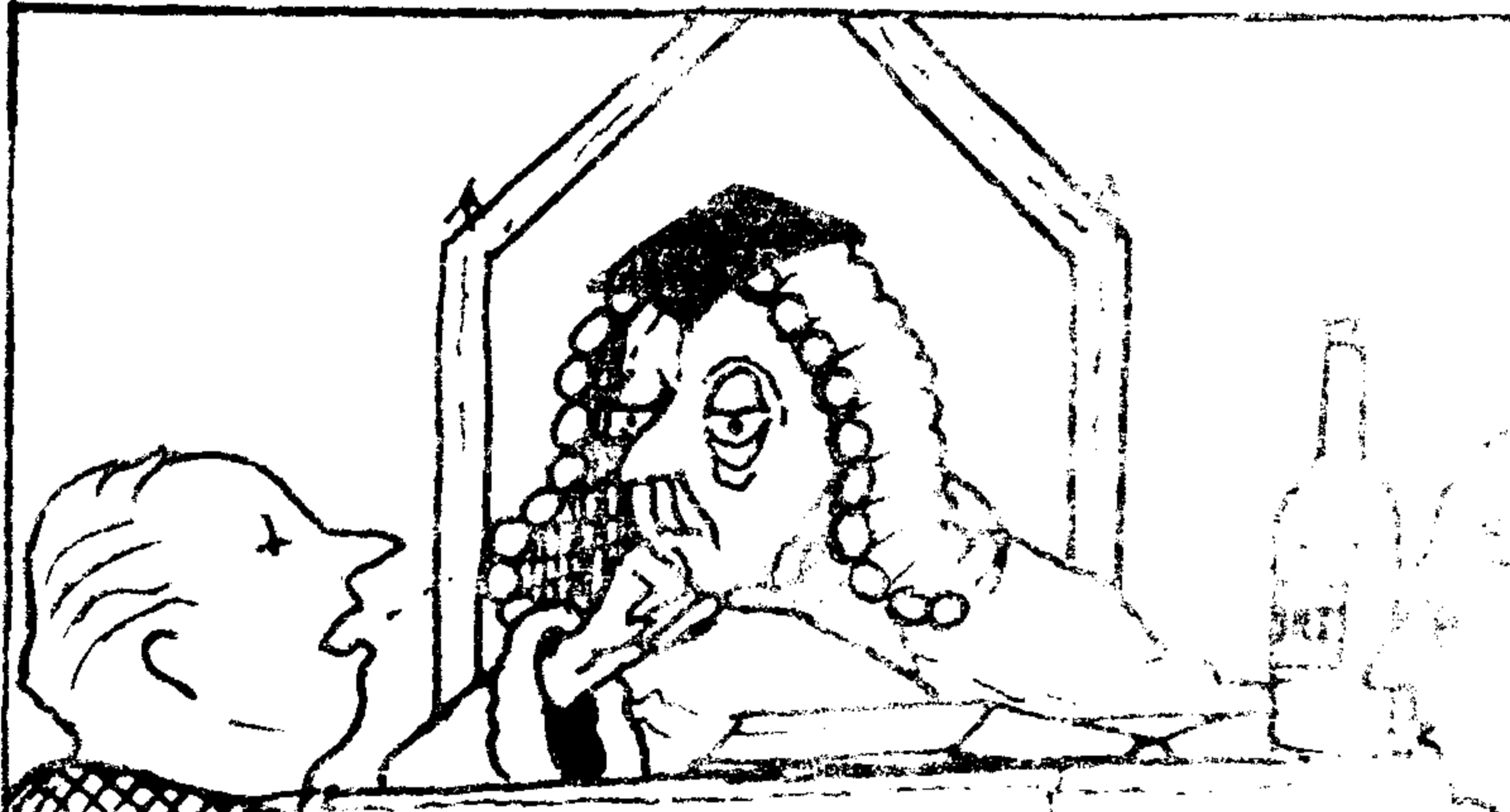
Wellingborough — Ivan Wells, 14 Craigie, Wellingborough, Northants.

I would like to know more about Workers' Fight.

NAME

Address

Send to: Joe Wright, 21 Lindum Street, Manchester 14.



IT'S A SORT OF CARD M'LUD — THE WORKING PEOPLE PUT IT IN A KIND OF CLOCK AND IT - - - - -

WORKERS FIGHT

N. Staffs.

MINERS ORGANISE AFTER THE STRIKE

THE MINERS HAVEN'T JUST won a few pounds in money. They have won a degree of self-confidence, of solidarity, and of organisation that not even they expected.

This other important victory of the miners' strike can't be allowed to die away. Any money victory which still leaves the Tories and the employers in power is a partial victory — one battle won in a continuing class war.

Militant miners need to organise and prepare for future battles.

A first step has been taken in North Staffordshire. A small nucleus of militants have started to hold regular meetings, and are producing reports and articles for the forthcoming national rank and file miners' paper "The Collier".

The main points to push for have been decided as follows:

1. To stress that the victory was won by rank and file solidarity of ALL unions and that solidarity must be forthcoming from mine-workers to other unions with claims coming up, especially the railwaymen. To continue to work for an Alliance of Unions in the Public Sector, as called for by the Union of Post Office Workers.

2. All Executive Committees, Area and national, should be made up of elected lay delegates (no votes for ex-officio members). Full time officials to be subject to regular re-election and recall at any time.

A local mineworkers' panel to be set up. (At present there is no official co-ordination between collieries in North Staffordshire other than through the Area.)

3. To point out the dangers in the strike settlement:

— the 'promise' of productivity dealing in September. Productivity dealing has always meant the same production can be carried out with fewer workers, i.e. redundancies.

— the 16 month clause, which means that the next round of negotiations will come up just before the summer period in which coal consumption is lowest.

— the lack of any agreement that no further pit closures are to be allowed.

All these dangers can be fought. The 16 month clause is only a piece of paper. There is nothing to stop unofficial moves for a straight increase in September, with no productivity strings.

The vital thing is to develop and extend the links that grew up during the strike into a strong fighting organisation of rank and file militants.

Martin Thomas

Manchester

Confed. stewards on the move

MANCHESTER'S ON THE MOVE! That's the message that went out from a recent meeting at the Holdsworth Hall of 600 stewards in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, District 29.

After the sell-out by the Confed. leaders when they called off their talks with the Engineering Employers' Federation on 15th December, the task of a co-ordinated struggle has fallen to the rank and file.

As a steward from Fairey's said — "We've got captains on the platform, but we've got generals too — and they've let us down!"

But along with the unanimous disgust at their national "leaders" went a real fighting spirit, a real willingness to fight not only for the District's demands but also against the entire employers' offensive.

On unemployment, for instance, Betty Crawford of Ferranti got great applause when she said "They told you that if you don't work hard industry will be in trouble; now you've worked hard and YOU'RE in trouble."

UNION OSTRICH

Ron Williams of Stockport summed up the meeting's feelings on the Confed.'s attitude to the Industrial Relations Act: "It's the union that's done an ostrich on us. What did they say? Look at the Bill. Study it. And ignore it."

But the biggest response was drawn by those who rightly pointed to the criminal way the Confed. had left the workers of small firms to go to the wall. In a recessionary period the workers can only move forward with the fighting support of their brothers and sisters in the bigger firms.

Bristol

BENDIX WESTINGHOUSE

WORKERS PREPARE TO FIGHT

REDUNDANCIES

The Bristol based firm of Bendix Westinghouse announced on March 2nd that it is to sack 150 workers in the next 2 months.

This company, which makes air brakes for lorries, is jointly owned by two American corporations, Westinghouse and Bendix. The firm (which employs a thousand workers) already sacked 100 production workers before Christmas, complaining of a fall in demand.

This latest redundancy will affect staff and other "indirect" workers.

There are already over 11,000 on the dole in Bristol, and workers at Bendix Westinghouse have decided that it is time to make a firm stand against the management and challenge its rights to dispose of working people as it pleases. Ivor Bosley, ASTMS shop steward, said "We are definitely not accepting these redundancies."

It is not yet clear what tactics will be adopted against these redundancies. But the lessons of recent successful struggles against redundancies at Fisher Bendix, Plessey and Allis Chalmers will not have been lost.

Simon Temple

The step that District 29 has taken is important in organising a second line of struggle now that the first line has gone down with nothing more than a complaint in the minutes that the employers were not sticking to their secret — unminuted — agreements.

District 29 minimum claim is for a local no strings, no conditions non-legally binding agreement, granting:

a) a substantial increase, not less than £4, on the consolidated rate, and MORE FOR WOMEN AS A STEP TOWARDS EQUAL PAY.

b) a reduction to 35 hours in the standard working week without loss of pay.

c) another week's holiday; abolition of penal clause.

d) re-negotiation of local agreements on outworking, piecework

and grading for machinists.

But simply putting in the claims at the same time (they went in on March 1st to an almost complete press blackout) won't ensure victory. As the miners showed, there must be a common front offensive — a worked-out strategy for rank and file action that relies as little on the captains as on the generals.

For the fact is that "captains" like John Tocher (District 29 Chairman, an AUEW Divisional Organiser and member of the Communist Party National Executive), have been notorious for selling productivity deals, despite their supposed opposition to them.

For all the diffidencies that lie ahead, a real lead has been taken here. The message to the Scanlons and Wrights is simple: if you won't fight, get out of the way. We're on the move and we're ready to go a lot further than you!

Andrew Hornung

Teeside:

SOLIDARITY STRIKERS SACKED

LAGGERS — INSULATION MEN — in the Hartlepool (Teesside) area are being sacked for coming out in support of their striking fellow-workers on the Tyne and Wear. And the bosses are openly advertising for scabs to take their jobs.

300 of the Hartlepool ladders struck in January to support the 600 Tyneside Thermal Insulation workers who'd been out since November for an increase of 16½p on top of the national minimum rate, to bring their wages up to those of ladders in other regions, eg Scotland.

When the Hartlepool men walked out, they received a warning notice after a week on strike, then got their cards through the post.

The sympathetic strike became a lockout.

The fight is essentially about the right to win local awards over and above the basic rate. The employers said that local claims were a breach of contract.

For the last 14 weeks the men's

union — the G&MWU — and its officials have done nothing to help the strike. They have in fact tried to break it by telling men to go back to work, and fought any attempts to make the strike official.

They will be directly responsible for any scabbing. But then, attacks on militants are nothing new to Lord Cooper and his "brothers".

Even the attempt of the firms to recruit skilled and unskilled workers — who need not be union members, under the Industrial Relations Act — to scab on the locked out ladders has provoked no response from the G&MWU, which is already putting the Tory Act into practice.

That Act makes sympathetic strikes illegal. But workers cannot and will not allow their rights to be taken away so easily.

The Hartlepool ladders are only the first of a wave that will ram that truth of working class existence down the throats of Heath and his Tory spivs.

Alan Theasby

Ad. for scabs!

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